GLOBAL ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

Lecturer: Dr Thomas Fetzer

Course objectives

Does globalization reduce income and wealth inequalities? Or does it make the rich richer and the poor still poorer? In this course, we will examine long-term trends in global economic inequalities between and within countries, and we will engage with the most important controversies about the measurement and interpretation of inequality. In the first part of the course, major theoretical approaches to global inequality will be introduced and discussed against the backdrop of macro-level aggregate data. Subsequently, we 'zoom in' to consider the inequality effects of trade, cross-border capital movements and international migration. The course also highlights major recent debates about how reforms of the global economic system could help to address inequality problems.

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1) discuss and critically assess the most important theoretical approaches to issues of international distributive justice
2) identify key trends of inequality development between and within countries
3) engage with major debates about the relationship between globalization and economic inequalities

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and active participation in class discussions (20 % of final grade).
2. Seminar presentation (15 % of final grade)
3. Summary and critique of readings (25 % of final grade)
4. Final essay (40% of final grade).
Course Outline and Readings

Seminar 1: Introduction - why does global economic inequality matter?

PART I: Conceptual and methodological issues

Seminar 2: The Concept of (In)Equality


Seminar 3: The Concept of (In)Equality (cont.)


Seminar 4: From domestic to global inequality concepts


Seminar 5: Problems of economic inequality measurement

Seminar 6: Aggregate trends of global economic inequality


PART II: Globalization and economic inequality

Seminar 7: Globalization: A brief introduction


Seminar 8: Globalization and economic inequality: Contrasting approaches


Seminar 9: Within-country-inequality: Many causes beyond globalization


Seminar 10: Globalization and within-country inequality (I): Trade, migration and income inequality in the West

Seminar 11: Globalization and within-country inequality (II): Income inequality in non-Western countries

OECD, Divided We Stand: Why inequality keeps rising, 2011, pp. 47-82.

Seminar 12: Globalization and within-country inequality (III): Capital mobility and taxation


Seminar 13: Globalization and within-country inequality (IV): Capital mobility and the welfare state


Seminar 14: Globalization and within-country inequality (V): The impact of globalization on capital-labour relations


Seminar 15: Globalization and between-country inequality (I): Market access and protection

Seminar 16: Globalization and between-country inequality (II): Intellectual Property Rights


Seminar 17: Globalization and between-country inequality (III): International trade and world poverty


Seminar 18: Globalization and between-country inequality (IV): Foreign direct investment


Seminar 19: Globalization and between-country inequality (V): International Migration

PART III: Debates about reform and alternatives

Seminar 20: Debates on reforms of the global trade system


Seminar 21: Debates on reforms of global tax regulation

John Christensen and Richard Murphy, Tax us if you can, chapter 5.

Seminar 22: Fair trade, microfinance, corporate social responsibility: Towards alternative bottom-up regulation?


Seminar 23: Addressing inequality through migration liberalization?


Seminar 24: Conclusions