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occasional paper series on culture and development

CULTURAL INDICATORS OF DEVELOPMENT

by
Terry McKinley

united nations research institute for social development

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Foreword on Culture and Development

Culture is both the context for development as well as the missing factor in policies for development. Although such interactions have long been recognized as essential, there has been no worldwide analysis in this field on which new policies could be based. The independent World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD) was therefore established jointly by UNESCO and the United Nations in December 1992 to prepare a policy-oriented report on the interactions of culture and development.

The Commission, composed of distinguished specialists from all regions of the world and presided by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, held a series of consultations with scholars, policy makers, artists and NGO activists on specific regional perspectives and concerns. The ideas and data gathered during this process have provided new and powerful insights into the relationship between culture and development worldwide. **Our Creative Diversity**, the report of the Commission presented to the General Conference of UNESCO and the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1995, recommended that an "annual Report on Culture and Development be published as an independent statement addressed to policy makers and other interested parties".

As highlighted in **Our Creative Diversity**, economic, governance and social activities are deeply embedded in the value systems and practices of societies. Their impact on the form and content of development is pervasive and profound. There is an urgent need to analyse and monitor the evolution of interactions such as: economic growth, culture and globalization; ethics, democracy and development objectives; ethnic conflicts, indigenous peoples and the rights of minorities; environment and inter-generational ethics; values, customs and gender; culture and the growth of cities; and culture and the information highway.

The preparation of a World Culture Report will open up a new field in analytical and quantitative thinking on the relationship between culture and development while providing scientific and creative inputs that will inform policy makers. This requires that tasks of an exploratory nature, both conceptually and in terms of creating quantitative indicators on culture and development, be combined with the wide-ranging collection of existing data and statistics on this theme.

For this reason, the close collaboration of multi-disciplinary agencies, such as UNESCO and UNRISD, is crucial. The joint UNRISD-UNESCO series of Occasional Papers on Culture and Development is a first step in facilitating and catalyzing an international debate on culture and development based on high-quality research. In the fourth paper in the series, Terry McKinley examines human development from a cultural perspective, focusing on how people's quality of life is determined by how they are able to live together. The paper describes three indices that could be combined into a composite Cultural Index of Development. First, a Cultural Freedom

Index could indicate whether a society respects and allows basic human freedoms of belief, thought and expression. Second, a Creative Empowerment Index could indicate whether a society encourages people to express themselves in innovative ways. Third, a Cultural Dialogue Index could register the basic opportunities and means for mutually beneficial communication among people of different cultures. Terry McKinley works with the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme.

A World Culture Report that takes an attractive and innovative approach to the quantification of crucial cultural phenomena can have profound implications for global development and international peace, security and well-being. Quantitative indicators in this area deserve greater attention at all levels of development action, for they can contribute to the dissemination throughout the world of a message of respect for creative diversity, equity and peace.

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June 1997

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I. The Evaluation of Culture*

Culture is the way that people live together, interact and co-operate – together with how they justify such interaction through beliefs, values and norms. This implies that culture does not define a separate category of human activities but covers a whole range of activities. Furthermore, it is not a normative term, but a descriptive one. These considerations raise a number of problems that must be resolved in order to devise "cultural indicators of development".

The title of this paper has been carefully chosen. We are not attempting to identify indicators of "cultural development" – which would follow logically from regarding culture as a separate category of human activities. We are attempting to examine human development from a "cultural perspective", i.e., with particular focus on how people's quality of life is determined by how they are able to live together and the value systems that animate their interactions.

If culture is an all-encompassing term, then all indicators reflect, to one degree or another, a cultural content. How do we decide which ones to use? Moreover, since culture defines people's value systems, how can we evaluate different cultures or cultural practices from a trans-cultural perspective?

We must take an explicitly ethical position with which people of different cultures can readily agree. Our concern is not only that a people's culture enable them to live together, but also that it enables them to live together well. As much as possible, the universal ethical standards should be simple, transparent and non-controversial. But they should also be compelling and have the cutting power necessary to distinguish cultures that hamper human development from those that foster it. Satisfying both of these criteria simultaneously is obviously not easy.

