

SPECIFIC CALL FOR PAPERS TO THE WORKSHOP: « INEQUALITIES AND CAPITALISM »

1. GENERAL ORGANIZATION

As detailed by the general presentation of the Conference (*check on our website [Recherche & Régulation](#)*), the organizers want to support collective research, on new or critical economic challenges, which in turn question the researchers' practices and methods. With this prospect in mind, the scientific committee has selected this workshop topic—and around thirty other ones.

This specific call will help you to submit a paper to the organizers of this specific workshop (*otherwise you should check on our website to submit to another workshop or as a varia*).

Paper proposals will be examined by the organizers of the workshop and by the scientific committee according to the schedule and requirements below:

SCHEDULE AND FORMAL REQUIREMENTS.

ÉCHÉANCE	DATE LIMITE
Paper proposals <i>Approximately 500 words + maximum 10 bibliographic references (languages: either French or English)</i>	November 1, 2014. <i>Response from the scientific committee: December 15, 2014.</i>
Final versions of complete papers (for both varia and special workshops) <i>Approximately 8,000 words except for "state of the art" papers that are limited to 2,500 words + maximum 15 bibliographic references</i>	April 15, 2015
Conference : June 10-12, 2015 (Paris)	

FORMATS. The topics addressed by contributions to the Research and Regulation 2015 Conference are not limited, but submitted papers must clearly set out how they are positioned: within epistemological or theoretical issues; conceptual or empirical; whether they present results, a survey or a programmatic approach.

The committee will also examine proposals that sum up state-of-the-art knowledge in specific areas, whether methodological or field-based.¹

In addition, selected presentations will be proposed for publication in a variety of formats, such as peer-reviewed journals, books or proceedings; specifics will be provided by the organizers prior to the Conference.

2. WORKSHOP CONVENER

- Michael REICH (University of California at Berkeley, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment)

3. SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Thomas Piketty's essay "*Capital for the Twenty-First Century*" has raised some important issues, which have been at the heart of the social structure of accumulation (SSA) theory. Meanwhile, the closeness of the SSA theory and of the French regulation theory has also already been underlined. Hence the conference gives the opportunity of a scientific debate between them about the 'essence' of capitalism and its future.

Provisionally, we prospect applications of the following researchers on this special session:

¹ Be aware that such state-of-the-art papers must meet some formal requirements (see section "Event Organization" below).

“CAPITAL FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY”

THOMAS PIKETTY (EHESS PARIS, PARIS SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS).

“INEQUALITIES AND CAPITALISM: THE SSA ANALYSIS”

MICHAEL REICH (UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY).

“INEQUALITIES AND QUALITATIVE GROWTH”

FRED BLOCK (UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT DAVIS).

Piketty argues that growing income and wealth inequality have been key ingredients in the Global Financial Crisis and the difficulty of restoring growth since the crisis. However, a more redistributive tax regime is not sufficient to restore global growth since the dominant mode of accumulation has been exhausted. The paper will outline a series of structural reforms that are necessary to unleash a new period of global economic growth marked by a shift from quantitative growth to qualitative growth. Qualitative growth emphasizes enhancing human capacities by expanding the output of non-monetized utilities—environmental sustainability, better education and health, greater personal and economic security—that are often miscounted or ignored in GDP data.

“CAPITAL AND LABOR IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: SSA THEORY AND THE SURPLUS APPROACH”

CIAN MACMAHON AND TERENCE MCDONOUGH (SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND AT GALWAY).

Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the 21st Century* documents a trend of increasing inequality in the longue duree of capitalism. This conclusion has been widely welcomed by progressives, social democrats and socialists as confirming both their political analyses and a popular unease with contemporary trends. Piketty’s proposal for a progressive global tax on capital has received a more controversial welcome, not least by Piketty himself who sees his own proposal as a utopian idea. Can a structural critique of Piketty’s approach to capitalist history also serve to address doubts about the feasibility of Piketty’s favoured solution to rising inequality while also opening the door to more radical proposals?

