Econ 110A: Lecture 6

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UCSD, Summer Session II

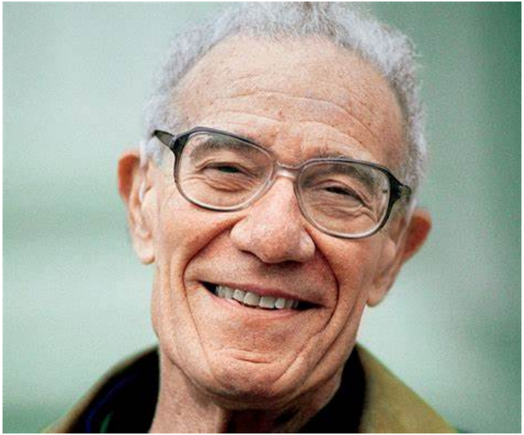
Growth without growth?

So far we talked about growth without actually talking about growth...

We tried to explain income levels across differences at a given moment, not growth rates, which only indirectly speaks about growth.

An introduction to Growth Dynamics

Robert (Bob) Solow
1924-



Nobel Prize in Economics, 1987

An introduction to Growth Dynamics

Questions we asked:

- Why some countries are so much richer than others?

- Capital matters but only partially. TFP plays a much bigger role.

- Why do some countries grow faster than others?

- Can the answer to this question help understand the role of TFP?

Two Pictures from 1960

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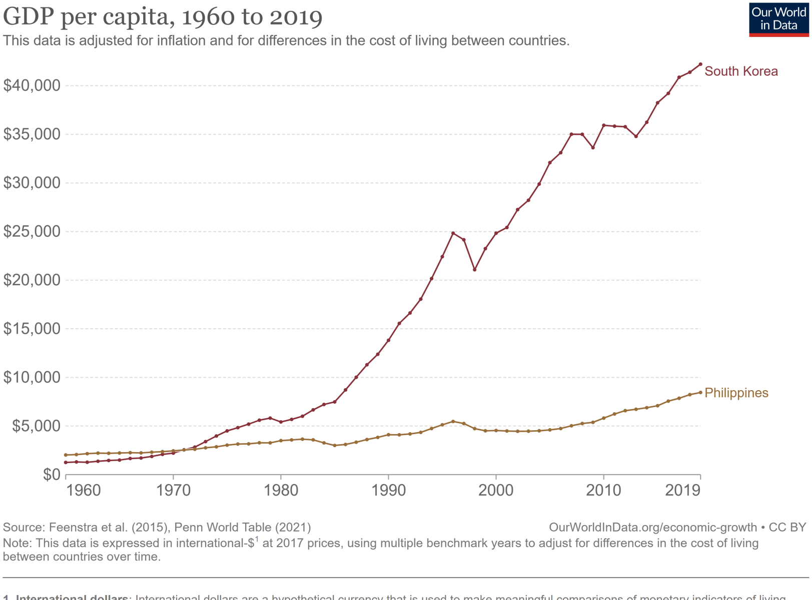
	South Korea	Philippines
Per Capita GDP	$1,500	$1,500
Population	25M	25M
Working Age Population	50%	50%
Attending College at 20	5%	13%

Two Pictures from 1960



An introduction to Growth Dynamics

More specific questions:

- Can differences in capital accumulation explain differences in growth of GDP per capita across countries?

- Is capital accumulation the ultimate source of sustained growth in GDP per capita?

The Solow Growth Model

We add the time dimension!

- Production:

$$Y_t = \bar{A}K_t^{\alpha}L_t^{1-\alpha}, \qquad \alpha \in (0,1), \quad t \in \{0,1,2,\cdots\}$$

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- Capital Accumulation:

$$K_{t+1} = K_t + \underbrace{I_t}_{\text{investment}} - \underbrace{\bar{d} \cdot K_t}_{\text{depreciation}}, \qquad \bar{d} \in (0,1), \quad t \in \{0,1,2,\cdots\}$$

$$K_{t+1} - K_t \equiv \Delta K_{t+1} = I_t - \bar{d} \cdot K_t$$

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- Production:

$$L_t = \bar{L}, \quad t \in \{0, 1, 2, \cdots\}$$

- Investment:

$$I_t = S_t = \bar{s} Y_t, \quad \bar{s} \in (0, 1), \quad t \in \{0, 1, 2, \cdots\}$$

