

Does the Philippines have a damaged culture? some impressions

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But what is a *damaged culture*?

- a culture that is not consistent with or inhibitive of economic growth?
 - seems to be Fallows' implicit definition
 - but why the primacy of economic growth?
 - Should indigenous culture always give way to economic growth?
 - “Contra mundum!” (Nick Joaquin's *Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*)

Culture and Economic Growth

- Robert E. Lucas Jr, (1995 Nobel laureate for economics)

“I do not see how one can look at figures like these without seeing them as representing *possibilities*. Is there some action a government of India could take that would lead the Indian economy to grow like Indonesia’s or Egypt’s? If so, *what*, exactly? If not, what is it about the ‘nature of India’ that makes it so? The consequences for human welfare involved in questions like these are simply staggering: Once one starts to think about them, it is hard to think of anything else.” (p. 5)

1985 Marshall Lectures, Cambridge University.

“On the mechanics of economic development,” *Journal of Monetary Economics* **22** (1) : 3–42, 1988.

Culture and Economic Growth

- Economic growth and individual well-being
- Culture is an important factor in economic growth.
- But lately India doing a lot better

– “Institutions shape men; men shape institutions.”

oral exam proposition in Philosophy of Man 2, ADMU, 1977.

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books, 1966.

– “Countries climb onto the modern economic growth ‘escalator’ at different points in time.” (p. 73)

Charles I. Jones, *Introduction to Economic Growth*. 2nd edition. New York: Norton, 2002.

Culture and Economic Growth

- Aeschylus's Agamemnon

“He who learns must suffer. And, even in our sleep, pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God.”

– Have we suffered enough as a nation to learn the object lessons of economic growth?

When does sustained economic growth transpire?

- when a country is far from its convergence point (catch-up growth)
- When social infrastructures allow individuals and firms to reap the full benefits of investments and hard work
 - incentives against diversion and for productivity

The Philippines needs ...

- servant-leaders
 - who value peoples' welfare more than their own
 - who value competence in subordinates vs. merely loyalty & sycophancy
- to become a meritocracy
 - where talent and hard work reap higher rewards than family connections
 - vs political and business oligarchy that unashamedly promotes and jealously protects its narrow selfish interests

Areas for reform

- conduct of elections
 - fast and accurate counting of votes
- engaged citizenry (or a disciplined political party)
 - demand transparency and accountability in our leaders
 - Why is GMA still in power?
 - People didn't care enough that she cheated in the 2004 elections.
 - People preferred corrupt but seemingly able leadership over principle (because of perception of inept vice-president).
- competent, corruption-intolerant government firmly committed to reform and transformation of society
- raise the quality of education, emphasis on science and math, especially in high school, & civic values

“Each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation... It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is thus shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

-- Robert F. Kennedy