

## Why international trade is positive – and why call centres are a shining example

Written by David Daly

Thursday, 26 January 2017 00:00

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Two news stories caught my attention last week. The first was Donald Trump's horrific inaugural address. I forced myself to listen to it all.

One thing stood out for me: the promise "to protect our borders from the ravages of other countries...destroying our jobs" and "to bring back our jobs". Apart from the absolute hypocrisy of it – much of his own wealth has depended on foreign supplies and labour – there is little evidence that such protectionism will work. Remember George W. Bush's tariffs on imported steel, which resulted in reduced domestic steel production, increased cost to purchasers, and increased unemployment in related industries?

### **The Moral Argument**

On another level, though, there is a strong moral argument against protectionism. As a one-time student of the economics of developing countries, I believe that, despite its shortcomings, international trade helps spread wealth to poorer nations, and is a force for good for the human race as a whole.

Some people see it as a negative - 'globalisation' - and while it is far from perfect, it's here to stay. Despite Trump's efforts, it will continue to grow. We are all part of it. Chances are the

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device you are reading this on was made abroad, as were the clothes you're wearing, the music system you're listening to, and numerous other things around your house and office. I'm sure even Trump doesn't write his poisonous tweets on an American-made phone!

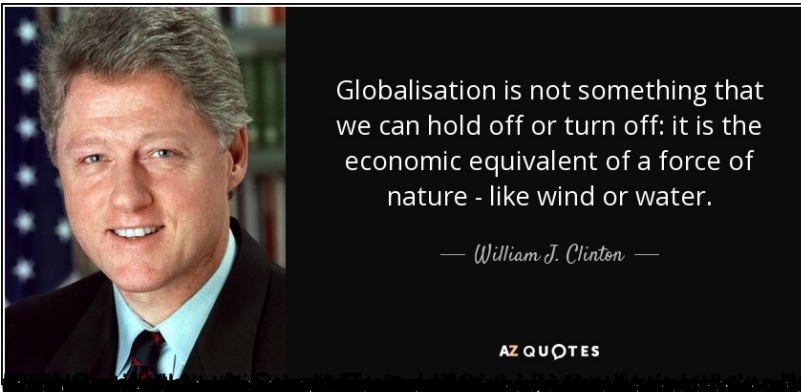


It may take a few generations to shake out, and for all of its negative effects to lessen. We are all aware of poor practices, and (happily) increasingly intolerant of products which are produced in sweatshops or using child labour. I do agree there is a long way to go, but we are headed in the right direction.

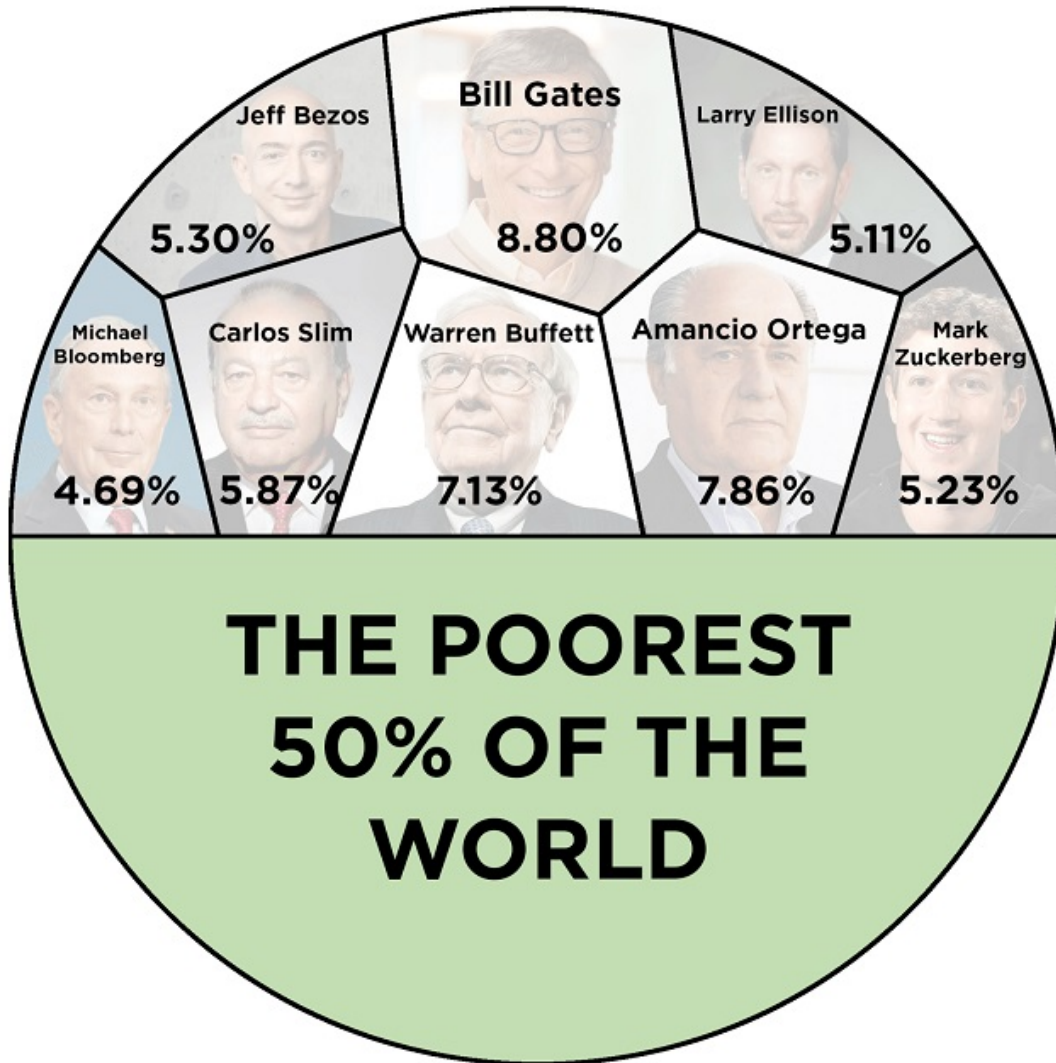
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## THE WORLD'S WEALTH INEQUALITY



Sources:  
<https://www.oxfam.org/>  
<https://howmuch.net/articles/the-worlds-wealth-inequality>

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