

MEASURES OF SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT: ~~A~~MBIGUOUS AND UNAMBIGUOUS

Whereas some economic, social and cultural indicators are unambiguous others are not. For example, the GNP is an ambiguous indicator of economic welfare because it says nothing about the way the global wealth is distributed. On the other hand the average number of school years, the military expenditure as a percentage of the GNP, and the percentage of unemployed, are absolute or unambiguous indicators. Likewise the percentage of people who take part in polls where voting is not compulsory, or the abortion rate where abortion is legal, but family planning techniques poorly known, are absolute indicators-- the former of political participation, the latter of backwardness in health care.

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