

Ismail Sirageldin (2001) Culture and Development in the Arab World. (In Arabic. With English summary.), Journal of Development and Economic Policies 4(1):B9-38

**Abstract:**

For years, since the interest in development began as a social concern, development theory, modeling, policies, and programs focused on capital formation, transfer of technology, and human capital formation as the main building blocks of the development process. The inadequacies of this approach have become increasingly clear and the conceptualization of development processes took a significant turn as scholars began to recognize that development should be viewed as the outcome of a complex set of processes, which include, non-material and historical forces in addition to material capital. In this evolving paradigm, culture becomes an important force in the development process. The paper examines the main factors that determine the evolution of culture, focuses on the role of technological change from an historical perspective and analyzes some of these dynamics in the context of the Arab region. We argue that in this framework, the Arab region's unexpected weak development performance is traced to the suspension of the rational outlook that had historically characterized Islamic epistemological traditions in the region and to the lack of evolutionary dynamism and scientific culture.