The Solow Growth Model: Taking Stock

Normalizing the price of the output good $P_t = 1$ each period, for each period $t \in \{0, 1, 2, \cdots\}$, given parameters $\bar{d}$, $\bar{s}$, $\bar{A}$, $\bar{L}$, α and the initial value of capital K_0 there are five unknowns Y_t, K_{t+1}, L_t, C_t, I_t and five equations:

$$
\begin{aligned}
Y_t &= \bar{A}K_t^{\alpha}L_t^{1-\alpha} && (1)\\
Y_t &= C_t + I_t && (2)\\
\Delta K_{t+1} &= I_t - \bar{d} \cdot K_t && (3)\\
L_t &= \bar{L} && (4)\\
I_t &= \bar{s}Y_t && (5)
\end{aligned}
$$

that characterize the solution to this model.

The Solow Growth Model: Factor Markets?

What about factor markets?

- We can add factor markets, satisfying:

$$\begin{aligned} w_t &= MPL_t = (1-\alpha)\frac{Y_t}{L_t} \\ r_t &= MPK_t = \alpha\frac{Y_t}{K_t} \end{aligned}$$

- But nothing else would change in the model.

- So to simplify, we keep these two equations and unknowns out!

Solving the Solow Growth Model

Solving fully the model with equations is very hard. We usually do that numerically, using a computer. But here are some things we can do with pen and paper to simplify the problem:

- Reduce equations to strictly necessary
- Show solution on a diagram (Solow Diagram)
- Solve for the “Long Run” of the model (Steady State)

Solving the Solow Growth Model

Strategy: Reduce system of equations from five to two

- Equations (2) and (5) are redundant, not independent (”Walras’ Law”; reduces the system to 4)

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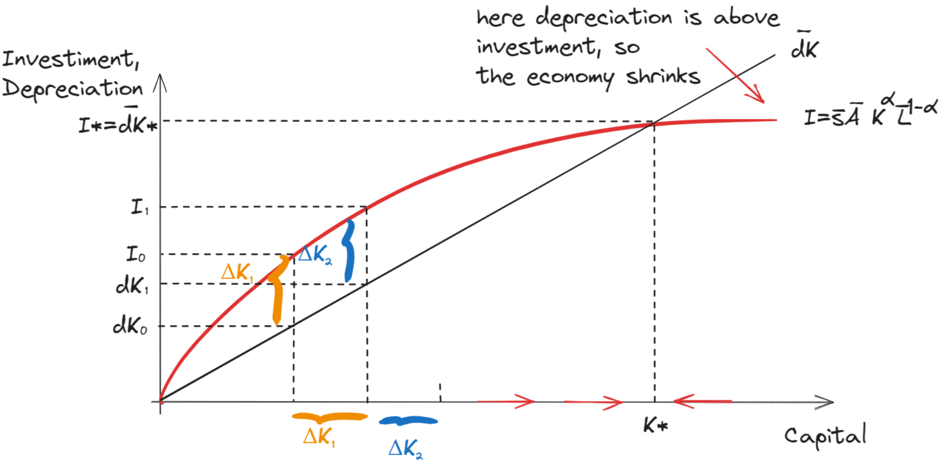
Final system:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_t &= \bar{A}K_t^{\alpha}\bar{L}^{1-\alpha} \\ \Delta K_{t+1} &= \bar{s}\bar{A}K_t^{\alpha}\bar{L}^{1-\alpha} - \bar{d} \cdot K_t \end{aligned}$$

Solow Diagram: Capital Dynamics



Solow Model: The Steady State

$$\begin{aligned} Y_t &= \bar{A}K_t^{\alpha}\bar{L}^{1-\alpha} \\ \Delta K_{t+1} &= \bar{s}\bar{A}K_t^{\alpha}\bar{L}^{1-\alpha} - \bar{d} \cdot K_t \end{aligned}$$

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At the Steady-State (SS), $\Delta K_{t+1} = 0$ and $K_{t+1} = K_t$, so we might as well call it K^*. The same is true for Y, so we call it Y^*. Let us look for K^*, Y^* that satisfy the definition of a SS in the system above:

