

Social Inequality In A Global Economy Worlds Apart

[#social inequality](#) [#global economy](#) [#economic disparity](#) [#wealth gap](#) [#globalization challenges](#)

This piece delves into the pervasive issue of social inequality within the context of a global economy, illustrating how economic disparity creates a wide wealth gap where 'worlds apart' is a harsh reality. It explores the complex challenges of globalization and its impact on different populations worldwide.

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Worlds Apart

This book focuses primarily on social inequalities in the American context. However, a trend in this course is how the global inequalities are effecting, and affected by social stratification and inequality in America. The second edition of Sernau's Worlds Apart reflects that trend. Three new visual essays provide powerful illustrations of inequality in Global (Honduras), Rural (Navaholand), and Urban (Deindustrialized) Contexts. Chapter 3 is on the Gordian Knot, of Race, Class, and Gender; and chapter 12 is on Challenging the System: Social Movements. It has updated figures that includes information from the 2004 election. This edition's theme has been how the current regime of market-driven solutions actually contribute to rather than reduce social inequality. This edition continues to highlight inequality in America, with the addition of how social inequalities in America are affected by global inequalities.

Worlds Apart

We are used to thinking about inequality within countries--about rich Americans versus poor Americans, for instance. But what about inequality between all citizens of the world? Worlds Apart addresses just how to measure global inequality among individuals, and shows that inequality is shaped by complex forces often working in different directions. Branko Milanovic, a top World Bank economist, analyzes income distribution worldwide using, for the first time, household survey data from more than 100 countries. He evenhandedly explains the main approaches to the problem, offers a more accurate way of measuring inequality among individuals, and discusses the relevant policies of first-world countries and nongovernmental organizations. Inequality has increased between nations over the last half century (richer countries have generally grown faster than poorer countries). And yet the two most populous nations, China and India, have also grown fast. But over the past two decades inequality within countries has increased. As complex as reconciling these three data trends may be, it is clear: the inequality between the world's individuals is staggering. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the richest 5 percent of people receive one-third of total global income, as much as the poorest 80 percent. While a few poor countries are catching up with the rich world, the differences between the richest and poorest individuals around the globe are huge and likely growing.

Worlds Apart

"I can't emphasize how much I like the theoretical thrust of this book . . . too many undergraduate sociology texts of all kinds substitute description for theory and explanation. . . . I also like the integration of globalization." --Amy Wharton, Washington State University This innovative book is designed for use as a primary text for Social Inequalities and Social Stratification courses at the undergraduate level. It is the only undergraduate text that provides a sociological framework for analyzing inequality within U.S. society as well as analyzing the relationship between global stratification systems and internal systems of inequality. It places each issue and dimension of inequality in the context of a changing global economy.

Worlds Apart

To find more information about Rowman and Littlefield titles, please visit www.rowmanlittlefield.com.

Worlds Apart

Monograph, based on a series of radio programmes, on the emergence and widening of the economic development gap between developed countries and developing countries - covers the symptoms of poverty and underdevelopment and the technical problems faced by poor countries, examines whether the existence of affluent societies is a help or hindrance to the development effort, and stresses the need for fundamental social change and more determined political will if an acceptable rate of economic development is to be achieved. References and statistical tables.

Social Inequality in a Global Age

Worlds Apart: Social Inequality in a Global Age, Third Edition is intended as the primary text for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students who are enrolled in Social Stratification and Inequality courses, primarily taught in Sociology departments. This book focuses primarily on social inequalities in the American context. However, a trend in this course is how the global inequalities are effecting, and affected by social stratification and inequality in America. This edition reflects that trend.

World Social Report 2020

This report examines the links between inequality and other major global trends (or megatrends), with a focus on technological change, climate change, urbanization and international migration. The analysis pays particular attention to poverty and labour market trends, as they mediate the distributional impacts of the major trends selected. It also provides policy recommendations to manage these megatrends in an equitable manner and considers the policy implications, so as to reduce inequalities and support their implementation.

