

Technological Innovation, Global Justice and Politics of Development

Theo Papaioannou (The Open University)

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Abstract

The importance of innovation in human development is undeniable. Since the 1780s, successive scientific and technological revolutions have introduced new products and services with tremendous impact on well-being and general welfare. Yet innovation has not been available to all individuals and their societies. There are still countries in the developing world which lack proper access to fundamental innovations such as medicines, electricity, ICTs and so on. Unequal generation and diffusion of innovation constitutes a major problem of global justice. However, neither innovation theory nor the theory of global justice provides solutions. On the one hand, innovation theory has so far refused to engage with questions of fairness and justice in the generation and diffusion of new technologies. On the other hand, emerging approaches to global justice have been almost indifferent to the prominence of new technologies in the fight against poverty and inequality. The aim of this paper is to bridge the gulf between the literatures of technological innovation and global justice. It will be argued that technological innovation can satisfy minimum requirements of global justice only through successful public action and campaigning against unjust innovation diffusion. This implies that politics of development should support redistributive systems and global social movements against current IPR regimes, providing alternative incentives for successful generation and application of new knowledge.