

Abstracts

Steffen Ganghof

Conditional Convergence

Ideas, Institutions and Locational Competition in the
Tax Policy of EU- and OECD-Countries

ZIB, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 7-40.

Reform trends in the taxation of corporate and personal incomes figure prominently in the literature on globalization. The most obvious trend is the strong decline of top marginal tax rates after the mid-1980s. The article analyzes convergence patterns for these tax rates and evaluates different explanations. For both types of tax rates, there are patterns of conditional convergence. Corporate tax rates have become positively associated with country size, revealing the importance of tax competition. In contrast, top personal tax rates are associated with total tax burdens, pointing towards remaining national degrees of freedom. The analysis shows that political decision-makers face stricter structural constraints than has been acknowledged in the literature. The causal role of ideas is less important than widely believed. The importance of the institutional division of power varies with the strength of material constraints: it is negligible for corporate and substantial for personal income tax rates.

Reimut Zohlnhöfer

Economic Globalization and National Policy Adaptations

Theoretical Considerations

ZIB, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 41-75.

The article introduces a theoretical model that helps to explain the reactions of Western European governments to the challenges of economic globalization. Since reforms to adjust to external challenges need to be adopted by governments and parliaments, the analysis models the preferences of these actors (most often political parties). In the following section, the article puts forward hypotheses on the process of economic policy adaptation and its results. It is concluded that far-reaching reforms to adapt national political economies to globalization occur only in case of significant deterioration of economic performance, coinciding with a previous failure to adjust to economic globalization which threatens to jeopardize the electoral or programmatic performance of the political actors.

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Solveig Richter

Peace through Democratic Means?

Democratization as Peace Strategy in Theory and Practice

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In the Western world and its international organisations, democratization is seen as a key instrument for peace-building. However, no theoretical model for analyzing the role and function of international organizations in democratization processes has been developed so far. Therefore, the scientific community can contribute little to the much-debated question whether an externally initiated democratization process is conducive to peace and democracy and how it should look like in the ideal case. The article develops an analytical framework of »democratization as peace strategy«. Basic elements of a possible »virtuous circle« are: the enforcement of democratic norms at the level of the political system, the creation of a sufficient level of transparency and publicity to facilitate the perception of an upcoming democracy by other states, and the inclusion into the collective identity of already existing democracies. In order to probe the plausibility of the model, the framework is applied to South-Eastern Europe.

Andreas Behnke

9/11 and the Limits of the Political

ZIB, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 117-140.

The starting point for this article is the conviction that the events of 9/11 have once more raised the issue of the relationship between different cultural entities in the international system. In particular, 9/11 has cast into question liberal commitments to universalist norms that are supposed to serve as the basis for such relations. A deconstructivist analysis of the liberal responses to these challenges demonstrates their inherent contradictions and inconsistencies. The article will focus in particular on the constitutive strategies of exclusion, through which liberal theorists attempt to establish the limits of the political, of toleration, and of discourse. A critical discussion of the political consequences of these strategies is followed by a brief sketch of an alternative ethos for our engagement with cultural and political antagonists in international politics.

Gerhard Kümmel

The Privatization of Security

Private Military and Security Companies in International Relations

ZIB, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 141-169.

In recent years, the world has witnessed a mushrooming of private military and security companies. The conflict in Iraq – there are indications that employees of such firms have been involved in the torture of prisoners – illustrates both the current relevance of the topic as well as the problematic relationship between private corporations and public security. The article provides a definition of private military and security companies, develops a typology of the various types of corporations, and investigates why this kind of industry has experienced such a boom in recent years. It discusses advantages and disadvantages of the deployment of private military and security companies and examines possible instruments that allow for a better control of the actions of private military and security companies.

Ingo Juchler

Thoughts on Political Didactics for Teaching

International Relations at Schools and Universities

ZIB, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 171-192.

The article discusses which topics of International Relations students training to become teachers should deal with at universities and what competences they ought to acquire. It investigates possible elements of a »binding canon« from the perspective of cognitive psychology in order to determine the specific subjects to be studied. However, university teaching has to take into account already existing teaching programs and syllabi in the field, too: there are different didactical categories that may be used as heuristic means in order to achieve a thorough understanding of the subject studied or taught. In this respect, the synoptic case study-method is a particularly appropriate means to teach International Relations at schools and universities.