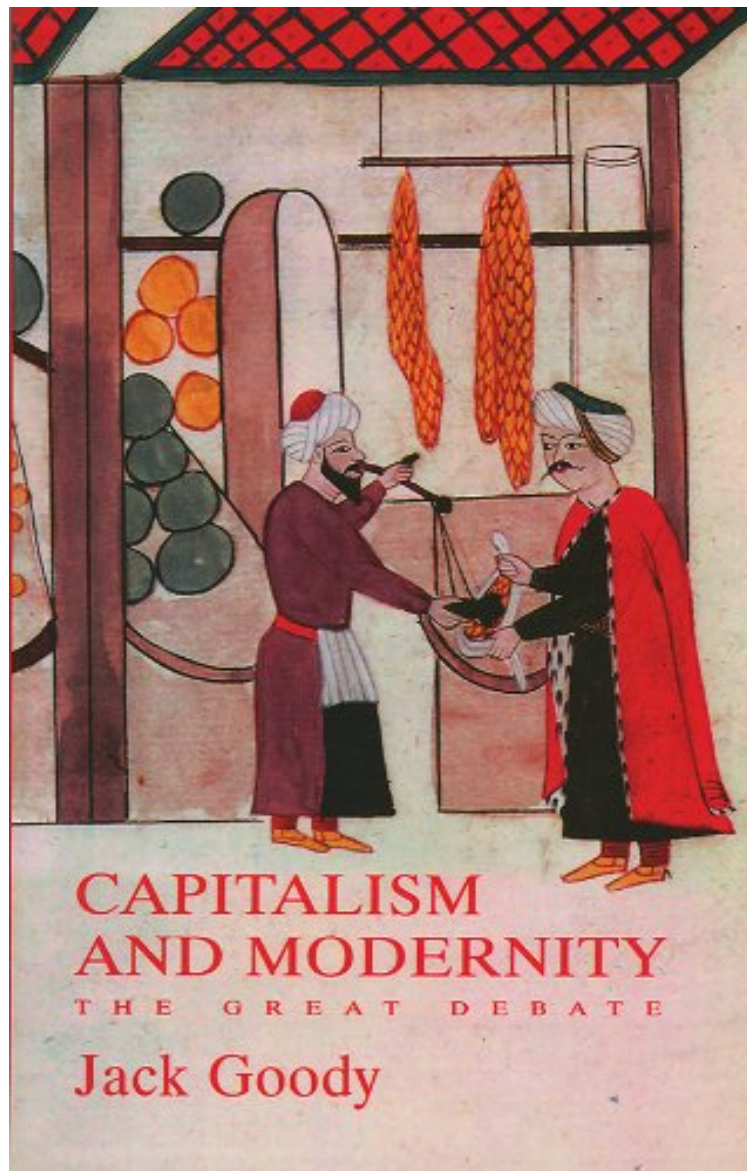


(Online library) Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate

## Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate

Jack Goody

*\*Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1900087 in eBooks 2013-04-22 2013-04-22 File Name: B00CIRJ19E | File size: 20.Mb

**Jack Goody : Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "Viewing modern European history from a convergent perspective"By Hubert SheaProfessor Goody refutes the European advantage hypothesis on the basis of abundant secondary evidence and archive research to prove that Eurasian countries were not less inferior to Europe in terms of social and economic progress before the eighteenth century industrial revolution.This is an authoritative reading of

European social and economic history, encompassing all key for-and-against European advantage hypothesis propounded by well-known scholars from different research disciplinary domains such as Wallerstein, Bray, Braduel, Weber, Marx, Gunder, Pomeranz, Landes, and Blaut to delve deeply into the timing of initial occurrence of modernity, industrialization, and capitalism in modern Europe and the reasons for the delay in Eurasian and non-European regions. According to Professor Goody, the European advantage hypothesis that Protestant ethics, individualism, rationality, secularization, urbanization, nuclear family, and modern science and technology help to distinguish Europe from Eurasian region is virtually "chimerical" and lacks proper theoretical and empirical justification. Contrarily speaking, Islam and China had attained their economic and technological superiority since the medieval era so that scholars should set aside their Eurocentric prejudices and view the modern world history from a more convergent perspective. Putting it in a nutshell, European advantage since the eighteenth century Industrial Revolution was due mainly to its naval and weapon capabilities, acquisition of bullions in America, and colonial expansion which allowed them to enter the world economy as active as they did. This book has significant theoretical value to the study of modern European history. The convergent perspective presented by Professor Goody has key temporal and spatial implications. First, the binary view of West and East and ethnocentric approach (Eurocentrism and Eurasiacentrism) to the study of history can distort and ignore homogeneity and heterogeneity of socio-economic development paths in diverse regions. Second, the traditional-modern dichotomy notion that modern opposes traditional values is not well-founded. Traditional societies can be as dynamic as the modern world. Key ideologies, beliefs, technologies, social structure, and business practices that are popular and relevant to the modern world were also prevalent in the ancient and medieval eras. The classical periodization of antiquity, feudalism, and capitalism with revolutionary change or leap introduced in each new period cannot view human history in an objective and comprehensive manner. This book is a must read for historians and readers who are interested in economic rise of the West and modern European history.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Excellent review of the anti-Eurocentric debate

