

Overvaluing or Undervaluing Motivations

To not scare people away, let me state that I am opening with an analogy.

I was talking to a professional poker buddy years ago. We were discussing a hand and he told me I shouldn't have called preflop with a specific hand. I told him all of the factors that made me make that choice. I was in position, my hand was suited, the people in the blinds were unlikely to three bet, etc. he replied that I knew all the relevant factors, but that I am misvaluing them.

I think when people discuss the motivations of human interaction (politics, history, and economics included) they often don't realize that they understand many of the relevant factors, but they often overvalue and undervalue certain ones. For example, I tend to think historians overvalue leadership and undervalue economics. Every leader looks great when the economy is working and every leader looks horrible when they lack funds.

This translates into what is inspiring change today. I think the main factors of change are economic and technological ... however, most people think they are political and cultural. I would never venture to say people are totally wrong. I just think they are overvaluing certain factors and undervaluing others.