



Special Issue on Global Inequality – Part I

EDITED BY ALBERT J. BERGESEN AND MICHELLE BATA

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Michelle Bata
Albert J. Bergesen



Global inequality has been little analyzed by sociologists despite their claim to be the scientific experts most in charge of the study of human inequalities and social stratification. Most undergraduate courses on social inequalities study race, class and gender without ever acknowledging that the greatest inequalities are between those individuals and households that live in developed versus less developed societies. The amount of international inequality has vastly outweighed within country inequalities since at least the 1870s when a wave of economic globalization under the *Pax Britannica* increased average wages in the core while leaving most of the periphery and the semiperiphery at subsistence levels. Increasing inequality was one of the most important consequences of nineteenth century globalization, and this fact is pregnant with importance for those who seek to understand what the consequences of twentieth century globalization may be. Resistance to global capitalism and attacks on symbols of power are likely to increase, just as they did in the decades following the great expansion of trade and investment in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Research into the causes of increasing inequalities is thus extremely important for social scientists, policy makers and global citizens who need to understand how the world-system works in order to change it.

There exists little doubt among most researchers that income inequality both within and between nations has increased since the mid-twentieth century.¹

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¹ See Firebaugh (1999) for an exception.