The New Third World
The New Third World

SECOND EDITION

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Preface

This book aspires to characterize the Third World at the close of the twentieth century. It is The New Third World because, truism or not, the world is changing, and these changes are not only immense, they are incoherent and contradictory. Every description seems inadequate, which indicates the magnitude of this ongoing paradigm shift and our consequent confusion. Consider just a few examples:

- We are at once converging and fragmenting (i.e., becoming more placeless and more local, or at least more anxious to recapture or reify a local identity).
- The developing world fast becomes more Western (e.g., skeptical of convention and constraint) while the postmodern demographics, gated communities, and beyond-the-pale underclass enclaves of places like Los Angeles more and more resemble Third World cities.
- Skin color declines in social import as appearance, being attractive, and "cool," for instance, ascends.
- The skilled overclass and the redundant unskilled underclass expand while the ranks of the middle class become, if not thinner, less secure.
- Possession of natural resources (other than water) now means far less than the geography of intellectual resources.
- We are context-free postmoderns in our everyday attitudes and behaviors yet often consider ourselves "traditional" or even fundamentalist, and this conflict within our own individual, personal value escapes makes us uneasy.
- We are masters of a largely humanified natural world, which yet lurks, we intuit, awaiting its vengeance.

In 1940, the global population was almost evenly divided (40–60 roughly) between the developed and the developing worlds. Now, only a half century later, three-quarters of all people live in the Third World and most births occur somewhere in that realm.

One might even ask whether there will be a First World by the next fin de siècle. After about 2050, for example, so-called minority subgroups—
notably Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans—will together constitute a majority of the U.S. population. In color, "complexion," or ethnicity, and even culture, the United States will soon resemble the world in miniature, and by the second or third generation of the new century, Europe will have experienced the same profoundly exciting and challenging transformation. From a perspective based on changing demographics and their possible consequences, then, the Third World seems fast on its way to being, simply, the world.

The First World seems to be disappearing before our very eyes. Or is it merely going underground? What manner of Third World will in fact inherit the world? It is obvious that modern and even postmodern outlooks are in the ascension in the developing world. Egalitarianism is in, hierarchy is out, or at least is on the ropes. For example, most newly arrived immigrants to southern Texas, where I live and teach, are already about half-Americanized (or globalized, if you insist). I am thinking not so much of the nearly universal assumption of the necessity of personal freedom and access to the good material life (e.g., "owning stuff"), but of attitudes and behaviors tied to worldview, particularly among the young: popular rather than high or low culture; self-referential rather than deferential; choice over constraints; maybe even image over reality.

(Irony may be the only postmodern attribute that has yet to make serious inroads among ordinary people in the developing world. Third World consumerism, for example, remains modern or sincere or genuine, for ownership of something like a first home or car or even a nice dress or baseball glove can give genuine pleasure, even joy. In the First World, on the other hand, even our shop-till-you-drop consumerism—even that!—is ironic and faux: We would like for new stuff to make us happy, we hope against hope that it does, but we do not expect it to, and it does not.)

The new Third World is coming into its own, is becoming the world, and is transforming in ways—democracies, market economies, modern/postmodern Weltanshauungen—that potentially could mean the loss of formerly highly prized traditional virtues. More important, perhaps, traditional outlooks as diverse as those of Black Elk, Saint Francis, and Charles Darwin have assumed that authentic personal identity can only be attained via a submission or a deference of individuals to something larger than self. This notion stands in direct opposition to the contemporary paradigm, already dominant in the First World and rising in the Third, that the self is and must be central because it is the only center that has held.

I hope that The New Third World fairly portrays the developing world as it is. As to what it will be, the people of the Third World will have to decide—as those in the rich world seem long since to have done—where their hearts' desires lie. To exaggerate a bit, much of the developing world is shifting almost directly from traditionality to postmodernity
with only a bare minimum of a “modern” phase in between. The profundity of the contrast is fantastically destabilizing. However, it is just possible that the abruptness of this transition (and the lingering resonance of traditional truths—e.g., radical personal autonomy is not synonymous with freedom, happiness and pleasure are not equivalent, submission is not always oppression) might make it easier to avoid the extreme self-referentiality (the phrase “being jerks” comes to mind) that already seems normal, perhaps even hegemonic, in the postmodern West.

