

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910823054003321
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Titolo	Institutions v. geography : sub-national evidence from the United States // prepared by Eric V. Clifton and Alma Romero-Barrutieta
Pubbl/distr/stampa	[Washington, D.C.], : International Monetary Fund, c2006
ISBN	1-4623-9117-6 1-4527-5619-8 1-283-51903-8 9786613831484 1-4519-8613-0
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (26 p.)
Collana	IMF working paper ; ; WP/06/169
Altri autori (Persone)	Romero-BarrutietaAlma
Soggetti	Economic development Economic geography
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	"July 2006".
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references.
Nota di contenuto	""Contents""; ""I. INTRODUCTION""; ""II. INSTITUTIONS AND GEOGRAPHY""; ""III. DATA""; ""IV. EVIDENCE""; ""V. CONCLUSIONS""; ""References""
Sommario/riassunto	Empirical studies of the impact of geography and institutions on growth and development at the international level have become common place, but the high degree of abstraction at that level has led to calls for subnational studies. This paper examines these issues for a region of the United States, Appalachia, where the specific factors at play are identified and measured thus obviating the need for instrumental variable techniques. The evidence suggests that initial conditions, including both geography and institutions, are very important for economic development, having significant effects lasting hundreds of years.