By M. A. Krul

Sir Jack Goody's book "Capitalism and Modernity: The Great Debate" does what its title promises: it describes a debate, nothing more, nothing less. This work, written in 2004, analyzes the historical debate about the origins of modernity and/or capitalism as well as the related question of the 'superiority' of the West in the economic and military fields, with commentary from the author. He discusses and refutes (once again) the main Eurocentric authors, such as David Landes and Lynn White, and afterwards discusses in turn the other side of the coin, with such luminaries as Wallerstein, A.G. Frank, James Blaut and Pomeranz. Goody is always highly polite and considerate, even to the most egregious of incompetents (Landes), and this does not necessarily improve the effect his commentary has, for example when compared with the polemics of Blaut. Therefore, as yet another refutation of the Eurocentric perspective it isn't much. But what is new and interesting is that in turn he also discusses the main anti-Eurocentric authors, both in some depth looking at the coherence of their explanations as well as comparing them with each other. In so doing, he points out some of the flaws in otherwise excellent historians of this trend. With Blaut, he points out that the latter pays essentially no attention to Africa or the Americas and their own development path, and with Frank, he notes that he essentially reduces the entirety of economic history to mere trade flows and in particular bullion, which is in terms of economic theory a reversal from Marx to Adam Smith or even the mercantilists. Nonetheless, as becomes clear in the last chapter, Goody himself shares still some of Frank's flaws in a tendency to 'flatten out' the whole of global economic history. He thereby plays down the degree to which the slow progressive quantitative development of certain trends, such as urbanization and manufacturing, turn into qualitative revolutionary leaps and changes in identifiable modes of production. Just like Frank, he also does not understand the point of a mode of production, although he is less hostile to it: Goody emphasizes that wage labour has existed from the Bronze Age on and that manufacturing investors existed in the Middle Ages, but all this is irrelevant - what matters is not what class or caste existed at any given point, but how the whole of a society was reproduced. It is precisely the importance of reproduction, rather than just distribution and trade, to understanding economic history that was one of Marx's great breakthroughs. Goody's book is an excellent review of the state of the debate in any case, and as always with his works very readable and moderate in tone, allowing the reader to form his or her own opinion on the matter. Most of his commentary is well-considered and well-informed, and in a fairly short work (160 pages of actual text) he manages to provide a lot of information and useful evaluation. Therefore, I can definitely recommend this book to people interested in economic history and/or historiography.

15 of 19 people found the following review helpful. No answer is provided in this boring work

By Ceacute;sar Gonzaacute;lez Rouco

In my opinion, the problem with this book is that spends a good deal of its length explaining what it was not (i.e., that it is erroneous to think that the West was more advanced than the rest), and does not offer any alternative of its own, so eventually one wonders, "Well, if Europe was initially backwards, but by the end of the XVIII/beginning of the XIX century it became the first in the row, then, what on earth happened, why it moved ahead?" No answer at all is provided by the author. Apart from this, I have read another Goody's book, and dropped a third one, and I have realized that: i) he treats very interesting subjects; and ii) he is boring. Taking that into account, instead of this book, on the vexing question of why Western countries have dominated the world during the last few centuries [the very way the question is posed is controversial!], I would suggest reading the following books: 1) "Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second

Millennium" by Ronald Findlay and Kevin H. O'Rourke; 2) "The Great Divergence", by Kenneth Pomeranz; 3 - 4): "The world economy. A millennial perspective" (2001) plus "The world economy: Historical Statistics" (2003) by Angus Maddison (a combined edition of these two volumes appeared on December 2007); 5) The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation by John M. Hobson, and 6) it also seems interesting the brief book to be published this June "Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History 1500-1850" by Jack A. Goldstone. And for those looking for a broad framework to understand the past, I would add the following works, whose scope is amazingly global: 1. Agrarian cultures: "Pre-industrial societies" by Patricia Crone; 2. Government: "The History of Government" by S.E. Finer; 3. Ideas: "Ideas, a History from Fire to Freud", by Peter Watson; 4. Religion: "The Phenomenon of Religion: A Thematic Approach" by Moojan Momen; and 5. War: "War in Human Civilization" by Azar Gat.

This important new book investigates how the West attained its current position of economic and social advantage. In an incisive historical analysis, Jack Goody examines when and why Europe (and Anglo-America) started to outstrip all other continents in socio-economic growth. Drawing on non-Western examples of economic and technical progress, Goody challenges assumptions about long-term European supremacy of a 'cultural' kind, as was a feature of many theories current in social science. He argues that the divergence came with the Industrial Revolution and that the earlier bourgeois revolution of the sixteenth century was but one among many Eurasia-wide expressions of developing mercantile and manufacturing activity. This original book casts new light on the history of capitalism, industrialization and modernity, and will be essential reading for all those interested in the great debate about the economic rise of the West.

'One of the world's best-known anthropologists asks what modernity is [and] how it originated. [Capitalism and Modernity] updates readers very well on the state of the discussion.' Kenneth Pomeranz, *Journal of Social History*

From the Back Cover This important new book investigates how the West attained its current position of economic and social advantage. In an incisive historical analysis, Jack Goody examines when and why Europe (and Anglo-America) started to outstrip all other continents in socio-economic growth. Drawing on non-Western examples of economic and technical progress, Goody challenges assumptions about long-term European supremacy of a 'cultural' kind, as was a feature of many theories current in social science. He argues that the divergence came with the Industrial Revolution and that the earlier bourgeois revolution of the sixteenth century was but one among many Eurasia-wide expressions of developing mercantile and manufacturing activity. This original book casts new light on the history of capitalism, industrialization and modernity, and will be essential reading for all those interested in the great debate about the economic rise of the West.

About the Author Jack Goody is Emeritus William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology at St. Johns College, Cambridge