Jim Norwine
Introduction

Alfonso Gonzalez

The problem of socioeconomic development and the concomitant improvements of levels of living or the quality of life is certainly one of the outstanding issues confronting mankind. Virtually all aspects regarding the problem of development are subject to controversy, and there appears to be little general agreement on anything. Nevertheless, we endeavor to provide perspectives from a variety of specialists on different aspects of this ever-present critical problem.

Development does not appear to be a question of national endowment, such as natural resources or population size, but of capabilities, such as the utilization of resources, technology, and socioeconomic institutions. A definition of development would include the processes of more effective use of resources and increased efficiency in production and distribution, which result in a greater volume and diversity of goods and services for less human physical labor. Some argue that the distributional aspects within society are of major, perhaps primary, concern. To these advocates, the redistribution of wealth or the more egalitarian distribution of income constitutes "true" development. To this same group, and to others, "true" or "real" development consists of "human rights." Human rights generally consist of (1) political and civil rights (i.e., civil liberties and political freedom; this is the concept that is probably most frequently used in Western democracies), and (2) socioeconomic rights (i.e., the right to health care, an adequate diet, education, decent housing, and even the right to employment and rights for women and minorities). In most Western democracies, the socioeconomic aspect of human rights are generally considered to be highly desirable objectives of social justice and government policy rather than "rights." However, this aspect of human rights is most frequently advocated by the underdeveloped world in general, and by radicals and former Marxist regimes in particular, where political and civil rights are about the most restricted anywhere.

The causes of the status of development in the underdeveloped regions are also a subject of great controversy. Some groups, and even specialists,
expound on one particular cause or another, including the social system and structure, culture, limited education and technology, inadequate resources, population growth and pressure, inadequate capital accumulation, colonial and neocolonial exploitation, dependency on other countries or source regions, sociocultural isolation, the capitalist system (nationally and/or internationally), restraints on private enterprise, and so forth. Despite the conventional wisdom that development is a complex issue, many appear to argue that the cause, and therefore presumably the cure, for the condition of the Third World is due essentially to a single dominant factor. Since there is clearly no agreement on that factor, then perhaps another perspective would be that the issue is really complex and involves various elements perhaps differing in importance through time and countries.

Some have taken their lack of national development as an implication of lessened national prestige and thereby compensate by alleging that their culture has spiritual and ethical values not found in the higher technological societies. Unquestionably, all cultures have some merit; but in the cultural competition that is occurring—and competition always occurs when cultures come into contact with each other—the trend toward highly urbanized, educated, and industrial-commercial societies is relentless and cannot be denied.

In the national quest for development, the traditional indigenous cultures virtually everywhere are at a serious disadvantage. Many in these cultures (and some from the outside) wish to preserve some or all of their ancient traditions in the face of this cultural onslaught. Since development requires fundamental changes in society and the economy, these more traditional cultures in reality face the options of adjusting in some important degree or paying the price of slower change—less economic growth, lower material well-being, and falling ever further behind the more technological cultures. The choice should be theirs to make, but the consequences must be weighed with extreme caution.

There is a great diversity of approaches to development in the form of economic systems operating in the Third World. These range from capitalist economies, in which there is relatively minor government intervention in the operation of the economy, to varying degrees of state intervention and ownership, to the near-total elimination of private enterprise and virtually full governmental control of the economy seen in "socialist"/communist regimes, few of which now remain. On the basis of recent economic growth, no one economic system appears to have a clear advantage over the others. Nevertheless, beginning in the early 1980s the world trend has clearly been in the direction of less government ownership and intervention in the economy. This movement toward more open economic and political societies accelerated with the collapse of the Soviet system at the end of the 1980s.
Political systems also exhibit a great range within the Third World. There are relatively open multiparty democracies, semidemocracies or partly free societies, and authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Again, no one political system appeared to provide a greater benefit in terms of economic growth than the others until the 1980s. The only clear association that can be made between economic and political systems is that Marxist-based economies (of diverse types) permit no political competitiveness and very limited civil liberties.

