

Summaries

Stefan Schmalz: Changes in the world economy: Emerging nations and the decline of the IMF and WTO. A sea change is taking place: the rise of China, India and other emerging nations is restructuring the world economy and international relations. This article presents a general overview of the current debates surrounding these changes. Using the theoretical approaches of Susan Strange and of World Systems analysis, it is argued that the rise of the semi-periphery, in the areas of global finance and production, is having an impact on the shape of economic global governance. The WTO and the IMF are experiencing a profound crisis, as new forms of South-South cooperation, like the IBSA-Dialogue Forum and alternative regional governance institutions, such as the ALBA, are emerging. In light of this, it is concluded that a new wave of protectionism could come to affect the world economy.

Joachim Betz: Is Asia Gaining in Global Gravity? China and India as Aspiring Great Powers. According to common wisdom, the economic rise of Asia will bring about a colossal shift in the global distribution of wealth and of power, with the East being on the receiving end of both. In Asia, this is naturally seen as favourable, while some Western countries are concerned – especially the United States. The governments and think tanks of the apprehensive countries argue either for containment or for better integration of the Asian giants into the system of global governance. This article argues that the uninterrupted economic growth of India and China cannot be taken for granted, as long reform agendas still have to be tackled. Furthermore, the rise of these nations will not automatically spur military conflicts between the established powers or produce international security risks in general, as simplistic realist perspectives suggest. Rather, challenges resulting from the ascent of the Asian giants will be more economic in nature, as the development trajectories of China and India are capital and energy intensive, and therefore, only to a limited extent, economically, socially and ecologically sustainable.

Chris K.C. Chan: Emerging Patterns of Workers' Protest in South China. With its 'unlimited' supply of low cost and unorganized peasant workers, China has become a global manufacturing centre. The potential ability of Chinese workers to change this situation has significant meaning for global labour politics. Through ethnographic case studies, this paper examines the extent to which working class power in Southern China has managed to raise in recent years. The author contests the dominant current in labour studies, which declares 'the death of the working class' and privileges non-class identities, and instead argues that the expansion of global production into China has intensified class struggles in the workplace and beyond -even though workers' class formation has been dislocated by the state's labour regulation strategy. It is argued that without class-based organisations the

emergence of a labour movement is unlikely; nonetheless, the unstable workplace relations and labour market present a challenge to both state and management and are leading to the steady improvement of general working conditions.

Dik Roth & Jeroen Warner: Virtual Water: part of the solution or part of the problem? ,Virtual water‘, or water needed for crop production, is now being mainstreamed within the world of water policy. Relying on virtual water in the form of food imports is increasingly being recommended as good policy for water-scarce areas, therefore the topic of virtual water is tightly entwined in global discussions regarding water scarcity, ecological sustainability, food security and consumption. Accordingly, the concept of ,virtual water‘ is presently creating much noise in the water and food policy world. We argue that as the virtual water debate is also a ,real water‘, food and agricultural policy debate, with the potential to have substantial political effects. For instance, decisions regarding food strategies and resource allocation, which are played out in national political economies, benefit some while harm others. Therefore, policy choices surrounding virtual water are not politically neutral. ,Real water‘ interventions are, likewise, inspired by economic as well as political considerations, such as control of the countryside, geopolitical strategies and food sovereignty (independence from international political conditionalities and market uncertainties). To illustrate these ideas, we explore the case studies of Egypt, which switched to food imports in the early 1970s and where a long-standing taboo on debating virtual water is now being relaxed, as well as the State of Punjab in India, where a debate on the merits and demerits of a virtual water strategy is now emerging.