The Haves and the Have-Nots

Who is the richest person in the world, ever? Does where you were born affect how much money you'll earn over a lifetime? How would we know? Why -- beyond the idle curiosity -- do these questions even matter? In *The Haves and the Have-Nots*, Branko Milanovic, one of the world's leading experts on wealth, poverty, and the gap that separates them, explains these and other mysteries of how wealth is unevenly spread throughout our world, now and through time. Milanovic uses history, literature and stories straight out of today's newspapers, to discuss one of the major divisions in our social lives: between the haves and the have-nots. He reveals just how rich Elizabeth Bennet's suitor Mr. Darcy really was; how much Anna Karenina gained by falling in love; how wealthy ancient Romans compare to today's super-rich; where in Kenyan income distribution was Obama's grandfather; how we should think about Marxism in a modern world; and how location where one is born determines his wealth. He goes beyond mere entertainment to explain why inequality matters, how it damages our economic prospects, and how it can threaten the foundations of the social order that we take for granted. Bold, engaging, and illuminating, *The Haves and the Have-Nots* teaches us not only how to think about inequality, but why we should.

Global Inequalities in World-Systems Perspective

During its 500-year history, the modern world-system has seen several shifts in hegemony. Yet, since the decline of the U.S. in the 1970s, no single core power has attained a hegemonic position in an

increasingly polarized world. As income inequalities have become more pronounced in core countries, especially in the U.S. and the U.K., global inequalities emerged as a "new" topic of social scientific scholarship, ignoring the constant move toward polarization that has been characteristic of the entire modern world-system. At the same time, the rise of new states (most notably, the BRICS) and the relative economic growth of particular regions (especially East Asia) have prompted speculations about the next hegemon that largely disregard both the *longue durée* of hegemonic shifts and the constraints that regional differentiations place on the concentration of capital and geopolitical power in one location. Authors in this book place the issue of rising inequalities at the center of their analyses. They explore the concept and reality of semiperipheries in the 21st century world-system, the role of the state and of transnational migration in current patterns of global stratification, types of catching-up development and new spatial configurations of inequality in Europe's Eastern periphery as well as the prospects for the Global Left in the new systemic order. The book links novel theoretical debates on the rise of global inequalities to methodologically innovative approaches to the urgent task of addressing them.

Worlds Apart

No country today—even those considered the wealthiest and most developed—can claim to be fully inclusive, where all people have equal opportunities and protections, and fully enjoy their human rights. In many developing countries, women who are poor, in the bottom 20 per cent of the income scale, and particularly those who are in rural areas, are far less likely to have access to contraceptives, and care during pregnancy and birth than their wealthier urban counterparts.

State of World Population 2017

No country today—even those considered the wealthiest and most developed--can claim to be fully inclusive, where all people have equal opportunities and protections, and fully enjoy their human rights. In many developing countries, women who are poor, in the bottom 20 per cent of the income scale, and particularly those who are in rural areas, are far less likely to have access to contraceptives, and care during pregnancy and birth than their wealthier urban counterparts.

State of World Population 2017

Unequal Gains offers a radically new understanding of the economic evolution of the United States, providing a complete picture of the uneven progress of America from colonial times to today. While other economic historians base their accounts on American wealth, Peter Lindert and Jeffrey Williamson focus instead on income--and the result is a bold reassessment of the American economic experience. America has been exceptional in its rising inequality after an egalitarian start, but not in its long-run growth. America had already achieved world income leadership by 1700, not just in the twentieth century as is commonly thought. Long before independence, American colonists enjoyed higher living standards than Britain--and America's income advantage today is no greater than it was three hundred years ago. But that advantage was lost during the Revolution, lost again during the Civil War, and lost a third time during the Great Depression, though it was regained after each crisis. In addition, Lindert and Williamson show how income inequality among Americans rose steeply in two great waves--from 1774 to 1860 and from the 1970s to today--rising more than in any other wealthy nation in the world. *Unequal Gains* also demonstrates how the widening income gaps have always touched every social group, from the richest to the poorest. The book sheds critical light on the forces that shaped American income history, and situates that history in a broad global context. Economic writing at its most stimulating, *Unequal Gains* provides a vitally needed perspective on who has benefited most from American growth, and why.

Unequal Gains

World Inequality Report 2022 is the most authoritative and comprehensive account of global trends in inequality, providing cutting-edge information about income and wealth inequality and also pioneering data about the history of inequality, gender inequality, environmental inequalities, and trends in international tax reform and redistribution.