By 1991 the ideologically bipolarized world, which had dominated the post–World War II period, had collapsed. The end of the Cold War had an impressive impact on the Third World, creating a new and changing political, economic, and social environment—in essence, a New Third World. The competition between the two superpowers for allies and favored status along with foreign aid and surrogate wars came to an end. Increases, or even the maintenance, of assistance became problematic with budget restraints and trade imbalances in the leading industrial countries. The economies and political structures of the former Second World, notably the Soviet bloc, began to disintegrate and eliminated the continuation of assistance to the Third World. Even earlier, the decline of oil revenues necessitated reductions in aid contributions by the OPEC countries of the Middle East.

The collapse of the Second World also accelerated the demise, perhaps only temporarily, of alternative paths to development. With the debt crisis, starting in 1982, neoliberal/conservative policies for economic development began to gain favor, aided by the elections of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States a few years earlier. These policies generally entailed government deregulation, privatization, and open economies in terms of foreign investment and imports along with greater stress on exports. It was emphasized that the government was to be a less active participant in the development process and that the private sector would be the driving force ("engine") in a more competitive and export-oriented economy.

Lagging somewhat behind was the movement toward greater democracy and human rights, in the Western tradition (political competitiveness and freedom along with civil liberties). Both of these elements—a market economy and democracy—have been received somewhat grudgingly by much of the Third World. In many cases, tough economic measures imposed by international and national lending agencies created hardship as Third World countries attempted to shift their economies. Much of the Third World had a tradition of government ownership and intervention in the economy and authoritarian political rule. These newer measures were supposed to bring about a transformation of the Third World in their economic, political, and social structures.
Furthermore, with the deteriorating economic situation in many countries and the "New World Order" (the disappearance of the Communist threat), military expenditures declined somewhat but even more so did spending on health, education, and other social programs. This weakening of the social-support system had a severe impact in many countries, especially among the poor, and did not bode well for future political stability.

The great attention to economic restructuring and stability and the push for economic development have resulted in perhaps an even greater neglect in social investments. Education, health, and nutrition have undoubtedly sustained significant setbacks in many countries. However, there seems to be a recent growing awareness of social conditions, and perhaps rectifying measures will be implemented.

Another manifestation of change has been the resurgence of ethnic conflict, which has displaced ideology as the major determinant of warfare in the Third World. Ethnic conflict is certainly not new, but it has become even more common recently. The major conflicts have shifted from the more advanced world up to the mid-twentieth century to the Third World in the post-World War II period. With deteriorating economic and social conditions and the weakening of authoritarian rule, the prospects for both ethnic and political conflict will certainly not diminish.

There has also been a move toward regional trading blocs. This originated with Western Europe in the immediate post-World War II period and has spread, with lesser degrees of involvement, to areas of the Third World. For the first time a Third World country, Mexico, has been incorporated into a close trading bloc with advanced industrial countries, the United States and Canada in the North American Free Trade Agreement. At the same time, many Third World countries, particularly those in Africa, have been cut off from traditional trade with previous colonial partners due to new exclusive trading arrangements such as the European Union.

Despite all these recent momentous changes affecting the Third World the more traditional patterns remain, although with some modifications. Some of these continuing features include the following:

1. continued rapid population growth, with a gradual decrease in the rate of growth (but not the absolute annual increase), except for the poorest region, Sub-Saharan Africa, where the potential for even faster growth exists;
2. increasing attention to the protection and preservation of the environment, although this has not near the priority it has in the First World;
3. the uneven distribution of wealth and income, probably most severe in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and most reasonably balanced in the Orient;
4. the entrenched power of elite groups, who generally resist change, especially that which they cannot control or they consider detrimental to their perceived interests;
5. lack of sufficient economic growth to overcome the pervasive poverty of most of the population;
6. dependency on the First World for technology and assistance;
7. cultural resistance to change and to the general development process in many areas by different groups;
8. the continuing historical pattern that innovations are adapted by societies that are more receptive and able to incorporate changes means that many Third World countries will fall further behind as they do not have the resources to adapt innovations, such as the "information revolution," or they wish to restrict, in part, the effects and consequences of such changes;
9. as the gap continues to grow between the First and Third Worlds, there is within the Third World a growing gap between those countries that continue to modernize and grow rapidly, best exemplified by the newly industrialized countries (NICs), and those that are changing gradually or exhibit little growth or transformation.

The diverse and controversial solutions or approaches to development that have been advocated make it clear that there is little overall consensus, and the evidence indicates there is no sure "solution." In the developmental process there are certain policies ("fads") that attain ascendancy at particular times. Currently we are experiencing an emphasis on open economies and political systems, and there are many protestations that improvement cannot be accomplished without both, despite the historical evidence to the contrary. Probably no theory, and few concepts, with regard to the development process has been accepted by the majority of specialists. Furthermore, the situation in many parts of the Third World is desperate and it is not getting better. The time for resolution is not endless. It is hoped that the following chapters will provide insight into the complex nature of the problem of development. No simplistic solutions have been put forward. Differing options are available and contrasting perspectives are presented. No attempt at conformity or unity of approach has been attempted in these presentations because in the real world these do not exist unless imposed by authorities on a country. We have tried to present as balanced an approach as possible. The reader may assess, interpret, and judge from the writings of these specialists and so choose the perspective he or she prefers and identify the possible solutions.
concept of the free enterprise system is now unhooked from strictly economic roots: The free market system is now coupled with political ideals such as individual freedom, democracy, and human rights. Countries of the Third World are being advised (Berthoud 1993) that deregulating their markets is a sure path to development and the best available system for humankind. Whether this assertion is correct, only time will tell.

Notes


4. Frederick, Global Communication, p. 120. See Francis Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man (New York: Free Press, 1992); and Timothy Burns (ed.), After History: Francis Fukuyama and His Critics (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994).


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tors and increasingly sophisticated statistical analysis the index would be more valid and acceptable. The real test of these indexes, however, is how truly they reflect real world conditions, and in this, subjectivity becomes a consideration.

The use of the per capita GNP alone in ranking the major countries does bring out one major point. Since the mid-1970s when the price of petroleum began its rapid rise, the petroleum-rich countries (notably of the Middle East) have markedly increased their per capita GNP. As a consequence, some major petroleum producers, especially Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Iraq, and Iran, rank relatively higher in this index than in any of the others. However, this has lessened recently as oil revenues have declined relatively and the oil producers have improved their health, education, and nutrition indicators.

Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) may contribute a more refined measure of income. But data will be needed from even more countries than is currently available.

The use of the Socio-Economic Development Index (SEDI) is, in my view, sufficiently sophisticated, without being unduly complex and cumbersome, to allow adequate discrimination between different levels of development. Furthermore, it comes closer, in my opinion, to satisfying the ranking of countries with my own observations of the real world.

The Human Development Index (HDI) may become quite popular, especially if it is annually updated (which appears to be the trend), and appears to be a useful measure of development.

Different countries have had greater success in one field of socioeconomic development than in others, and many countries exhibit significant variation from one component to another. There are many variations in the degree of "balanced development" among countries. There are also significant variations in development between the world's major regions and within each region itself. The Third World appears to be progressing, probably not fast enough for some, in the fields of both health and education. The situation is more mixed with regard to improvements in nutrition. Above all, however, the lag in income expansion appears to be the major drawback in the development of the Third World, especially since it contributes directly to the improvement of other socioeconomic indicators.

Notes
1. If the purpose is to measure the quality of life, I add a fifth factor, political freedom (as measured annually by Freedom House in New York).
2. Most of these components, if not all, are occasionally called into question because they are allegedly inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading. However, in my estimation these are probably the best available, and although not precisely accu-
rate, they can be used for comparative purposes. GNP data for what remains of the Communist bloc and for some other countries is provisional or not available, but the latest estimates available for those countries are presented.

