

17.588f13 Week 8 “Political Institutions and Economic Growth”

Questions for Class Discussion

What are the main explanations for economic growth, and where do institutional explanations fit in?

By this argument, should democracy be good or bad at promoting economic growth?

What is “embedded autonomy”? Why is it advantageous for growth, good governance, etc.? How might we measure it?

Assess the evidence that Evans provides to support the contention that embedded autonomy contributes to economic development. What is the nature of this evidence? Do you find it persuasive? If not, what would constitute compelling evidence?

What does de Soto mean by “dead capital”? According to him, why does “capitalism” succeed in producing economic growth under some circumstances and not others?

Evans and de Soto disagree profoundly on the most effective role for the state in promoting economic development, especially in poorer countries. If you agreed with de Soto’s analysis, what specific policy measures would you recommend? What if you agree with Evans? Which of these recommendations are feasible?

Do different types of societies or economies require different types of institutions to encourage economic growth?

Take one specific institution thought to contribute to economic growth (e.g., reliable, non-corrupt, and inexpensive commercial dispute-resolution mechanisms). When is such an institution likely to emerge?

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