

Summaries

NICO WILTERDINK

Globalization and the Global Wealth Gap: Trends in world income inequality, 1950-98

The article describes and tries to explain main trends in world income inequality after 1950 on the basis of data on per capita GNP corrected for price level differences as well as data on the income distribution within countries. International income inequality appears to have increased in the period 1950-98, though not without fluctuations. The increase of inequality is stronger and more continuous when China is left out, and virtually disappears when Sub-Saharan Africa is left out. This is indicative of the impact of differential regional developments on world inequality. When the world is divided into eight regions, about 90% of international income inequality is explained by the differences between these regions. When within-country income inequality is taken into consideration, it appears that this contributes about 30% to global income inequality conceived as the sum of between-country (international) and within-country inequality.

The last section deals with a question raised by the 'anti-globalist' movement: does globalization lead to growing poverty in the world and a widening gap between rich and poor countries? On the basis of comparisons between various regions and countries it is concluded that globalization or, more particularly, the import of foreign capital as such can have both positive and negative effects on the economic development of poor nations and the distribution of world income. The strength and stability of the national state organization is a crucial factor on which the effects of globalization depend.

ROBERT VAN KRIEKEN

Reshaping civilization: Liberalism between assimilation and cultural genocide

This paper argues for a more nuanced understanding of different meanings of the concept of 'civilization' through an examination of the relationships between processes of civilization and settler-colonialism under liberal political regimes. The particular example used is that of the history of the Australian 'stolen generations' – those Aboriginal children removed from their families in

the course of the twentieth century – and its current political and normative re-assessment, which provides an important stimulus towards critical reflections on the nature of liberal politics and practices in a settler-colonial context. The paper focuses on the linkages between the historical development of liberalism and changes in what is understood and experienced as ‘civilization’, beginning with the contrast between the reliance on the concept of ‘civilization’ both to remove Aboriginal children families up until the 1970s, and to support the subsequent critique of removal policies and practices. I observe that the concept of ‘civilization’ has been used by social scientists in at least three different ways, and argue for the need to keep in view the relationship between civilization and colonialism in order to support a more reflexive understanding of civilization which can encompass all three meanings and pay due heed to the paradoxical possibilities of violence and barbarism coexisting alongside and within processes of civilization.

PAUL KAPTEYN

‘The wto as example’:

On the states’ co-operative and global patterns of dominance and reciprocity

The wto – World Trade Organization – is one of the many international organizations forming together *‘the states’ co-operative*. What are its conditions and what is its dominant direction measured along *‘the three steps of co-operation’*, negative co-operation, positive co-operation and higher authority formation?

The wto is, as the GATT was before, about world market formation. That means primarily negative co-operation – not doing what previously was done – of lowering or even abandoning tariffs and other trade barriers, – although quite moderate or still non-existing for agricultural goods and textiles brought to the US and the EU. They protect their markets while dumping the same products elsewhere.

The wto is also about positive co-operation, meant to protect the market against cartels and monopolies, the consumers against unhealthy products and intellectual property against illegal imitations. These controls however are more limited than the liberalization itself. Positive co-operation is more difficult to agree upon than negative co-operation, because it directly harms the ‘sacred cow’ of national state autonomy. Nevertheless positive co-operation is also progressing and has led to the formation of the higher authority of a trade court, the so-called panel as a supra-national agency to settle disputes and to permit retaliation where wto-rules have been disobeyed.

The relative success of the WTO raises the question of why ever more states are co-operating and solving together the dilemma of collective action. The most important condition was the *dominance* of the USA, militarily and economically, during the first four decades after 1945. However, its economic dominance decreased and *reciprocity* increased as the basis of the world market, especially after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, with the formation of the WTO itself in 1994 and the recent entrance of China and the application for membership by Russia.

The progress of the WTO is not undisputed. The US and the EU are challenging common agreements and obstructing ongoing negotiations. At the same time Non Governmental Organizations are doing the same, with an opposing interest. They attack economic liberalization on behalf of the poor and less developed, just as the so-called neo-liberals propagate this form of negative co-operation as a common good for all. Both viewpoints are one-sided. The question is not either large scale liberalization or small-scale protection, but a judicious mix of positive and negative co-operation that fosters trade and controls its harmful effects for the mankind as a whole and its environment. The actual development of the WTO seems to go in that direction.