

The subject

Achtergrond - 2 april 2009

Is there a future for the Rhineland model of capitalism in Europe?

Background

In light of the ever advancing globalization of money, labour and culture, the question we are trying to answer is; how much moral can the market endure? There are currently various serious challenges to the existence of moral in the marketplace: A middle class that sees its job security under threat now masses of energized Chinese and Indians present themselves on the labour market. An economic elite that finds itself increasingly at odds with Anglo-American investors. A state that is rapidly losing its grip on the wheeling and dealing of multinationals. A financial crisis that has dramatically spilled over to the real economy and offers nothing but uncertainty for the future. And finally, an electorate that demands its political leaders to effectively combat the global recession.

These developments compel us to rethink the continental European answer to the troubling state of the relationship between markets and moral. Can we reinvigorate the Dutch and German Rhineland economic tradition, in order for it to serve as the basis for a renewed model of European capitalism?

Through a series of confrontations between German and Dutch scientists and businessmen, we will scrutinize the durability of a European solution to the challenges at hand. Do the independent experiences of Germany and the Netherlands with market forces that have run wild, provide in lessons for both countries? Although the Netherlands is known to have the most Atlantic economy of continental Europe, it is Germany that finds its current political debate concerned with how much to give way to Atlantic capitalism, and what that means for the integrity of the social market economy that has worked miracles in post-war Germany. Will scientists and top business executives see a future in a renewed version of the Rhineland model of capitalism, which will provide for a sustainable European social market model?

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