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Competing Concepts of Inequality in the Globalization Debate

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Differences in the value judgments made in measuring inequality underlie the conflicting factual claims often heard about how much poor people have shared in the economic gains from globalization.

Opponents in the debate differ in: (i) whether they weight people or countries equally in assessing the extent of inequality; (ii) the weight they give to vertical inequalities versus horizontal inequalities and (iii) the extent to which they care about relative inequality versus absolute inequality. The value judgments on these issues made by both sides need greater scrutiny if the globalization debate is to move forward.

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