World Inequality Report 2022

"The Human Paradox analyses the links among the many acute polarisations that mark contemporary times. While acknowledging the limits of progressive politics in the last half century in addressing social

issues such as inequality and diversity, it examines how the new world of information can infect as well as enrich culture, economy and democracy itself. The book argues that beneath all the present social tumult lies a fundamental dilemma for human progress, namely how we can be estranged from what we call humanity. Beginning with an appraisal of populism and authoritarian nationalism, the text also examines whether, in our human development, we're bound for doom or bloom. The book concludes with exploration of a radical agenda for future social improvement. Addressing issues related to Trumpism, Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, and exploring challenges such as a broken economy, climate emergency, artificial intelligence, while offering an outline radical agenda for future social improvement, *The Human Paradox* will appeal to students of subjects including sociology, politics, history, and economics"--

The Human Paradox

Over five years, sociologist Cynthia Duncan visited remote rural areas across the U.S. and conducted 350 in-depth interviews with the residents to unravel the ways in which poverty is perpetuated--and what can be done to alleviate the problem. Illustrations.

Worlds Apart

A rapidly growing area of economic research investigates the top of the income distribution using data from income tax records. This volume brings together studies of top incomes for twelve countries from around the world, including China, India, Japan, Argentina and Indonesia. Together with the first volume, published in 2007, the studies cover twenty two countries. They have a long time span, the earliest data relating to 1875 (for Norway), allowing recent developments to be placed in historical perspective. The volume describes in detail the source data and the methods employed. It will be an invaluable reference source for researchers in the field. Individual country chapters deal with the specific nature of the data for each of the countries, and describe the long-term evolution of top income shares. In the countries as a whole, dramatic changes have taken place at the top of the income distribution. Over the first part of the century, top income shares fell markedly. This largely took the form of a reduction in capital incomes. The different authors examine the impact of the First and Second World Wars, contrasting countries that were and were not engaged. They consider the impact of depressions and banking crises, and pay particular attention to the impact of progressive taxation. In the last 30 years, the shares of top incomes have increased markedly in the US and other Anglo-Saxon countries, reflecting the increased dispersion of earnings. The volume includes statistics on the much-discussed top pay and bonuses, providing a global perspective that discusses important differences between countries such as the lesser increase in Continental Europe. This book, together with volume 1, documents this interesting development and explores the underlying causes. The findings are brought together in a final summary chapter by Atkinson, Piketty and Saez.

Top Incomes

Twenty-First Century Inequality & Capitalism: Piketty, Marx and Beyond is a collection of critical essays on the economist's iconic 2014 book, from the perspective of critical theory, global political economy or public sociology, mostly drawn from the Marxist tradition.

Twenty-First Century Inequality & Capitalism: Piketty, Marx and Beyond

Global growth is forecast at 3.0 percent for 2019, its lowest level since 2008–09 and a 0.3 percentage point downgrade from the April 2019 World Economic Outlook.

World Economic Outlook, October 2019

James Henslin has always been able to share the excitement of sociology, with his acclaimed "down-to-earth" approach and personal writing style that highlight the sociology of everyday life and its relevance to students' lives. Adapted for students studying within Australia, this text, now in a second edition, has been made even more relevant and engaging to students. With wit, personal reflection, and illuminating examples, the local author team share their passion for sociology, promote sociology to students and entice them to delve deeper into this exciting science. Six central themes run throughout this text: down-to-earth sociology, globalisation, cultural diversity, critical thinking, the new technology, and the growing influence of the mass media on our lives. These themes are especially useful for introducing the controversial topics that make studying sociology such a lively, exciting activity.

Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach

List of Figures. Preface. 1. Globalization I: Liquids, Flows, and Structures. Some of the Basics. From Solids to Liquids (to Gases). Flows. Does Globalization Hop Rather Than Flow? Heavy, Light, Weightless. Heavy Structures That Expedite Flows. Heavy Structures as Barriers to Flows. Subtler Structural Barriers. Structure and Process. On the Increasing Ubiquity of Global Flows (and Processes) and Structures. Thinking About Global Flows and Structures. Chapter Summary. 2. Globalization II: Some Basic Issues, Debates, and Controversies. Is There Such a Thing as Globalization? If There Is Such a Thing as Globalization, When Did It Begin? Globalization or Globalizations? What Drives Globalization? If There Is Such a Thing as Globalization, Is It Inexorable? Does Globophilia or Globophobia Have the Upper Hand? If Globalization Is Not Inexorable, Has It Gone Too Far? What, if Anything, Can be Done About Globalization? Chapter Summary. 3. Globalization and Related Processes I: Imperialism, Colonialism, Development, Westernization, Easternization. Imperialism. Colonialism. Development. Westernization. Easternization. Comparisons with Globalization. The Era of the "Posts". Chapter Summary. 4. Globalization and Related Processes II: Americanization and Anti-Americanism. Clarifying Americanization. Some Useful Conceptual Distinctions. America's Logistical Technologies. A Broader and Deeper View of the Americanization of Consumer Culture. An American Empire? Minimizing the Importance of Americanization. Anti-Americanism. Post-Americanization. Chapter Summary. 5. Neo-Liberalism: Roots, Principles, Criticisms, and Neo-Marxian Alternatives. The Past, Present, and Future of Neo-Liberalism. Neo-Liberalism: An Exemplary Statement and the Basic Principles. Popular Neo-Liberal "Theory": The Case of Thomas Friedman. Critiquing Neo-Liberalism. Neo-Liberalism as Exception. Neo-Liberalism: The Case of Israel The End of History. The Death of Neo-Liberalism? Neo-Marxian Theoretical Alternatives to Neo-Liberalism. Chapter Summary. 6. Global Political Structures and Processes. On Political Processes and Flows. The Nation-State. Threats to the Nation-State. In Defense of the Nation-State. "Imagined Community". Changes in Global Nation-State Relations. Other Global Political Developments and Structures. Regional Political Organizations. Global Governance. Civil Society. Other Players. Chapter Summary. 7. Structuring the Global Economy. Before Bretton Woods. Bretton Woods and the Bretton Woods System. The End of Bretton Woods. Changes in, and Critiques of, Bretton-Woods-Era Organizations. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). European Union (Common Market). North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). MERCOSUR. OPEC. The Multinational Corporation (MNC). World Economic Forum. The Myth of Economic Globalization? Chapter Summary. 8. Global Economic Flows: Production and Consumption. Trade. Increasing Competition for Commodities. The Economic Impact of the Flow of Oil. Race to the Bottom and Upgrading. Outsourcing. Financial Globalization. Corporations, People, and Ideas. Consumption. Chapter Summary. 9. Global Culture and Cultural Flows. Cultural Differentialism. Cultural Hybridization. Cultural Convergence. Cultural Imperialism. Chapter Summary. 10. High-Tech Global Flows and Structures: Technology, Media, and the Internet. Technology. Media. The Internet. Chapter Summary. 11. Global Flows of People: Vagabonds and Tourists. Migrants. Migration. Tourists and Tourism. Chapter Summary. 12. Global Environmental Flows. Differences among Nation-States. Collapse. The Leading Environmental Problems. Global Responses. Chapter Summary. 13. Negative Global Flows and Processes: Dangerous Imports, Diseases, Crime, Terrorism, War. Dangerous Imports. Borderless Diseases. Crime. Corruption. Terrorism. War. The Impact of Negative Global Flows on Individuals. Chapter Summary. 14. Global Inequalities I: Patterns of Inequality. Inequality. Rural-Urban. Chapter Summary. 15. Global Inequalities II: Global Majority-Minority Relations. Majority-Minority Relations in a Global Context. Social Definitions. Race and Ethnicity. Ethnicity. Race. Gender. Children. Sexual Minorities: Gays and Lesbians. Responding to and Resisting Minority Status: The Case of Women. Chapter Summary. 16. Dealing with, Resisting, and the Futures of, Globalization. Dealing with Globalization. Resisting Globalization. The Futures of Globalization. Chapter Summary. Appendix: Disciplinary Approaches to Globalization. Anthropology. Sociology. Political Science. Economics. Geography. Psychology. Literary Criticism (Postcolonial). Other Fields. Glossary. Index.

Globalization

In the United States, some populations suffer from far greater disparities in health than others. Those disparities are caused not only by fundamental differences in health status across segments of the population, but also because of inequities in factors that impact health status, so-called determinants of health. Only part of an individual's health status depends on his or her behavior and choice; community-wide problems like poverty, unemployment, poor education, inadequate housing, poor public transportation, interpersonal violence, and decaying neighborhoods also contribute to health inequities, as well as the historic and ongoing interplay of structures, policies, and norms that shape lives. When these factors are not optimal in a community, it does not mean they are intractable: such

inequities can be mitigated by social policies that can shape health in powerful ways. Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity seeks to delineate the causes of and the solutions to health inequities in the United States. This report focuses on what communities can do to promote health equity, what actions are needed by the many and varied stakeholders that are part of communities or support them, as well as the root causes and structural barriers that need to be overcome.