This paper takes the position that the ultimate test of a particular culture is whether it fosters an expansion of human capabilities and choice – whether it enables people to live well. Part of people's quality of life is being able to live together well, and it is in this latter aspect that culture becomes crucial. The central question is: does the way that people live together enable them to pursue the kind of life that they have reason to value? Whether people are able to live together well can be evaluated according to a number of important dimensions. Based on the work of the World Commission on Culture and Development, this paper proposes that three be highlighted: cultural freedom, creativity and cultural dialogue.

* This is a revised version of a paper prepared for the workshop on Cultural Statistics and Indicators: Towards a World Culture Report, Royaumont Foundation, France, 10-12 May 1996.

II. Availability of Data

The above considerations can help us choose appropriate indicators. But beyond the desirability of certain indicators, there are also questions of feasibility. Data are not extensive for many "social" indicators. Data are particularly sparse on social indicators with a significant cultural content. Many "cultural indicators" currently being collected are based on a restricted definition of culture and are thus unnecessarily narrow.

There is also the overriding problem that quantitative variables – even if they were available – are inadequate to the task of determining the qualitative conditions we seek to identify and evaluate. An example is how to gauge "creativity". Surely, this is an activity that cannot be reduced to a cardinal measure. There may be a number of quantitative measures – such as number of novels written or movies produced – that could be marshalled as circumstantial evidence of a higher or lower level of creative activity. But even with such supporting evidence, it is inadvisable to construct a composite index of cardinally-calibrated variables as a "measure" of creativity.

It would be preferable, on the basis of all available evidence, to make an explicit judgment on the qualitative level of creative activity. This could involve using a simple numbered scale, such as 1 to 4, with the number 1 being assigned to what is considered a low level of creativity and 4 to a high level, with 2 and 3 denoting intermediate levels. Since much information is reduced to simple scalar values, we cannot expect (and should not expect) to achieve a "complete ordering" of countries. But for the kind of dimensions of human activity that we hope to evaluate, it is better not to succumb to a false sense of rigor and precision.

If any index is going to have an impact on discussions of culture and development, it should cover a broad range of countries – say, at least 100 – both developing and industrial. In the 1996 **Human Development Report**, for example, the number of countries covered by the new Capability Poverty Measure is 101; 104 are covered by the Gender Empowerment Measure; over 130 by the Gender-related Development Index; and more than 170 by the Human Development Index. Some data are available for industrial countries but not for developing, and vice versa. As a result, the set of variables that can be used as indicators for all countries is relatively small.

In developing an index, we should not strive to present an encyclopedia of indicators covering every conceivable aspect of human activity that has cultural significance. The ranking of countries by a composite index tends to capture media attention and dominate popular discussions. For example, in the early years, the **Human Development Report** and human development itself were identified by many with the Human Development Index. The same phenomenon may well occur with the proposed report on the cultural dimensions of development. Any composite index it presents should have a distinctive and novel content that is regarded as the report's "comparative advantage" and has hitherto been neglected by other reports.

This paper proposes that three indices be constructed: the Cultural Freedom Index, the Creative Empowerment Index and the Cultural Dialogue Index. These three indices could be combined to present an overall composite Cultural Index of Development. Alternatively, the three could be combined with an index of life expectancy, in order to present a comprehensive picture of both quality and "quantity" of life.

III. The Cultural Freedom Index

This paper proposes that a World Report on Culture and Development attempt to construct a composite index of qualitative variables registering cultural freedom. These rights would include group rights, such as linguistic rights for minorities, and individual human rights, such as freedom of expression.

Composite indices that are based on subjectively-constructed qualitative variables, such as that proposed for cultural rights, have now become much more common. A prominent example from the **Human Development Report** is the Political Freedom Index (PFI) (see UNDP, 1992). This index is used in the present paper as a point of reference for constructing the Cultural Freedom Index. In the following discussion of the PFI, we refer mainly to the paper by Meghnad Desai on the subject, "Measuring political freedom", which was written as a background document for the **Human Development Report** (Desai, 1992).

The Political Freedom Index is based on the work of Charles Humana (1986), who took the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the basis for constructing 40 questions used to determine the extent of political freedom in a country. In evaluating whether freedom was guaranteed in each of the 40 areas, Humana graded the answers as "firm yes", "mild yes", "mild no" or "firm no". Humana gave seven questions pertaining to integrity of self (unlawful arrest, inhuman imprisonment, torture) greater weight than the others. By comparison, the Freedom House uses 22 indicators for a composite index of political rights and civil liberties, and employs a scale of 1 to 7.

