

Jean-Yves Grenier

The Dynamics of Capitalism and Inequality

Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* shows that capitalism is a fundamentally unstable economic system. Without external parameters such as wars, it produces constantly increasing inequalities in wealth and income. The first part of this article explains this central feature, considering in particular the historical significance of the long period of the New Deal (1930–1980), marked by the Second World War and economic policies attempting to limit social disparities. In its second section, the article focuses on the economic reasons for these inequalities and the mechanisms of income distribution.

Peter H. LindertMaking the Most of *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*

Thomas Piketty's monumental *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has transported us to a higher understanding of the historical evolution of inequality. This essay attempts to inventory the different avenues of research, more or less promising, that scholars might usefully pursue when building on his work. The most important path to follow is the history of inequalities in income that Piketty and his team have flagged up so well, supported by the book's history of the great shocks of the twentieth century and the political responses that they elicited. Less promising is the book's emphasis on wealth, capital, and the rate of return. The best predictions of future inequality can be achieved by merging Piketty and his team's history of those who hold the top 10 percent of income with works dedicated to the history of inequality within the lower 90 percent. It is also necessary to integrate other scholarship that has demonstrated that the sort of democratic system Piketty calls for would have positive effects on growth.

Éric Monnet

Money and Capital

The Contributions of *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* to Monetary History and Theory

Like many other historians and economists before him, Thomas Piketty includes money in his definition of capital (wealth). This obliges him to distinguish between real and nominal assets, notably to understand the distributional effect of inflation on capital. This article draws comparisons between this approach and other theories of the difference between

money and capital, before going on to show, from a historical point of view, why the role and the share of money within total capital cannot be neglected. Potential substitution effects between monetary and non-monetary assets must to be taken into account in order to understand the historical dynamic of capital and the effects of its taxation.

Nicolas Delalande

Toward a Political History of Capital?

The interaction between economic analysis and political action is one of the major issues raised by *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* and by any work of political economy. However, the way this interaction works and changes over time is not always clear in Thomas Piketty's book. This critical review, informed by history and political science, aims to open up three areas of discussion. Are redistributive tax policies a mere accident, produced by the chaotic history of the twentieth century, and, if so, what might their future be? On what grounds could capitalism's tendency to create inequality be regulated in the absence of any alternative system? Finally, can deliberative democracy offer any solution, or has it already been profoundly weakened by the very economic processes that Piketty's brings to the fore in his book? A political history of capital seems more essential than ever.

Alexis Spire

Capital, Social Reproduction, and the Rise of Inequality

Thomas Piketty's book has the great merit of implementing a global analysis of inequality that compares countries and periods. However, he adopts a definition of social class that overlooks the importance of cultural capital. Furthermore, the role of social movements is relatively marginalized in his account, which also focuses on fiscal tools to the detriment of other forms of regulation. Nonetheless, this innovative and important book opens up new avenues of research in the field of political sociology.

Laurent Thévenot

You Said "Capital"?

Extending the Notion of Capital, Interrogating Inequalities and Dominant Powers

Capital in the Twenty-first Century is based on the author's choices concerning the definition of capital, the inequalities of its distribution, and the social state policies he recommends to address them. In line with Thomas Piketty's proposal to encourage a dialogue between economics and the other social sciences, this article sheds light on the implications of those choices. It traces the political genealogy of "human" and "intellectual" capital, and the subsequent development of other capital-variables used to measure different types of inequality and to evaluate the policies designed to cope with them. Differentiating the modes—which are not exclusively market-orientated—of investing in and valorizing these various types of capital, it clarifies the kind of power associated with each, its claim to legitimacy despite the inequalities it causes, and the domination it exercises. This calls into question the delimitation that Piketty has chosen for a basic set of capital-goods that are used in very different ways, along with his understanding and evaluation of them according to market valuation alone.

Giacomo Todeschini

Servitude and Work at the Dawn of the Early Modern Era
The Devaluation of Salaried Workers and the “Undeserving Poor”

Thomas Piketty’s analysis of the way that neoliberal economists use false meritocracy to justify growing economic inequality invites historians to reconsider the representation of workers in the economic thought and administrative politics of preindustrial Western Europe. This renewed focus on those termed *mercenarii* in theological, economic, and legal texts, namely salaried workers, shows that since the thirteenth century the literate elites of Christian Europe have interpreted manual labor as the sign of a competence that was useful but also socially and politically devalorizing. The ancient Roman conception of wages as *auctoramentum servitutis*, or evidence of servitude, reemerges at the end of Middle Ages in the guise of a complex theological, legal, and governmental discourse about the intellectual incompetence and necessary political marginality of salaried workers as manual laborers. At the dawn of the early modern era, the representation of salaried labor as a social condition corresponding to a state of servitude and lack of intellect characterizes both literary works and the economic rationality embodied by the first “scientific” economists.