Communities in Action

"The paper presents a nontechnical summary of the current state of debate on the measurement and implications of global inequality (inequality between citizens of the world). It discusses the relationship between globalization and global inequality. And it shows why global inequality matters and proposes a scheme for global redistribution." --World Bank web site.

Global Income Inequality

World Inequality Report 2018 is the most authoritative and up-to-date account of global trends in inequality. Researched, compiled, and written by a team of the world's leading economists of inequality, it presents--with unrivaled clarity and depth--information and analysis that will be vital to policy makers and scholars everywhere. Inequality has taken center stage in public debate as the wealthiest people in most parts of the world have seen their share of the economy soar relative to that of others, many of whom, especially in the West, have experienced stagnation. The resulting political and social pressures have posed harsh new challenges for governments and created a pressing demand for reliable data. The World Inequality Lab at the Paris School of Economics and the University of California, Berkeley, has answered this call by coordinating research into the latest trends in the accumulation and distribution of income and wealth on every continent. This inaugural report analyzes the Lab's findings, which include data from major countries where information has traditionally been difficult to acquire, such as China, India, and Brazil. Among nations, inequality has been decreasing as traditionally poor countries' economies have caught up with the West. The report shows, however, that inequality has been steadily deepening within almost every nation, though national trajectories vary, suggesting the importance of institutional and policy frameworks in shaping inequality. World Inequality Report 2018 will be a key document for anyone concerned about one of the most imperative and contentious subjects in contemporary politics and economics.

World Inequality Report 2018

Winner of the Bruno Kreisky Prize, Karl Renner Institut A Financial Times Best Economics Book of the Year An Economist Best Book of the Year A Livemint Best Book of the Year One of the world's leading economists of inequality, Branko Milanovic presents a bold new account of the dynamics that drive inequality on a global scale. Drawing on vast data sets and cutting-edge research, he explains the benign and malign forces that make inequality rise and fall within and among nations. He also reveals who has been helped the most by globalization, who has been held back, and what policies might tilt the balance toward economic justice. "The data [Milanovic] provides offer a clearer picture of great economic puzzles, and his bold theorizing chips away at tired economic orthodoxies." —The Economist "Milanovic has written an outstanding book...Informative, wide-ranging, scholarly, imaginative and commendably brief. As you would expect from one of the world's leading experts on this topic, Milanovic has added significantly to important recent works by Thomas Piketty, Anthony Atkinson and François Bourguignon...Ever-rising inequality looks a highly unlikely combination with any genuine democracy. It is to the credit of Milanovic's book that it brings out these dangers so clearly, along with the important global successes of the past few decades. —Martin Wolf, Financial Times

Global Inequality

Demonstrates that finance is the driveshaft that links inequality to economic instability.

Inequality and Instability

Prosperity for All in the Global Economy -- World Class Skills : Final Report

Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills

A large percentage of workers and firms operate in the informal economy, outside the line of sight of governments in emerging market and developing economies. This may hold back the recovery in

these economies from the deep recessions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic--unless governments adopt a broad set of policies to address the challenges of widespread informality. This study is the first comprehensive analysis of the extent of informality and its implications for a durable economic recovery and for long-term development. It finds that pervasive informality is associated with significantly weaker economic outcomes--including lower government resources to combat recessions, lower per capita incomes, greater poverty, less financial development, and weaker investment and productivity.

The Long Shadow of Informality

This volume debates the complex nature of the relationships between globalization, social and economic transformations and growing inequalities. Employing a global, world-historical and comparative perspective, the 16 articles brought together in this volume deal with three central questions: Firstly, the question of the spatio-temporal evolution and variations of growing inequalities, secondly, the relative importance of globalization as compared to other factors explaining growing inequalities and, thirdly, institutional variations of inequality dynamics and globalization impacts. Christian Suter is Professor of Economic Sociology at the University of NeuchÂ?tel and President of the World Society Foundation, domiciled at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

Inequality Beyond Globalization

Globalization is one of the most politically charged issues of our time. This book aims to bridge the divide between its advocates and its critics, but, rather than trying to find middle ground, the author looks at globalization through the lens of poor people and poor countries, arguing for a different management of global changes that ensures everyone a share in its opportunities. His is a call for ethical globalization. An influential and globalizing civil society has a great opportunity to be a critical player - but this could be a brief window. Its advocacy largely pillories deficiencies in the system instead of promoting viable alternatives. The author seeks to change this by applying his experience from both sides of the ideological divide - working with NGOs, governments and the World Bank - to analyse the system's faults and suggest a fresh framework for transforming global relations and redressing injustices.