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$$\begin{aligned} Y_t &= \bar{A} K_t^{\alpha} \bar{L}^{1-\alpha} \\ \Delta K_{t+1} &= \bar{s} \bar{A} K_t^{\alpha} \bar{L}^{1-\alpha} - \bar{d} \cdot K_t \end{aligned}$$

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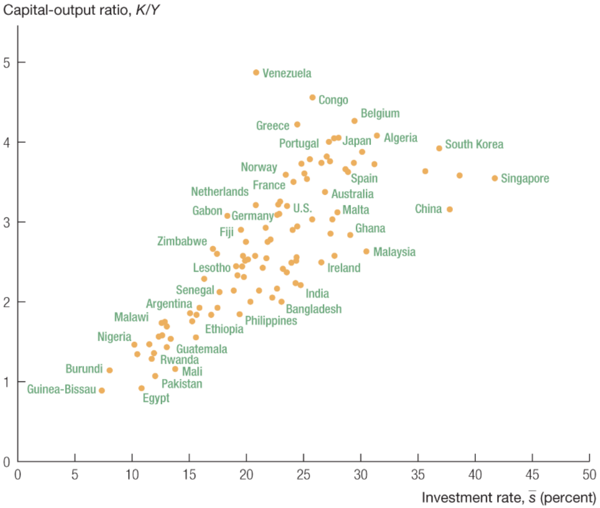
$$\begin{aligned} \bar{s} \bar{A} (K^*)^{\alpha} \bar{L}^{1-\alpha} - \bar{d} \cdot K^* = 0 \iff K^* &= \left(\frac{\bar{s} \bar{A}}{\bar{d}} \right)^{\frac{1}{1-\alpha}} \bar{L} \\ \implies Y^* &= \bar{A}^{\frac{1}{1-\alpha}} \left(\frac{\bar{s}}{\bar{d}} \right)^{\frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}} \bar{L} \end{aligned}$$

Solow Model: The Steady State

Note that the model predicts that the capital-to-output ratio is increasing in the investment rate:

$$\frac{K^*}{Y^*} = \frac{\bar{s}}{\bar{d}}$$

In the data, there is indeed a positive correlation between those variables.



Source: Penn World Tables, Version 9.1. The capital-output ratio is measured in the year 2017, while the investment rate is averaged over the period 1990 to 2017.

Solow Model: The Steady State

Other predictions of the model do not have a great fit...

$$y^* \equiv \frac{Y^*}{\bar{L}} = \bar{A}^{\frac{1}{1-\alpha}} \left(\frac{\bar{s}}{\bar{d}} \right)^{\frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}}$$

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Now assume $\bar{d}_{rich} = \bar{d}_{poor}$ and let us make a similar decomposition as we did with the production model:

$$\underbrace{\frac{y^*_{rich}}{y^*_{poor}}}_{64} = \underbrace{\left(\frac{\bar{A}_{rich}}{\bar{A}_{poor}}\right)^{\frac{3}{2}}}_{32} \times \underbrace{\left(\frac{\bar{s}_{rich}}{\bar{s}_{poor}}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}}_{2}$$