Katia Béguin

From the Present to the Past
The Historical Dynamics of Wealth in Early Modern Europe

Historians generally account for the dynamics of asset accumulation and the concentration of wealth in early modern societies by invoking systems of inheritance, matrimonial strategies, political distribution, and market transfers of property. Thomas Piketty emphasizes a more significant factor: higher returns on inherited capital. This article considers the ways in which early modern history might make use of such a hypothesis.

Alessandro Stanziani

Scales of Inequality: Nation, Region, Empire

This article discusses the specificity of Western economies and, within this framework, of inequality as envisaged by Thomas Piketty. To this end, it considers the relevance of national, regional, trans-regional, and above all imperial scales of analysis, particularly in regard to the historical dynamics of development (the “Great Divergence”), the fiscal state, and welfare.

Nicolas Barreyre

Thomas Piketty in America

This essay proposes a reading of *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* from a perspective rooted in the nineteenth-century United States. It explores some of the ways that Piketty’s book and its American reception could lead to a reconceptualization of US history. In a feedback loop, this exploration in turn suggests elements that extend and qualify some of Piketty’s conclusions, especially regarding the role of politics in the processes responsible for the growth of inequality under modern capitalism.

Thomas Piketty

Toward a Political and Historical Economics
Reflections on Capital in the Twenty-First Century

This article attempts to clarify certain points raised in my book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. In particular, I try to lay the foundations for a multidimensional history of capital and power relations between social classes. I study the way different forms of ownership lead to specific structures of inequality and social and institutional compromises.

Virginie Barbier

History and Geography in the Classroom
Constructing Knowledge through Savoir-Faire

This article seeks to link the teaching of history and geography to issues affecting research in the two disciplines. It invites the reader to reflect on the relationship between the knowledge that a teacher passes on to his or her pupils and the acquisition of a research method as a savoir-faire or know-how, even as a way of being. After offering an insight into current teacher training, the author, a secondary-school teacher, uses concrete teaching situations to explain the necessity of making pupils active participants in their own learning process and helping them develop sound research methods.

Alexandre Berthon-Dumurgier

Historical Apprenticeship and the Historian's Craft
A Competency-Based Pathway

A skills-based approach encourages us to see learning as a journey between the simplest and the most elaborate level of competence, which can be developed over a whole lifetime. Teachers in a middle school in Vitry-sur-Seine (to the south of Paris) have developed a competency-based approach to history that focuses on the key techniques of professional historians, including developing hypotheses by analyzing sets of documents and writing historical narratives. The link between “academic history” and “school history” strengthens students’ learning.

Hayat El Kaaouachi

The Role of Historical Research in the Continuing Professional Education of Teachers in France

Academic research has a tremendous impact on the scientific and methodological quality of history teaching in secondary schools. Yet the bridges between higher and secondary education are not always sufficient to meet this challenge. To what extent can teachers’ continuing professional education make history teaching more consistent with the findings of historiographical research and debates?

Laurence De Cock

History in the Classroom
An Undisciplined Subject

This paper argues that a discipline taught in schools is more than a mere copy of scientific knowledge. It investigates the relationship between scholarly and pedagogic knowledge from the end of the nineteenth century, when the teaching of history was tasked with participating in the construction of a shared national culture. In fact, it is only by mobilizing tools from the social sciences that the complexity of history teaching can be understood. The repeated accusations directed at the teaching of history in schools therefore reflect a trite and hackneyed understanding of its nature and mission.

Christian Delacroix

A Pedagogical Turn in French Teacher Training
The Case of the History and Geography CAPES

The “scientific” and “educational” questions raised by the relationship between research and the teaching of history have returned to the spotlight with the current reform of teacher training in France. Undertaken as part of the “Refounding the School System” project initiated in 2012 by minister of education Vincent Peillon, this reform accords a central place to pedagogical approaches and “professionalization.” This article analyzes some of the issues at stake in this “pedagogical turn” for the training of history and geography teachers, particularly with regard to renewed questions about the social function of history and the recurrent challenges and reservations on the part of academic historians about binding the notions of “scientific” and “educational” together.

Bénédicte Girault

From Didactics to the Epistemology of History
A Shared Reflexivity

Behind the complex issue of the relationship between the professionalization of teacher training and the spaces where academic and disciplinary knowledge is produced lie questions about the very nature of historical research. This paper suggests that the reflexive practices of professional historians and of those who teach history can be a meeting ground for scientific, didactic, and pedagogical questions that concern secondary schools and universities alike. In terms of the training of future history teachers, this implies combining the acquisition of historical knowledge and a personal, hands-on experience of researching and writing history from the very beginning of the learning process.