In his own work on the Political Freedom Index for the **Human Development Report**, Desai categorizes freedom into five equally-weighted clusters:

- integrity of the self or personal security;
- rule of law;
- political participation;
- freedom of expression; and
- equality before the law.

Each of the five clusters in turn combines several interrelated rights or freedoms. Desai proposes that a small group of evaluators examine the evidence for each country, place this evidence within

its appropriate historical context, and rate the country's performance on a scale of 0-100 for each cluster. He calls this an "inter-subjective qualitative exercise" in which the members of the group must review their scores for inter-country consistency. Ideally, their results should be checked against the judgments of additional groups of evaluators in order to arrive at a final assessment.

The method for constructing the index

The Political Freedom Index is a simple arithmetic average of the scores for the five clusters. Countries are classified as having "high political freedom" (a score of 75-100), "reasonable political freedom" (50-75), "modest political freedom" (25-50), or "low political freedom" (0-25).

One alternative to the arithmetic mean would be to take the product of the five scores; this would punish countries for low scores in individual clusters. An extreme alternative would be to take the lowest score for the five clusters as the overall index; in other words, a country would be judged by its worst performance. Since a complex set of qualitative judgments is already involved in giving scores to each of the five clusters, a simple, straightforward method of aggregation, such as the equally-weighted arithmetic mean, seems the most advisable.

In general, the method for constructing a composite index should be transparent and easily understandable. The more complex the method, the more likely it is to be judged arbitrary and rejected. The general audience for the index should be development policy makers, practitioners, organizers and activists. Therefore the focus should be on the results, not on the method.

An alternative to adding together the scores for the five clusters is to rank each country according to each of the five clusters and then add together the five ranks instead of the five scores. A recent example of this method is found in Partha Dasgupta's **An Inquiry into Well-Being and Deprivation**, in which he combines indicators of civil and political liberties with human development indicators (Dasgupta, 1993). In general, this kind of approach gives less weight to particular scores since a range of scores could conceivably correspond to the same rank. This emphasizes the importance of a particular country's position relative to that of other countries, not its absolute standing on some fixed scale.

Whether five ranks or five scores are averaged together, the result could be used simply to place each country in one of several categories – such as "high", "above-average", "modest", or "low" political freedom in the PFI. If more distinctions were desired, more categories could be used. For each category, countries could be presented alphabetically with their average rank or score in parentheses. Such an approach can make meaningful distinctions between countries without giving the misleading impression of precision implied by a complete ordering of countries.

The technique of presenting countries alphabetically in major groups can avoid much unnecessary controversy – but not all. Consideration should be given to who should carry out the evaluations of cultural rights for the Cultural Freedom Index. One option is to delegate this responsibility to a semi-autonomous advisory group. The results could be checked by the Culture

Sector of UNESCO and approved before their publication. They could also be checked by other knowledgeable people outside the United Nations.

This paper recommends that countries' performance on each cluster of cultural freedoms be evaluated according to a scale of 0-10. A score of 10 would denote very strong endorsement and a score of 0 no endorsement. The scores can then be added together with equal weight and averaged to give a score for the whole index. The scale of 0-10 is used because it gives some latitude to evaluation and can be easily integrated with other indicators scaled in a similar fashion, such as those in the HDI. It also facilitates the grouping of countries according to their scores, e.g. into four, five or ten groups. The groups could simply be identified with their range of scores without necessarily giving the groupings evaluative designations – such as "strong" endorsement of rights or "moderately strong" endorsement.

The content of the Cultural Freedom Index

What rights should the Cultural Freedom Index cover? Out of the five clusters used in the Political Freedom Index, this paper recommends that three be incorporated into the Cultural Freedom Index: integrity of the self, freedom of expression, and equality before the law. Integrity of the self is concerned with the most basic and non-controversial human freedoms, such as freedom from torture and arbitrary arrest. While certain countries may contest the value of multiparty elections or an independent judiciary, surely none would claim the right to torture its citizens based on its own cultural values. It is important to uphold these basic rights of individuals in order to avoid the possible tyranny arising from supporting the collective rights of minority groups. Group rights cannot be used as an excuse to violate individual rights.