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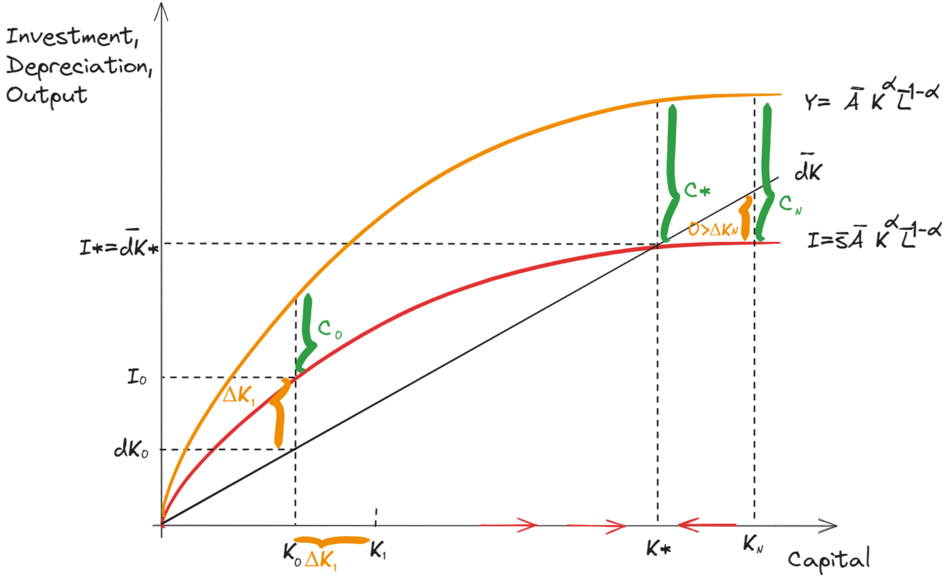
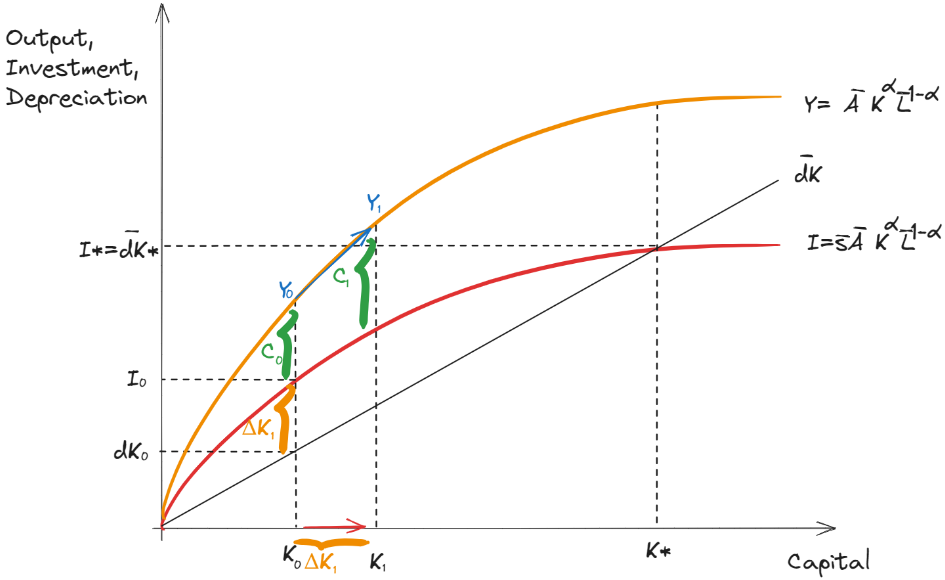
while in the production model

$$\underbrace{\frac{y^*_{rich}}{y^*_{poor}}}_{64} = \underbrace{\frac{\bar{A}_{rich}}{\bar{A}_{poor}}}_{13} \times \underbrace{\left(\frac{\bar{k}^*_{rich}}{\bar{k}^*_{poor}}\right)^{\frac{1}{3}}}_{5}$$

Solow Model: The Complete Diagram



Solow Model: The Complete Diagram, tracing out the dynamics



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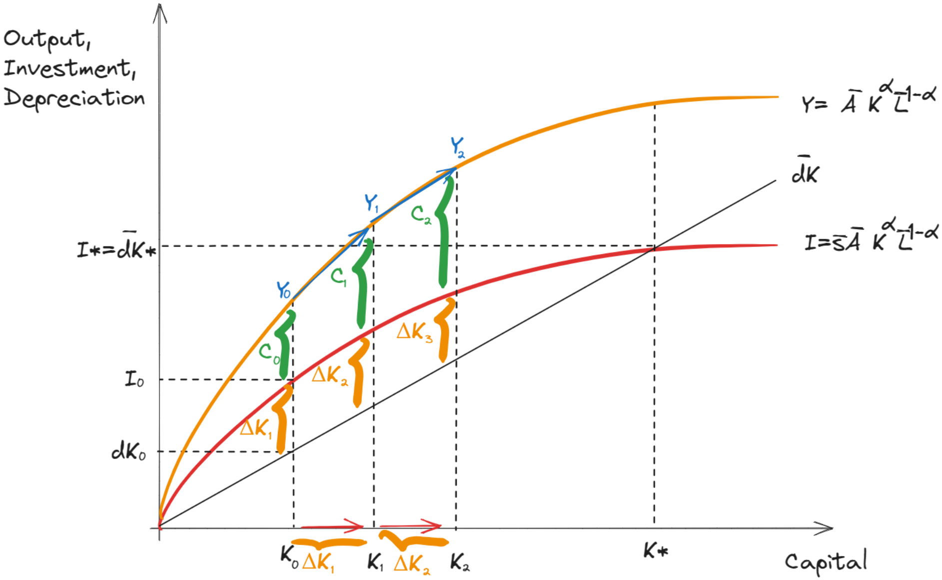

