LSE IDEAS public lecture

Each Age Gets the Inequality it Needs: 20,000 years of hierarchy

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Professor Erik Berglof
Chair, LSE

Hashtag for Twitter users: #LSEMorris
Each age gets the inequality it needs: 20,000 years of hierarchy
Assiros, northern Greece, in the 1980s
Not Greek farmers

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A word from my sponsor: Princeton University Press, 2015
The plan

1. What is hierarchy?
2. Foragers, farmers, and fossil fuels
3. The right amount of inequality
4. The shape of inequality to come
That’s not fair!

Monkeys demand equal wages for equal work

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Tanzania: left, Hadza hunters; right, Nyamwezi farm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Foragers</th>
<th>Farmers</th>
<th>Fossil Fuelers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Inequality</td>
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Saints?
Shoshone, 1930s

Bullies?
Russians, 1890s

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Profile Books, 2013
Aboriginal Australian group (late nineteenth century)
The age of foragers: here, twentieth-century hunter-gatherers from Botswana
A bad combination: Louis XIV among the foragers
Affluent foragers: Kwakiutl (Kwakwaka’wakw) settlement and ceremony, British Columbia, c. 1900
An increasingly attractive option: forced labor
Really rich: Tutankhamun of Egypt (1341-1324 BC)
Another bad combination: !Kung San serfs
Affluent agrarian, maritime, commercial city-states: left, fifth-century BC Athens; below, Venice in 1720
Really big fossil-fuel cities: Tokyo, around 35 million people in 2016
Energy capture per capita

kilocalories per person per day

Foraging • Farming • Fossil fuels

source of energy

High
Low
- Mid point

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How to run a fossil-fuel society: left, the Soviet way, c. 1950; below, the American way, 1963
The mighty fallen: Dominque Strauss-Kahn, May 2011

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7 Facts About Bill Gates

BILL GATES EARS $250 EVERY SECOND. THAT'S ABOUT $20 MILLION A DAY AND $7.8 BILLION A YEAR.

IF HE DROPS A THOUSAND DOLLARS, HE WON'T EVEN BOTHER TO PICK IT UP BECAUSE IN THE 4 SECONDS IT TAKES TO PICK IT UP, HE WOULD HAVE ALREADY EARNED IT BACK.

U.S.'S NATIONAL DEBT IS ABOUT $5.62 TRILLION. IF BILL GATES WANTS TO PAY THE DEBT BY HIMSELF, HE WILL FINISH IT IN LESS THAN 10 YEARS.

IF BILL GATES WERE A COUNTRY, HE WILL BE THE 37TH RICHEST COUNTRY ON EARTH.

HE CAN DONATE $15 TO EVERYONE ON EARTH AND STILL BE LEFT WITH $5 MILLION FOR HIS POCKET MONEY.

MICHAEL JORDON IS THE HIGHEST PAID ATHLETE IN THE U.S. IF HE DOESN'T DRINK AND EAT, AND KEEP HIS ANNUAL INCOME AT $30 MILLION, HE'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR 277 YEARS TO BECOME AS RICH AS BILL GATES IS TODAY.

IF YOU CHANGE ALL OF BILL GATES MONEY TO $1 BILLS, YOU CAN MAKE A ROAD FROM EARTH TO MOON 14 TIMES BACK AND FORTH.
A fossil-fueller lost in the farming world
The plan

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3. The right amount of inequality
4. The shape of inequality to come
the right amount of inequality

![Graph showing the Gini coefficient of income inequality for different energy sources: Foraging, Farming, and Fossil fuels. The graph indicates the right amount of inequality.](image-url)
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The rich are different ...
2.7 pounds of magic: the modern human brain
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