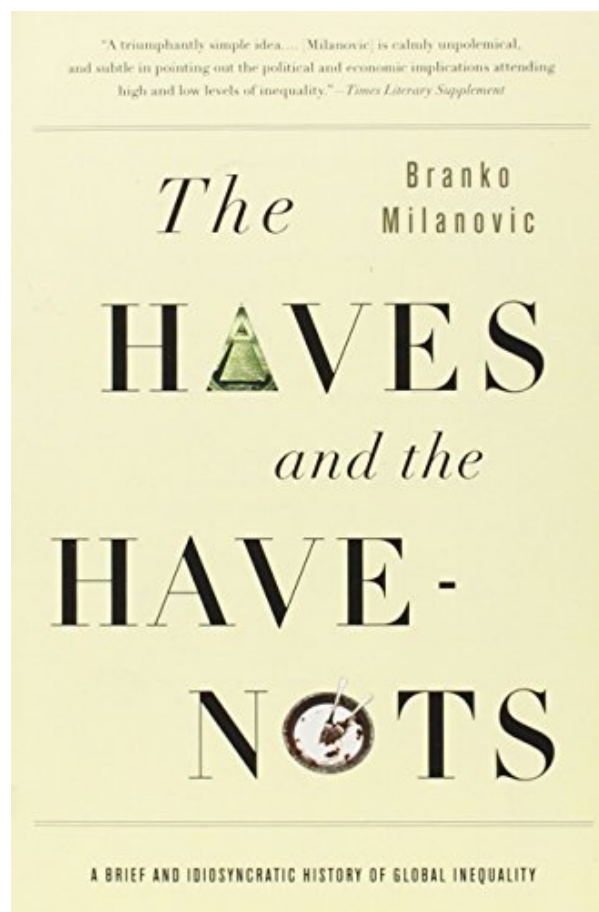


**THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS: A BRIEF
AND IDIOSYNCRATIC HISTORY OF
GLOBAL INEQUALITY BY BRANKO
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"A triumphantly simple idea... (Milanovic) is calmly unpolemical, and subtle in pointing out the political and economic implications attending high and low levels of inequality."—*Times Literary Supplement*

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About the Author

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THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS: A BRIEF AND IDIOSYNCRATIC HISTORY OF GLOBAL INEQUALITY BY BRANKO MILANOVIC PDF

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 economics 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.

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Engaging and clear

By Ecologist

I'm not an economist, but I am curious about the alarming increase in inequality. I cannot vouch for its accuracy or whether it reflects accepted or well supported ideas by economists or other social scientists. That said, it was incredibly clear, engaging, and in rich in detail and ideas. A great read and very thought provoking. It's logic and theses are compelling and the data it provides here and there are quite absorbing. It considers the history, competing ideas, causes and consequences.

I'm not sold on the vignette approach - though it did help in navigating complex ideas. I was also disappointed that the role of natural capital and environmental sustainability did not figure in discussions of poverty and inequality. I also found the end, or the final vignette about the first and third worlds, not really a great close to an engaging read.

I totally recommend this book, however. Easily the best on the topic I have read. Beautifully written, and I feel I have learned more about this important topic than I have with any other book or media.

43 of 49 people found the following review helpful.

Dispelling Myths

By Amazon Customer

Professor Milanovic begins this book by explaining, "The objective of the stories around which this book is organized is to show, in an unusual and entertaining way, how inequality of income and wealth is present in many facets of our daily lives, in the stories we read or the discussions we have around our kitchen tables or in our schools or offices, and how inequality appears when we look at certain well-known phenomena from a different angle...The book is organized around three types of inequalities. In the first part, I deal with inequality among individuals within a single community - typically a nation...In the second part, I deal with inequality in income among countries or nations - which is also intuitively close to most of us because it is the sort of thing we notice when we travel, or when we watch the international news...In the third part, I move to the topic whose relevance and importance are of a much more recent vintage: global inequality, or inequality among all citizens of the world."

Professor Milanovic accomplishes this task by introducing the reader to several tools that professional economists use to describe and quantify inequality; "Kuznets' Hypothesis," the "Gini coefficient," and "Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) dollars," to name a few. The book is, on the whole, very engaging and easy to grasp. Each of the three chapters begins with an essay which is followed by several vignettes, or short stories, that give concrete examples of ideas outlined in the essay. There are more than a few spots in this

book where Milanovic does a great job of dispelling some widely held myths. For example, "A lesson from the collapse of the communist federations is that an important part of the reason for the breakup lies in the inability of communist authorities - despite their successful policy to contain and reduce interpersonal inequality - to reduce huge, historically inherited income differences among the constituent members." Which bears a remarkable resemblance to today's China; "The single most serious threat to Chinese unity is increasing inequality."

In closing, I really enjoyed this book, both from a historical and an economic angle. It may deserve five stars, but I gave it only four because I disagreed with Professor Milanovic's stance on immigration; I tend to agree with the view that John Rawls advocates ("Increasing obstacles to migration raised by rich countries would be, one is led to believe, viewed as fully justified by Rawls."), whereas Milanovic states that, "Whether it is under the pressure of domestic labor or out of fear of cultural heterogeneity, the rich world has begun a process of walling itself in, creating de facto gated communities at the world level." I garnered my view having read *The Central Liberal Truth: How Politics Can Change a Culture and Save It from Itself* and *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. Regardless however, I believe there will probably be no major change from this perspective, because as Professor Milanovic rightly points out, "Inequality studies are not particularly appreciated by the rich."

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

A great introduction to inequality

By G.X. Larson

This short book (about 220 pages) by World Bank economist Branko Milanovic is a great introduction to global economic inequality. The book is made up of three parts: inequality inside of nations, inequality among nations, and inequality among the people of the world. Each of the three sections is introduced with an "essay" that discusses the main ideas and introduces relevant economic tools (such as the Kuznets hypothesis and the Gini coefficient). After each essay Milanovic presents shorter (about six or seven pages each) "vignettes" to help convey the ideas discussed in the preceding essay. For example, one vignette used to convey inequality inside of nations discusses characters' incomes in Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice". Another vignette discusses inequality in the Roman Empire. The vignettes are not all trivial bits of information, though. In fact, most of the book is a serious exposition of inequality; this book is no mere "Freakonomics" for inequality. Some more serious vignettes are concerned with globalization, economic mobility, and redistribution. In short, this book contains a wealth of information.

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