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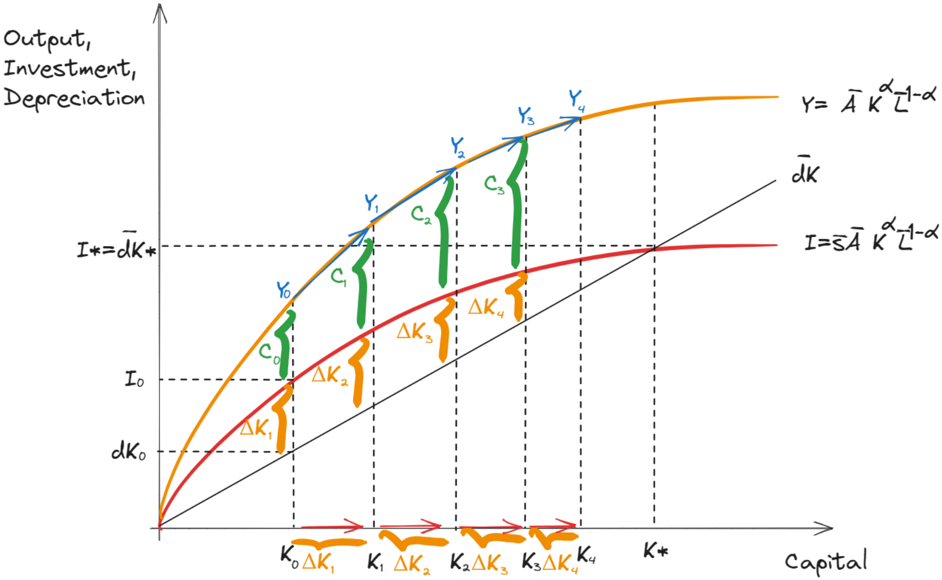
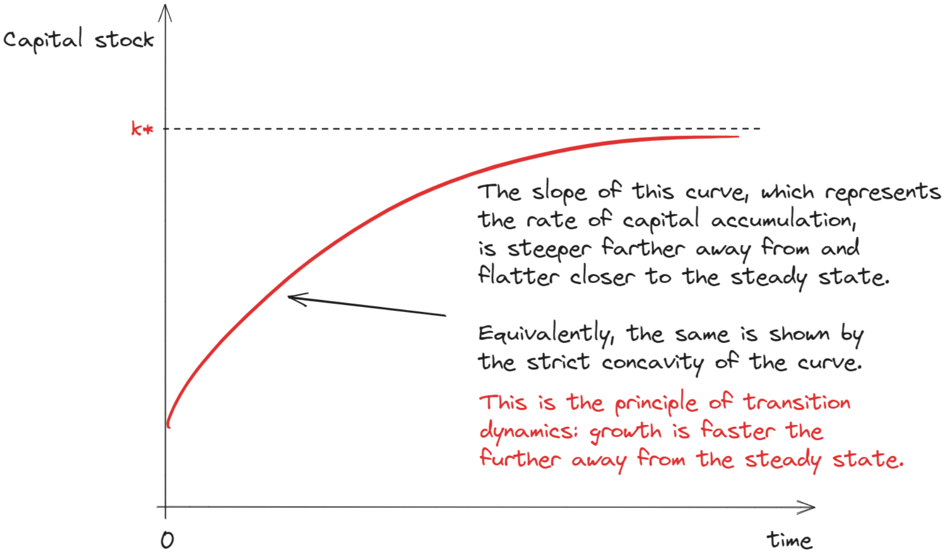