Freedom of expression is a logical component of the Cultural Freedom Index. Groups should have the right to be able to express their own cultural values. This would imply lack of censorship of books, plays, art, the press, television, radio and films. Equality before the law implies lack of discrimination based on belonging to a group identified by race, ethnicity, religion, class or gender. Non-discrimination is a fundamental right that allows the exercise of all other rights and is particularly important for minority ethnic or indigenous groups.

Are there other clusters of rights and freedoms that should be included in the Cultural Freedom Index? Following is a proposed list – which includes the three mentioned above – drawn from the International Bill of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations, 1966) and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (United Nations, 1992). Using these documents adds legitimacy to the choice of rights and freedoms. The list is put forward as a basis for discussion, although a deliberate effort was made to keep the list brief, clear and coherent.

1. Integrity of self

(i.) Are people free from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile and from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment?

(ii.) Are people free from arbitrary interference with their privacy, family, home or correspondence?

2. Non-discrimination

Is everyone entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law, without regard for race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status?

3. Freedom of thought and expression

(i.) Does everyone have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion?

(ii.) Does everyone have the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity?

(iii.) Does everyone have the right freely to participate in the cultural life of their community, to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancement and its benefits?

4. Right of self-determination

(i.) Do all people have the right of self-determination; and are they able freely to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development?

(ii.) Is the existence of national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic minorities protected within the territories of the nation state, and are conditions encouraged for the promotion of their identity, such as developing their own culture, language, religion, traditions and customs?

(iii.) Do members of minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue and to have instruction in it?

(iv.) Do states take measures in the field of education to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities residing within their territories?

The performance of countries would be evaluated on a scale of 0-10 on each of the four clusters and then the four scores would be averaged together with equal weight to derive the Cultural Freedom Index.

A number of social, economic and political rights have not been included in the four clusters. The nature of the judiciary has not been addressed, nor has the nature of the electoral process, for example. Part of the reason is that some of the legal and political issues are best left to other

organizations. Controversies on some of these matters – such as whether multiparty elections are a universal model of democracy – may detract from the main purpose of the index, which is to focus on cultural rights and activities.

IV. The Creative Empowerment Index

While the Cultural Freedom Index indicates whether society respects and allows basic human freedoms of belief, thought and expression, the Creative Empowerment Index indicates whether society actively encourages people to express themselves in innovative ways. The term "empowerment" has been used to denote various phenomena, and in this context it is being used to denote human empowerment in a fundamental sense – i.e., whether people are supported to reach their full potential, freely choose their own place and form of participation in society, and determine the nature of their contribution to it.

Creative empowerment can be measured either in terms of the opportunities that society provides its citizens, such as access to the means for creative expression, or in terms of creative outcomes, e.g. plays, books, artwork. Measuring outcomes is preferable because it focuses on people's achievements – and is usually conclusive evidence of being afforded opportunities – but measuring such things is not always possible. Moreover, society cannot be held directly responsible for the outcomes, but merely for the opportunities that it affords.

We are speaking here of social outcomes as well as individual outcomes. People are empowered both as individuals and as members of groups. Creativity is not solely an individual phenomenon, but also a collective one. Creativity can also characterize all forms of human activity – social, political and economic as well as cultural (in the narrow sense of the word). Just as culture is often mistakenly defined as a distinct and self-contained sphere of human activity, creativity is customarily identified exclusively with artistic production. While artistic expression is one of its most vivid and notable forms, it is a much broader phenomenon that can shape activities in industry and business, in government and in civil society. Creativity is also the basis of the rapid pace of technological change that is dramatically reshaping whole societies and altering how nations and peoples relate to one another.

In **Culture, Human Development and Economic Growth**, Keith Griffin argues that the increased interpenetration of diverse cultures that has accompanied globalization is, in fact, accelerating creativity and innovation, and he points to the explosive growth of knowledge and technology as evidence of this trend (see Griffin, 1997). As he states, "this burst of cultural creativity or cultural vitality, although uneven across space, is very widespread and indeed is reshaping the world". Although cultural exchange is an overlooked aspect of globalization, it is a pervasive and powerful influence stimulating creativity and laying the foundation for material progress and human development.

Remaining consistent with the conventional designation of culture-related activities, we propose that information be gathered on the following:

(i.) How many new titles are there of books, periodicals and newspapers (and how often are they published)?

(ii.) How many new performances are put on in music and performing arts:

- how many dances, plays, operas, musical performances, etc.?
- how many new songs have been recorded?

