

Some other Measures of Development than Science and Technology

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My guiding question: measures of development

- One facet of second order science is the questioning of assumptions.
- The West has assumed for a long time that development is indicated by level of science and technology.
- But the US still struggles with political stability and advancement of human rights.
- Other civilizations have had long histories of political stability and innovation in the arts, literature, architecture, astronomy, religion, sculpture, etc. Yet the West tends to say that they are “underdeveloped.”
- Are there other measures of development? Here is a preliminary list for purposes of discussion.

Some measures of development

- Science, technology, medicine, technological comforts (e.g., air conditioning, washing machines, radio, TV, computers, etc.).
- Stable government and smooth political transitions vs. recurring wars and civil disorder.
- Restraints on excessive power concentration: progressive taxes, division of power and authority in business and govt, law suits, press freedom, property rights, moderate inequality, rule of law, minimal corruption in police and courts.
- Human rights: no slavery, respect for women and minorities, religious tolerance, acceptance of sexual differences

Some additional measures of development

- Art, architecture, sculpture, music, literature, fashion.
- Restraint and respect in the use of land, nature, people.
- Spirituality, a conception of God or the sacred.
- Physical fitness, meditation, “a healthy mind in a healthy body,” self-development.
- Social mobility: multiple mechanisms and institutions for social mobility, e.g., education, intermarriage, a flexible class structure, laws against discrimination based on race, religion, gender, etc.

Advantages of a multi-dimensional approach

- If we measured countries on all of these considerations, we would not focus so much attention on economic growth.
- Yes, economic growth gives us new resources. But have we transformed the means into the sole or primary end?
- What can we learn from other societies?

Mechanisms to aid social development

- Education
- Saving and investment
- Friends, personal and institutional networks
- Urbanization
- Globalization
- Sharing, franchising, patent rights
- Learning from others, travel
- Adoption of innovations
- Respect and rewards for talent and contributions in all aspects of society, including humble service to others, e.g., nuns.

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