Worlds Apart

The book outlines a journey from enabling models of government and business to strategies for creating both financial and social inclusion and entrepreneurship as mechanisms for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Inclusive Growth

Like past editions, this ninth edition of *Social Inequality: Forms, Causes, and Consequences* is a user-friendly introduction to the study of social inequality. This book conveys the pervasiveness and extensiveness of social inequality in the United States within a comparative context, to show how inequality occurs, how it affects all of us, and what is being done about it. This edition benefits from a variety of changes that have significantly strengthened the text. The authors pay increased attention to disability, transgender issues, intersectionality, experiences of Muslims, Hispanic populations, and immigration. The 9th edition also includes content on the fall-out from the recession across various groups. The sections on global inequalities have been greatly updated, emphasizing comparative inequalities and the impact of the process of globalization on inequality internationally. The authors have also added material on several current social movements, including Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, and Marriage Equality.

Social Inequality

Economy/Society provides an introduction to the ways in which economic exchanges are embedded in social relationships. It offers insights into advertising, consumer behaviour, conflicts in the work place, social inequality and other issues.

Economy/Society

This book reviews the major ways in which social scientists are conceptualizing more integrated perspectives on society and nature, from the global to local levels. The chapters in this volume, by international experts from a variety of disciplines, explore the challenges, contradictions and

consequences of socioecological change, along with the uncertainties and governance dilemmas they create.

Routledge International Handbook of Social and Environmental Change

This volume reviews the state of the field of world-systems analysis. World-systems analysts study the structure of the relationships among people, organisations, and states and how those relationships change over time.

Routledge Handbook of World-Systems Analysis

Despite the fact that the globalization process tends to reinforce existing inequality structures and generate new areas of inequality on multiple levels, systematic analyses on this very important field remain scarce. Hence, this book approaches the complex question of inequality not only from different regional perspectives, covering Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and Northern America, but also from different disciplinary perspectives, namely cultural anthropology, economics, ethnology, geography, international relations, sociology, and political sciences. The contributions are subdivided into three essential fields of research: Part I analyzes the socio-economic dimension of global exclusion, highlighting in particular the impacts of internationalization and globalization processes on national social structures against the background of theoretical concepts of social inequality. Part II addresses the political dimension of global inequalities. Since the decline of the Soviet Union new regional powers like Brazil, China, India and South Africa have emerged, creating power shifts in international relations that are the primary focus of the second part. Lastly, Part III examines the structural and transnational dimension of inequality patterns, which can be concretized in the rise of globalized national elites and the emergence of multinational networks that transcend the geographical and imaginative borders of nation states.

Understanding the Dynamics of Global Inequality

Identifies the major weaknesses in the current United Nations system and proposes fundamental reforms to address each. This title is also available as Open Access.

Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century

"Draft chapters in this volume were discussed in an Expert Group Meeting on 13-14 October 2016."--Page xi.

The World Economy Through the Lens of the United Nations

This book brings together the latest research findings from some of the most respected medical and social scientists in the world, surveying four pathways to understanding the social determinants of health.

Social Inequality and Public Health

"Are mass violence and catastrophes the only forces that can seriously decrease economic inequality? To judge by thousands of years of history, the answer is yes. Tracing the global history of inequality from the Stone Age to today, Walter Scheidel shows that inequality never dies peacefully. Inequality declines when carnage and disaster strike and increases when peace and stability return. The Great Leveler is the first book to chart the crucial role of violent shocks in reducing inequality over the full sweep of human history around the world. Ever since humans began to farm, herd livestock, and pass on their assets to future generations, economic inequality has been a defining feature of civilization. Over thousands of years, only violent events have significantly lessened inequality. The "Four Horsemen" of leveling--mass-mobilization warfare, transformative revolutions, state collapse, and catastrophic plagues--have repeatedly destroyed the fortunes of the rich. Scheidel identifies and examines these processes, from the crises of the earliest civilizations to the cataclysmic world wars and communist revolutions of the twentieth century. Today, the violence that reduced inequality in the past seems to have diminished, and that is a good thing. But it casts serious doubt on the prospects for a more equal future. An essential contribution to the debate about inequality, The Great Leveler provides important new insights about why inequality is so persistent--and why it is unlikely to decline anytime soon."--

The Great Leveler

