

Texas A&M International University  
A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business  
Center for the Study of Western Hemispheric Trade



## INTERNATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE 2017-2018 KEYNOTE SPEAKER SERIES

# “What is Government Doing about Inequality since the 1970s?”



PRESENTED BY:

**Peter H. Lindert, Ph.D.**

Distinguished Professor of Economics  
University of California, Davis

**Wednesday, April 11, 2018**

TAMIU Student Center Ballroom (SC 203)

**Reception 7 p.m. | Lecture 7:30 p.m.**

Open to the public. Free of charge.

For additional information,  
call 956.326.2820, email [cswht@tamiu.edu](mailto:cswht@tamiu.edu),  
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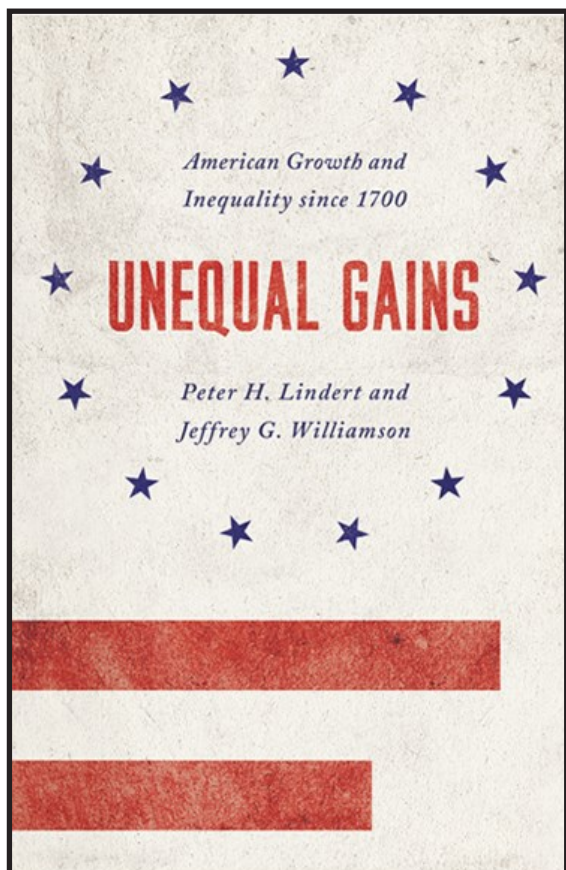
### “What is Government Doing about Inequality since the 1970s?”

Income inequality has been rising since the 1970s, especially in the United States. Are conservative changes in government policy contributing to this inequality, or have policy changes brought relief from rising inequality? New data suggest that although the U.S. government, like Britain and others, has been helping the richest slightly by cutting top tax rates, they have continued to help the poor and near-poor with better safety nets. Public education has also acted as a growing long-run equalizer of incomes. The net effect of policies that show up in the government budget has been slightly pro-poor, checking part of the rise of inequality.

If the changes in government spending and taxes did not make Americans more unequal, what did? Global market forces, mostly. Part of the answer has been that government policies toward trade and immigration have stood aside, letting market globalization foster growth while widening the income gaps within this country. Ironically, the pro-growth refusal to shelter workers against the globalization of trade and labor markets started as a Republican policy preference, but Republicans have now become the more protectionist party at the expense of world income growth.

#### References

- Hatton, Timothy J. 2014. “The economics of international migration: A short history of the debate.” *Labour Economics* 30 (October): 3-50.  
Ortega, Francesco and Giovanni Peri. 2014. “Openness and income: The roles of trade and migration.” *Journal of International Economics* 92, 2: 231-251.  
Peri, Giovanni. 2015. *The Economics of International Migration*. New Jersey: World Scientific.



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Economic historian Peter H. Lindert is the Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Lindert is also a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research.

His works on the welfare state and inequality include his prize-winning book, *Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth since the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press 2004), and the book *Unequal Gains: American Growth and Inequality since 1700* (Princeton University Press 2016, co-authored with Jeffrey Williamson).

Dr. Lindert earned an A.B. from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and a Ph.D. from Cornell University.

