Miriam Rehm¹ and Christa Schlager²

Distributions of wealth and power

This contribution presents a literature survey regarding the distribution of wealth in the context of financial and economic crises, both internationally and historically. Studies show that, while the immediate redistribution effect of crises can be in favor of the labor share in output due to plummeting capital gains, the rebound is often so strong that the medium-term distribution shifts in favor of capital. We present recent data on the concentration of income for Austria, and wealth for the U.S., since the onset of the financial and economic crisis. Finally, we discuss the implications of a high concentration of wealth for the democratic process and the distribution of power, and thus the distribution of the costs of crises.

¹ Arbeiterkammer Wien und The New School for Social Research, New York

² Arbeiterkammer Wien und Redaktion Kurswechsel