Solow Model: tracing out the dynamics

Assume $\alpha = 1/3$, $\bar{L} = 100$, $\bar{s} = .2$, $\bar{d} = .1$.

t	K_t	$\bar{d}K_t$	Y_t	I_t	ΔK_{t+1}
0	$\mathbf{250}$	$250 \cdot 0.1 = \mathbf{25}$	$250^{\frac{1}{3}} 100^{\frac{2}{3}} = \mathbf{135.7}$	$135.7 \cdot 0.2 = \mathbf{27.1}$	$(27.1 - 25) = \mathbf{2.1}$
1	$250 + 2.1 = \mathbf{252.1}$	$252.1 \cdot 0.1 = \mathbf{25.2}$	$252.1^{\frac{1}{3}} 100^{\frac{2}{3}} = \mathbf{136.1}$	$136.1 \cdot 0.2 = \mathbf{27.2}$	$(27.2 - 25.2) = \mathbf{2}$
2	$252.1 + 2 = \mathbf{254.1}$	$254.1 \cdot 0.1 = \mathbf{25.4}$	$254.1^{\frac{1}{3}} 100^{\frac{2}{3}} = \mathbf{136.5}$	$136.5 \cdot 0.2 = \mathbf{27.3}$	$(27.3 - 25.4) = \mathbf{1.9}$
3	$254.1 + 1.9 = \mathbf{256}$	$256 \cdot 0.1 = \mathbf{25.6}$	$256^{\frac{1}{3}} 100^{\frac{2}{3}} = \mathbf{136.8}$	$136.8 \cdot 0.2 = \mathbf{27.4}$	$(27.4 - 25.6) = \mathbf{1.8}$

Solow Model: principle of transition dynamics



Solow Model: principle of transition dynamics

The mathematics behind the principle

$$\Delta K_{t+1} = \bar{s}Y_t - \bar{d}K_t$$

So $\Delta \frac{K_{t+1}}{K_t}$ will be large if the gap $\frac{K^*}{K_t}$ is large.

Solow Model: principle of transition dynamics

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$$\begin{aligned}\Delta K_{t+1} &= \bar{s}Y_t - \bar{d}K_t \\ \Delta \frac{K_{t+1}}{K_t} &= \bar{s}\frac{Y_t}{K_t} - \bar{d}\end{aligned}$$

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\Delta \frac{K_{t+1}}{K_t} &= \bar{s} \frac{Y^*}{K^*} \times \left(\left[\frac{K^*}{K_t} \right]^{1-\alpha} - 1 \right) \qquad \left(\because Y^* = \bar{A} (K^*)^{\alpha} (\bar{L})^{1-\alpha}, \quad Y_t = \bar{A} (K_t)^{\alpha} (\bar{L})^{1-\alpha} \right)
\end{aligned}
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So $\Delta \frac{K_{t+1}}{K_t}$ will be large if the gap $\frac{K^*}{K_t}$ is large.

Important aside: there are no banks, but there is still a real interest rate

Real interest rate: the amount of output a person can earn by saving one unit of output for a year, or the amount of output a person must pay to borrow one unit of output for a year.

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- **Production view**: save 1 unit at time $t \rightarrow$ invest 1 unit $I_t \rightarrow$ get 1 unit of K_{t+1}: rented at $r = MPK$, but depreciates at $(1 - \bar{d})$.

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If markets are fully integrated, by nonarbitrage, the following must hold:

$$1 + R = r + (1 - \bar{d}) \implies r = R + \bar{d}$$

The forces behind the Solow Model

- If a society has some endowment of capital, it can save and invest to grow, accumulate capital stock and grow richer.

- However, with a fixed population and diminishing marginal returns to capital, growth cannot go on forever in this mode.

- In fact, in this “growth model” there is no long-run growth: is a unique steady-state in which the economy **does not grow**!

- The Solow model does a good job of explaining differences in capital accumulation across countries.

- Income per capita does not depend on the size of the country in this model – and it does a worse job than the production model in explaining differences in GDP per capita.

It has limits but it was a breakthrough

> *All theory depends on assumptions which are not quite true. That is what makes it theory. The art of successful theorizing is to make the inevitable simplifying assumptions in such a way that the final results are not very sensitive"*

Bob Solow (1956)