(iii.) How many new paintings, photographs and sculptures have been marketed?

(iv.) How many architectural designs have been commissioned?

(v.) How many new films, videos and radio and television programmes have been produced?

3. The number of people directly involved in creative activity

Part of the total picture of the extent of creativity in society is determined by ascertaining the number of people who engage in creative activity as a profession, e.g., the number of painters, poets and performance artists. There are also many people who engage in such activity only on a part-time basis, as a secondary source of income. And then there are the large numbers of people who engage in creative activity "on their own time", as a leisure activity. These include such people as amateur photographers, potters and dancers. It is only when we can incorporate information on this broad range of amateurs that we can obtain a sense of the spread of creative activity and its vital impact on the whole society.

There are also important collective expressions of creativity of which we need to take account. This is especially true for many developing countries. Collective creativity may find an outlet in many festivals, rituals and religious activities.

Information on the above three areas – expenditures, number of creations and number of creators – is not likely to be readily available, certainly not for many developing countries. Estimates of rough orders of magnitude are likely to be the best that can be expected. Knowledgeable people in the various fields should, however, be able to impart a good sense of the extent and vitality of creative activity. The important point is to provide a strong impetus to initiate the gathering of information on such items and establish a baseline of information that can be enlarged over time. Over the long term, purpose-designed surveys – or modules within existing surveys – might provide the most useful instrument for gathering such data.

Creativity in other spheres of activity

As suggested above, creative activity pervades society. Dynamic societies that afford people a high quality of life depend on a continuous stream of creative activity. Ideally, the Creative Empowerment Index should take into account this broader spread of creativity.

There is already recognition of the value of creativity in the fields of science and technology. Much information already exists on expenditures on research and development, for example, or on patents. Developing countries lag far behind in this field and are usually compelled to exercise ingenuity in adapting technology – invariably available from industrial countries – to their own needs. Advancing creative efforts in these countries to develop their own technologies, more appropriate to their needs, remains a high priority.

Often ignored, however, in discussions of technological innovation is the role of rank-and-file employees who are called upon to put these innovations into practice in their respective companies. A creative society will actively elicit the participation of workers in finding new ways of producing goods and services, reducing costs and/or improving quality. Modern theories of industrial relations have increasingly adopted this approach.

The same is true of government. It could adopt the same procedures of encouraging a well-spring of creative activity throughout society. In part, this could be done by actively involving citizens in contributing to government at various levels – forming commissions, holding conferences and drafting proposals.

The ultimate source of creativity is the people themselves, especially when they organize themselves in their own grassroots, civil society organizations to advance their own interests. One of the hallmarks of a creative society is a deep and lively array of civil society organizations actively involved in a broad range of activities and continuously regenerating themselves in new areas and in new forms.

We have suggested several areas that could be covered by the Creative Empowerment Index. This proposal is based on interpreting creativity broadly and regarding it as a basis for human empowerment. Much work would be needed, however, to gather the information necessary for such an index. With such information, the index could be constructed in much the same way as the Cultural Freedom Index: a scale of 0-10 would be used for each of the three clusters that we have recommended above. Ideally, there should be more clusters along the same lines. The performance of each country would be evaluated on each cluster and then the scores would be added together with equal weight to give an overall index score.

V. The Cultural Dialogue Index

To be able to live together well, people need to be able to communicate and understand one another's culture. Communication is the basis of culture and also the basis for any multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society to function well. The lack of communication is likely to lead to conflict, violence and social disintegration. This is especially true with regard to cultural differences. Cultural diversity should be respected, but what is most desirable is a flourishing, interactive diversity, in which people of differing cultures are able to communicate their values,

beliefs and traditions to one another in an atmosphere of mutual respect and learning. What is needed is communication based on genuine cultural dialogue – an active effort on everyone's part to understand and appreciate other peoples' cultures. In order to capture this aspect of people's quality of life, we propose constructing the Cultural Dialogue Index. The index will attempt to register the basic opportunities and means for communication among people in general, but will put a special emphasis on mutually beneficial communication among people of different cultures.

