

Sven Beckert

Author of “Capitalism” & “Empire of Cotton: A Global History”, Laird Bell Professor of History at Harvard University



Biography

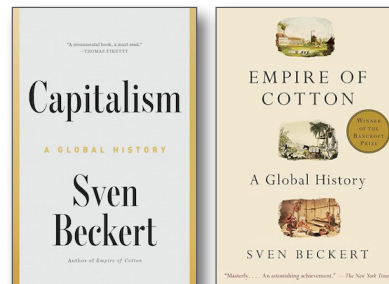
Sven Beckert is one of the world’s leading historians of capitalism and globalization, offering audiences a sweeping and deeply insightful perspective on how economic systems shape societies, power, and inequality. He is the Laird Bell Professor of History at Harvard University and co-director of the Program on the Study of Capitalism, where his research and teaching focus on the global history of capitalism and the United States in the nineteenth century.

Beckert is the author of the acclaimed *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, a groundbreaking work that traces how a single commodity reshaped the modern world through imperial expansion, industrialization, and global trade networks. The book won the prestigious Bancroft Prize, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and was named one of *The New York Times*’ Ten Best Books of the Year. His most recent book “*Capitalism: A Global History*”, which offers a sweeping account of capitalism’s evolution and its profound impact on societies around the world.

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His work reveals how the forces of capitalism—from slavery and colonialism to finance and innovation—created the interconnected global economy we live in today. A compelling and wide-ranging speaker, Beckert brings historical depth to today’s most urgent conversations about globalization, inequality, supply chains, and the future of capitalism. He challenges conventional narratives about free markets, illustrating instead how power, politics, and human choices have always been central to economic systems.

His insights help organizations, policymakers, and leaders better understand the roots of today’s economic challenges—and the forces that will shape the future. Beckert’s writing and commentary have appeared in leading publications, and his scholarship has earned fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, and other major institutions.

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