

Explaining Success and Failure in Development

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Abstract

Why do some developing countries experience spectacular growth and catch up, while others continue to lag behind? Prof Szirmai criticises monocausal explanations of growth and development focusing on single key factors such as culture, geography, natural resources, capital accumulation or institutional quality. Delving into the substantial empirical evidence that has been garnered so far, he will argue that breakthroughs and successes in development emerge from the interaction of diverse and complementary proximate and ultimate sources of growth, assisted by good timing and the growth momentum generated by earlier successes. Faced with this complex reality Prof. Szirmai will examine whether it is still possible to come up with systematic explanations of relative success and failure in socio-economic development, and to what extent we can assess future trends. Special attention will be paid to the ability of developing countries to tap into global technology flows. Developing countries that are able to absorb and utilise international technology can achieve very rapid growth and catch up. The lecture will span a broad landscape – comparing the experiences of the so-called Asian Tigers with those of sub Saharan African countries, and assessing progress in China and India against that of leading Latin American economies.

Venue: Maastricht University, Minderbroedersberg 4-6

Time: 16:30 - 18:00