In today's rapidly changing world, driven relentlessly by the so-called information revolution, people run the danger of becoming marginalized if they are not literate and do not have access to modern means of communication. The competitiveness and living standards of whole nations have become much more dependent on access to information and technological know-how. For many minorities, however, communication is really only a one-way process, in which people of the dominant majority in their country attempt to spread the influence of their own culture or people of dominant countries in the world strive to propagate their own cultural values and merchandise their own cultural products. Modern means of communication, which have such tremendous potential to uphold and strengthen cultural diversity, are in fact being used to standardize cultural values, beliefs and lifestyles. This is why the concept of communication must be enriched to include authentic cultural communication – real dialogue among people of differing ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

If people are free to think and express themselves as they wish, if they are encouraged to employ their creative capabilities in different spheres of their life, and if they are able to communicate and learn from one another, they can be said to have an exceptional quality of life. These are basic human needs that are less "physical" or "material" than the needs for food, clothing and shelter, but no less important for that reason.

Freedom, creativity and communication are ends in themselves – although they can also be seen as having instrumental value in promoting the attainment of basic physical needs. Communication is an end in itself because it can be seen as part of enhancing the quality of human life or of expanding human capabilities. Cultural dialogue has an added connotation: expanding people's ability to live together well – in the sense of being mutually enriched by understanding one another's culture. People have the opportunity to communicate based either on their own abilities (such as literacy, education and computer skills) or on the means or media to facilitate communication (such as newspapers, radios and telephones).

The Cultural Dialogue Index incorporates these aspects of communication but focuses on people's active participation in communication, i.e., on the social activities of people of different cultures that enable them to develop mutual respect and common understanding. The emphasis is on whether people of different cultures are taking part in and benefiting from communication – rather than on the general opportunities for communication or the technological state of the media for communication.

The emphasis in the Cultural Dialogue Index should be on people's abilities rather than on the means of communication. This is why basic literacy should be included in the first cluster of the index. Data on adult literacy are readily available from UNESCO, at least in aggregate form at the national level. One limitation of using this variable is that data are not collected for industrial countries; this problem would have to be addressed. There may well be a claim that, in today's rapidly changing conditions, a primary-school education is no longer adequate and should be supplemented by at least three years of lower secondary school. This would imply that an indicator for net enrolment in secondary school should be added. The value of the variable for adult literacy, however, is that it reflects an outcome, not an input – that it reflects a human capability, not the means to a capability, and that it is a stock variable not a flow variable.

What is most promising for our purposes is the possibility of disaggregating adult literacy by relevant population sub-groups. Thanks to the effort to collect gender-disaggregated data that began in the 1970s, many countries now report adult literacy by gender. The **Human Development Report** used this information for over 130 countries to help construct a Gender-related Development Index (GDI) in 1995. A similar effort could be mounted to begin collecting such data by national, ethnic or indigenous group within states. It is unlikely that much data already exist in this disaggregated form. Statistics Canada provides an excellent example of such information (see Statistics Canada, 1995). Conceivably, relevant questions could be incorporated into national surveys as a standard practice.

Adult literacy is a stock variable that registers a condition that arises as a result of activity over a number of years. We should also be interested in whether this stock of capabilities is likely to increase or decrease in future. Hence, it would be useful to supplement adult literacy with a measure of more recent efforts to educate people. One possibility is to use the net enrolment ratio for the age cohort 6-11 years old. Another useful piece of information would be the percentage of children who do not reach the fifth grade. An alternative to net primary-school enrolment is to report the literacy rate for the age group 15-24 years old or 15-19 years old.

1. The first cluster

The first cluster of the Cultural Dialogue Index should contain basic information on literacy and education, as they are commonly reported by UNESCO. Most interestingly, however, an effort should be made to disaggregate the basic literacy variable by ethnic or national group. This would be an indication of the degree of equality in educational attainment across different cultural groups in society. Mutually beneficial communication among people of different cultures is hardly possible when some groups are poorly educated, even in the official language of the country.

2. The second cluster

The second cluster should contain information on the basic means of communication in society and people's access to these means. An important piece of information is newspaper circulation

per 100,000 people. This variable gives us a sense of whether people are indeed functionally literate, since a stock of capabilities such as literacy diminishes with disuse. The advantage of this variable – compared to other information such as number of titles of books published – is that it provides the number of copies of each edition. Its shortcoming is that it does not tell us how many people read each newspaper. Newspapers remain an important means of communication in many countries, although in industrial countries other media, such as television, are of paramount importance and the Internet is rapidly becoming important.

