

An empirical investigation into the process of early institutional development in ex-colonies

Abstract

This paper examines the proposals regarding historic institutional development as presented in the 2001 paper “*The Colonial origins of Comparative Development*”, co-authored by Acemoglu, Robinson and Johnson (AJR). I find that several of the relationships proposed by AJR hold in an expanded and updated dataset, and are robust to various empirical checks. However, I also find that some key elements of the colonization process have been overlooked in the existing literature. Particularly, I note the role of Britain as a colonizer, as well the effects that timing had on institutional outcomes. I also argue that certain other factors that are difficult to operationalize should not be abandoned from the analysis.