Social structure of accumulation (SSA) theory draws insight from the Marxian, Post-Keynesian, and Institutionalist traditions. In particular it shares with Marxism an understanding of capital as not a ‘thing’ but rather a relationship – specifically the relationship between capital and labour. In this sense the dynamics of inequality over time depend on the nature of this relationship and more particularly class conflict over the production and distribution of the social surplus product. Such an approach places capital and labour as the primary, antagonistic agents of distributional conflict and change.

It is capital’s capacity to ensure this surplus is produced by the working class and subsequently appropriated by the capitalist class which underpins the distribution of income in capitalist society. To the extent that this surplus is reinvested in expanded production, accumulation of capital takes place. The SSA theory argues that this accumulation process is necessarily conditioned by social institutions at each of its steps. The dynamic interaction of the accumulation process and the social structures lead to an alternating pattern of crisis and recovery based on the inauguration of new SSAs. Rising inequality is both conditioned by this process and contributes to it, promoting capital accumulation or undermining it depending on the character of the accompanying SSA.

In this way the level and direction of inequality will vary historically from SSA to SSA. The long run tendencies to crisis within each SSA also pose the necessity of periodic more or less radical institutional change. The currently favoured establishment response to the crisis of global neoliberal capitalism – the intensification of global neoliberalism – is unlikely to succeed. New responses are demanded. In this context, Piketty’s proposal may turn out to be less utopian and poses a more general strategic question: how can the political left push for the implementation of

progressive policies such that ‘the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable’, to appropriate Milton Friedman’s parlance?

“EXPLAINING RISING INEQUALITY: CAPITALISM IN GENERAL OR SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF ACCUMULATION?”

DAVID M. KOTZ (UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST).

The publication of Thomas Piketty’s *Capital* for the Twenty-First Century has raised the profile of the debate about rising economic inequality in recent times. Piketty proposes a formula, $r > g$, where r is the rate of return on capital and g the growth rate of output, to account for rising inequality. He notes that a condition of $r > g$ is not a result of market imperfections but is a fundamental tendency within a capitalist system. As Piketty’s data show, this tendency prevails in some historical periods but not in all, and inequality has decreased or remained roughly stable by various measures over some long periods.

The social structure of accumulation theory (or approach), which emerged from work by David Gordon, Michael Reich, Richard Edwards, Thomas Weisskopf, and Samuel Bowles in the late 1970s and early 1980s, offers a way to explain both periods of rising inequality and periods of stable or decreasing inequality in capitalist economies. This paper argues that social structures of accumulation (SSAs) come in two broad varieties, liberal and regulated. A liberal type of SSA, such as has predominated since around 1980, increases inequality, while a regulated SSA, such as prevailed in the post-World War II decades, gives rise to a period of relatively low (for capitalism) and stable inequality. The dynamics of inequality in capitalist systems cannot be fully explained at the level of capitalism in general, or by supplementing such an account with reference to state policies, but require attention to the specific institutional form of capitalism.

TO SUBMIT A PAPER

1. PAPER PROPOSAL

To be considered, a paper proposal should be presented in a word-processing document that respects the following requirements:

First page: Paper title, professional status and contacts of author (if co-authors, use **boldface** for the correspondent)

Second page: Abstract in French and English (maximum 10 lines each, with 5 key words)

Third and fourth page:

— A summary presenting a detailed outline that addresses the following questions: What is the starting point? What is the key idea or argument? What is going to be demonstrated? Which scientific questioning and heuristic framework (and the theoretical or conceptual elements on which they are based)? What methodology is used? (when appropriate: what is the state of the art of which scientific issue?)

— A bibliography indicating the key references that will guide the author (**10 maximum**)

Proposals will be evaluated by the scientific committee according to the “double blind” procedure.

2. FULL PAPER

The definitive text must be received according to the calendar above in a digital word-processing file (Arial 10pt, single line spacing; margins 2.5 cm).

First page: Paper title, professional status and contacts of author (if co-authors, use **boldface** for the correspondent).

Second page: Abstract in French and English (maximum 10 lines each, with 5 key words)

Text: maximum 8,000 words.

Note that each paper will be evaluated for possible publication after the colloquium, in a peer-reviewed journal or edited volume.

CONTACT US

Proposals and full papers will be sent to the workshop conveners (michaelreich.prof@gmail.com) with a copy to the organizers of the RR2015 conference (rr2015@upmf-grenoble.fr).