It would also be important for the Cultural Dialogue Index to include other means of communication, such as radios per 100,000 people and telephones per 100,000 people. The amount of mail sent both within the country and abroad would also be interesting. In addition, any data on people's capabilities to handle modern means of communication, such as computer literacy, would be valuable – although not likely to be widely available.

An important consideration is not just whether certain means of communication are available in a country, but also whether people genuinely have access to them. Means such as telephones, for example, are not likely to be widely accessible in many developing countries. The same would probably be true of televisions. Moreover, ownership of the major media is often highly concentrated. The success that people have in communicating with one another depends, obviously, on their social organization. Are they able to communicate directly with one another, even if primarily on an informal basis? Is their government open and transparent? What is the quality of the information that is available to them? These factors relating to access should be taken into account in evaluating the performance of countries with regard to the availability of means of communication.

3. The third cluster

The third cluster of the Cultural Dialogue Index should focus on issues of cultural diversity and interaction. It would be valuable to know, for example, whether people are literate in their own language as well as in the official national language (if they differ). In addition, it would be useful to know whether they are literate in a *lingua franca* such as French or English.

In the third cluster, countries would be evaluated on the linguistic abilities of their people. The assumption is that as people learn one another's languages, they will be better able to communicate and more inclined to respect one another's culture. Part of this cluster would be information on the circulation of newspapers in different languages. A novel angle would be to provide information on the extent of translations carried out in a country. This could be an informative barometer of the degree of cultural interchange. The emphasis would not be on diversity per se, but on interactive diversity – on policies of cultural pluralism that are beneficial to all peoples, whether they be the majority or minority ethnic group within society.

The Cultural Dialogue Index would thus be composed of three equally-weighted clusters. The first would focus on basic questions of literacy and other forms of educational attainment, and

equality of these achievements across different cultural groups. The second cluster would include as much information as available on the means of communication, such as newspapers, radios, telephones, postal services and computers. In addition, it would attempt to evaluate the extent of people's access to these means. The third cluster would examine people's linguistic abilities – how many languages people know and how much communication is carried out on the basis of these languages.

Although a number of indicators in these clusters would be quantitative, such as literacy and newspaper circulation, for each cluster a qualitative judgment would be made on the overall performance of each country and a score of 0-10 assigned accordingly. As with the other two indices – the Cultural Freedom Index and the Creative Empowerment Index – the scores on the three clusters would be added together with equal weight to produce an overall score for the Cultural Dialogue Index.

VI. The Cultural Index of Development and Life Expectancy

Each of the indices discussed above is a composite of clusters that can include a number of different elements. Data constraints will determine in the final analysis what can be included in each of the three indices. This paper presents no more than a proposal for investigation and assumes that, in the end, each index will be simplified to include only a few key indicators and that therefore the full Cultural Index of Development will be composed of a relatively parsimonious set of indicators.

Once the three composite indices that we have proposed are constructed, the question arises about how to combine them into one overall Cultural Index of Development. All three deal with issues of people's quality of life – and the cultural aspects of their life in particular. The three could simply be combined with equal weight.

An alternative is to combine our three indices of quality of life with a measure of "quantity" of life. As Keith Griffin points out in **Quantifying Culture and Development**, the health status of people is in part a cultural variable, and the treatment of ill health reflects cultural values (see Griffin, 1996). An outcome indicator, such as a life expectancy, could be used to reflect whether people's basic material needs are being met. Strictly speaking, however, it is not a cultural indicator as such. Life expectancy reflects a number of different factors in society, not only cultural aspects.

There is much to be said, however, for proposing life expectancy as an integrating indicator for a Cultural Index of Development. In his paper entitled **Life Expectancy as an Integrating Concept in Cultural Analysis**, Paul Streeten proposes that total life expectancy be divided into segments, such as time spent at school, at work, at leisure or in retirement, and that the time spent in desirable states be summed into a single welfare index – or alternatively, that the time spent in

undesirable states be summed into a single "illfare" index (see Streeten, 1996). One recent simple index that follows this basic procedure is called "literate life expectancy", which takes into account the number of years that a person can expect to be literate as part of his or her total expected years of life. A measure of "disability-free life expectancy" is another variation on this same theme.

In a 1979 article, Hicks and Streeten suggest that life expectancy could be considered as a good single measure of basic needs fulfilment. They argue that life expectancy, as an outcome variable, could be regarded as a "weighted composite" of progress in meeting needs for health, food, water supply, sanitation and, to a lesser extent, for education and housing. It has the advantage of capturing the effects on people not only of their level of income – net of taxes, transfer payments and social services – but also of non-market, non-monetary factors.

