

Abstracts

Andrew Jackson: Why we don't have to choose between social justice and economic growth: The myth of the equity/efficiency trade-off

Mainstream economic theory holds that there is a fundamental trade-off between equity – a reasonably equal distribution of income and wealth – and efficiency – or economic growth. The basic idea is that societies that care too much about promoting equality will pay a price in terms of slower growth. Today, this theory is combined with the common argument that any advanced industrialized country that hopes to copy the recent economic success of the United States must buy into the high inequality U.S. social model.

The purpose of this paper is to critique this basic argument on both empirical and theoretical grounds, and to show that there are positive linkages between relative equality and good economic performance.

The economic and social performance of seven countries which are broadly representative of three different socio-economic models – „liberal“, „social market“ and „social-democratic“ – are compared. The central conclusion is that, in the 1990s, there was no clear association between inequality and economic growth, and that two low-inequality countries – the Netherlands and Denmark – did very well in both economic and social terms. At a minimum, this indicates that it is possible to achieve high growth and low unemployment without sacrificing the goal of social equity. Moreover, the paper shows that growing differences in income distribution among these seven countries are primarily caused by a shift to greater inequality in the so-called „liberal“ countries; there has been no universal trend towards greater inequality.

The paper surveys recent studies which show that equality producing institutions and policies do not necessarily carry a significant price in terms of poorer economic performance. Specifically, it points out that widespread collective bargaining and labour market regulation can maintain low levels of earnings inequality without blocking job growth or needed business investment, and that the relatively high taxes needed to finance „generous“ redistributive transfers and accessible public services do not necessarily have negative impacts on growth. Going one step further, the experience of some countries suggests that reform and renewal of these institutions and policies –rather than their erosion – can have positive impacts on economic performance.

A final section of the paper critiques the general argument that „globalization“ forces modern societies to abandon the goal of equality if they are to effectively compete in the international market. The paper points out that while changes to social and economic policies intended to promote equity may well be necessary, and while it is not easy to balance the goals of equity and efficiency, it is still possible for modern societies to „grow together“ rather than „grow apart.“ This general conclusion is highly relevant to the debates currently underway about the degree to which Canada must become more like the U.S. in social terms, if we are to match their success in economic terms.

Georg Vobruba: Limits of legitimation. Preconditions for conflict solution by the majority rule in the European Union

Expanding the domain of the majority rule is widely seen as desirable for the European Union. But the functioning of the majority rule depends on preconditions, which are seldom taken into account. The basic condition is that overrules minorities accept majority decisions instead of leaving a voting entirety. The particular problem

of applying the majority rule within the European Union consist in the fact that overruled minorities at the European level are majorities at the nation-state level. By distinguishing between three dimensions of conflicts: content, time and space, the article analyses under what conditions one can expect that minorities accept majorities' decisions, hence conflicts can be solved by the majority rule at the European level.

László Józsa: The network of social provisions in the Byzantine Empire. A historical study.

The history, function and organisation of social provisions are discussed in detail in this study. From the dedication of Constantinople in 330 AD to the Turkish conquest in 1453, the cities of the Byzantine Empire supported organized philanthropic institutions. By the sixth century Byzantine society considered these institutions one of the essential amenities of city life. The medical treatment both in hospitals and polyclinics as well as the funeral ceremony was free of charge for all East Roman Empire citizens. The author describes the following philanthropic institutions of the Byzantine Empire:

- 1) *Brephotropheion* was a foundling house and it was designed to care for the infants and very young children.
- 2) *Orphanotropheion* referred to an institution which sheltered and fed orphans.
- 3) *Gerokomeion* meant old-age home.
- 4) *Ptochotropheion* or *ptócheion*: poor-house.
- 5) *Onomasticon*: guest rooms for christian migrants.
- 6) *Xenon*: usually applied to a medical center, while it could still have its older meaning of hospice.
- 7) *Katagogia*: house for the poor and pilgrims.
- 8) *Diakonai*: Monophysites organized diakonai to help meet the basic needs of the poor and the sick.

András Lichtneckert: Füred, spa of peasants and the poor

Recent research results have made the documentation of the operation of the Balatonfüred acid-water spa possible as far back as 350 years. We have had access to the number and composition of the spa's guests since the 1830's. Social-historical analyses based on the processing of printed guest registers have so far stressed that in the reform era Balatonfüred was the thermal bath of the rich and the well-off. However, an extensive inventory of the source material allows us to draw the conclusion that before 1848, the thermal spa was attended and its services used by peasants and poor people in numbers similar to those of members of the upper classes: of special importance was cupping to cure inflammations. The presence of common people at the bath can be followed and verified on the basis of the institutions, language use, mineral water consumption, structure of the baths, the services and prices, the number and composition of the guests and the people cupped. Numerical figures reflect an ever-decreasing presence of the poor at the spa between 1836 and 1852.

István Budai: Approaches to the development of social work education III. Curriculum and system-approach

This is the final part of three closely interrelated studies that investigate the basic questions of social work education – what, why, how and in which framework can we teach social work. The analysis is based partly on theoretical research in the related scientific literature, and partly on the achievements of professional debates

in different Hungarian and international – mostly European – forums. The first study examined some issues of the professional knowledge and competence-based education and the second one considered the methods, learning-strategies, and tools that can help students in their future social work activities (Approaches to the development of social work education I. and II. Budai 2006, 2007).

Based on Global Standards and British literature the present study tries to give a short outline about the advantages and possibilities of curriculum- and system-approach educational development, and about curriculum as educational framework. It also describes some important characteristics of permanent curriculum development. Since the three studies are in close connection, the understanding of this study needs the reader's acquaintance with the earlier parts.