Finally, Clark considers the great divergence among today's economies. Because he has argued that good institutions were not the key to generating the knowledge that caused the initial breakthrough in growth, he maintains that the lag in growth in much of the world differed fundamentally from the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution was about how human society generated knowledge at a high enough rate to escape Malthusian equilibrium. Today, knowledge, capital, and management are available in a globalized world and need not be created. So why does divergence in incomes and real wages characterize today's world? Drawing on his earlier work (much of it with Susan Wolcott) on the history of the Indian cotton industry, Clark argues that 'that these differences in labor productivity must stem from differences in the quality of labor in production across societies, differences that stem largely from the local social environment' (p. 352). That is to say that Indians did not have the preferences for work and accumulation that 'survival of the richest' generated in Europe.

Overall, then, the book develops a consistent argument to explain development and underdevelopment that rests on two key elements, neither of which is established convincingly. First, Clark's astonishingly casual rejection of 'institutions' as keys to growth is unconvincing. Second, his proposition that children of England's rich had a differential survival advantage, and this transformed attitudes to risk and work in a way that led to the industrial revolution, is suggestive at best. It is not clear that the late medieval rich had the attitudes he postulates; the intergenerational transfer of these attitudes is not explored; and north-western Europe's difference from the rest of the world is at best weakly established. Overall, his rejection of institutional views is facile; his arguments for Darwinian transfer unconvincing.

University of Oxford KNICK HARLEY