

Economic Progress in Democratizing Countries

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Ten Propositions

#1

In Western countries, economic progress has been made under political systems with strong presidencies (executive branch) like the USA as well as those with strong parliaments (legislative branch) like the U.K.

#2

The rapid economic progress across East Asia since 1960 has been made under non-democratic/authoritarian systems, supported by Western aid agencies.

#3

Western donors since 2000 have given priority to political development over economic development, in Asia and beyond.

#4

Indonesia's parliament (DPR) is the biggest obstacle to economic progress in the country, due in some measure to aid from Western donor agencies.

#5

Myanmar is following Indonesia's post-1998 path, and
is being pushed in this direction
by Western aid agencies.

#6

It is very difficult to build effective democratic political institutions in a patronage culture. The cultural changes required to get good governance from democratic political systems cannot be achieved in less than one generation.

#7

The only culturally democratic countries in Asia are
Australia and New Zealand.

#8

Rule of law is part of democratic culture but it is not easy to transplant into a patronage culture. Minimally satisfactory rule of law requires judicial institutions that take more than a generation to build.

#9

In transition countries with patronage cultures, it is smarter to improve traditional conflict/dispute resolution systems than to build new systems based on Western models.

#10

Mobile telephones are now shaping political outcomes in some countries in transition to more democratic rule.