Hicks and Streeten suggest that it might be useful to add a measure of progress in education, such as literacy, to distinguish between countries that have roughly the same average life expectancy. They also believe that it is possible to "have a long and miserable life" and hence raise the question of whether it would be advisable to add some measure of the "quality of life".

This is the point of departure for this paper's recommendation that life expectancy be used as an integrating concept for a composite Cultural Index of Development. It is not possible to divide each person's life expectancy (or each nation's average life expectancy) into discrete desirable or undesirable segments. But it should be possible to "qualify" the length of life with indicators of the kind of life that people are able to lead. The emphasis should be on such questions as cultural freedom, creativity and cultural dialogue.

We want to know not only how long people are able to live (and, by implication, how healthy they are), but also whether they are free to express themselves, both as individuals and as culturally-defined groups, whether they are encouraged to be creative and whether they can take part in society and communicate with one another. In examining the quality of people's lives, the emphasis should be on how they relate to one another and whether they are able to express themselves in a free and creative manner.

In selecting life expectancy as a central indicator, we assume that all cultures favour more life rather than less life. There are exceptions to every assumption, but we can safely ignore the small minority that opts for a "short and merry" life. Unlike the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), which was criticized for focusing on basic "physical" needs because it confined itself to three variables (life expectancy at age one, infant mortality and adult literacy) that were believed to reveal little about people's overall quality of life, the composite Cultural Index of Development that we are proposing would modify an index of life expectancy with three indices concerned with a broad range of development issues. In combination with an index for life expectancy, these three indices can adequately distinguish among the performance of industrial countries as well as among that of developing countries.

The indexing of life expectancy should be relatively straightforward. A reasonable maximum and minimum need to be chosen. In the HDI the maximum value is 85 years and the minimum is 25 years. These are fixed "goalposts", not the maximum and minimum values observable for any one year (as was the case in earlier versions of the HDI). Fixing the endpoints allows us to do valid comparisons over time. But this implies that the maximum, e.g. 85 years, not be reached for an extended period of time and, similarly, that the minimum be low enough that no country is likely to plummet to its level. How far the fixed maximum and minimum are from the observable maximum and minimum will determine how high or low the index will be and, therefore, how much weight it will have relative to other indices with which it is to be combined. With fixed maximum and minimum, each country's life expectancy can be converted into an index number between 0 and 1.

If data are available, such a variable as life expectancy can be disaggregated into subgroups. In the **Human Development Report**, for instance, the Gender-related Development Index examines separately the life expectancy of men and women and discounts their combined average by the degree of disparity between them. However, given equal treatment, women can be expected to live longer than men and hence their maximum and minimum are higher than men's. Provided information were available, average life expectancy could also be compared for different national, ethnic or culturally-defined subgroups. This would require, however, that respondents to surveys be asked to identify whether they belong to such groups. This should be encouraged as a priority objective of future survey efforts.

VII. The Question of Aggregation and Weighting

The question of weighting always raises some controversy. Gross National Product (GNP) is, of course, a weighted composite index – weighted by prices of each commodity included in the index. The simple weighting scheme of the Human Development Index has been criticized for being arbitrary in comparison to using the price weights of GNP. This is based on the assumption, of course, that prices are somehow "natural" weights. It is best to keep the weighting scheme for a composite index simple and transparent; the more complex the scheme, the more difficult it is to interpret the results.

For each of the three quality of life indices – the Cultural Freedom Index, the Creative Empowerment Index and the Cultural Dialogue Index – we have proposed to combine clusters with equal weight. We now propose to combine the three indices with equal weight. The method of combination is the arithmetic mean.

To actually give equal weight to each index, we may have to adjust the weights in accordance with the standard deviation of each index. But this is a minor technical issue. It would merely involve taking the inverse of the standard deviation of each index based on the scores of all

countries, and then taking this as a ratio to the sum of the inverses of the three standard deviations. To be consistent, this should be done for the clusters within each index.

The above procedure would give us one score for the three indices. If we choose life expectancy as an integrating indicator, how then should we combine it with the combined score of the three indices? We propose to multiply the index of life expectancy by the combined score of the three. The final result would be the Cultural Index of Development.

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