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Research Announcement

Autocratic rule in ethnically-diverse societies

J. Atsu Amegashie
University of Guelph

Abstract

An autocrat who is politically insecure may not invest in income-enhancing goods like education, roads, the rule of law, etc. The novelty of this paper is to argue that ethnic diversity and discrimination exacerbate an autocrat's fear of the negative effect of high income or income-enhancing investments like public education on his political survival. I show that in such ethnically-diverse societies, kleptocrats may be better off with a bigger share of a smaller national income than they are with a smaller share of a bigger national income. I discuss applications and limitations of my results.

Completed draft available on request from:

J. Atsu Amegashie
University of Guelph
jamegash@uoguelph.ca