3. Since there are two components in the measures of diet, health, and education, it is possible that the same country may not be the leader in both components of the same factor. This would result in no country with a ranking of 100 for that factor. This is what occurs for diet and possibly education.

4. Comparable data with regard to diet are not available for Puerto Rico and Oman. Therefore, in computing the overall index, both countries have only three of the factors instead of four. However, in diet, Puerto Rico would rank high, by the standards of the underdeveloped world.

5. Recent data are available for a total of 65 countries (44 of which are in the Third World). However, all countries have been utilized in this brief discussion of income distribution.

6. As interpreted recently, economic "restructuring" now generally refers to a collection of monetary, fiscal, business, and trade policies. As used in this study, economic "transformation" refers to the sectorial structural changes in the economy and sectorial changes in the population and labor force.

References


the twenty-first century. Also, regional differences in rates of population growth, urbanization, and economic development will continue to differentiate Third World regions and countries. One cannot apply the same generalizations about population growth to China and India, or to Argentina and Mexico. Nor can levels of urbanization in Africa be equated with Latin America. These differences must be considered in any evaluation of future developments in the Third World. It remains to be seen if the projections of future world population and metropolitan area size presented in this chapter will prove to be accurate, and chances are they will not be. But whatever the future brings, the answers lie in the dynamics of Third World population growth, migration, and urban expansion.

Notes

1. Some demographic transition models, such as that developed by Chung, identify three stages of population growth rather than four as used in this chapter. In those models stages 2 and 3 are combined.

2. Not all human mobility is classified as migration. Migration must include a relatively long-term change of residence. Repetitive movements, such as commuting to work or school, or temporary changes of residence to attend school, a training program, or for work do not constitute migration. These short-term and often habitual movements are referred to as circulation. Mike Pamwell (1993: 11–28) provides a comprehensive review of migration forms and the terminology applied to them.

3. As a result of negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Palestinians in Gaza and certain West Bank communities are now partly self-governing and may no longer be classified as refugees.

4. Indices of primacy are sometimes used to compare the urban primacy of countries. The index is a ratio of the population of the largest city in a country with the combined populations of the next three largest cities.

References


were summed. The resulting scores were the basis for a ranked classification of conditions and potentials of health of the 150 countries for which data were available.

The spatial patterns of the extremes are expected. The advanced countries of East and West—a "First World" of health—scored well on each of the components. The poorest, least developed countries of, particularly, Africa and southern Asia clearly demonstrate the existence of a counterworld of disease and death. What is significant is the disparity in the numbers of people who reside in those worlds of extremes. Only 12 percent of global population is represented by the 38 countries of the lowest quartile, while 17 percent of the world's peoples are in the most developed upper quartile. More than two-thirds of humanity occupies transitional ground between the two extremes. Within countries, especially the larger ones, there are usually striking differences in conditions for rural and urban populations. For instance, in China, conditions in rural areas are typical of poorer developing countries; in the cities they are similar to those of developed countries such as the United States and Japan (Lawson and Lin 1994).

The appalling conditions of disease and death afflicting the poorest, least developed countries serve as a continuing reminder that much yet remains before adopted international goals of "Health for All by the Year 2000" are achieved. Nevertheless, by the multifactor evaluation of national conditions of health applied here, some two-thirds of the world's population is beginning to approach the health standards set by the most advanced countries. Although the present reality is divided, the prospect is for a converging single world of health by about 2030.

References


which people have available to them the resources needed to attain a decent standard of living, women lagged behind men in every country for which data were available. Among developing countries the gender gap was narrowest in El Salvador, Thailand, and Paraguay and widest in Egypt, Bahrain, and Hong Kong where women's access to resources was about two-thirds that of men. These data make it clear that women's poverty is fundamentally a matter of gender bias in entitlements. Yet public action to strengthen the entitlements of poor women has been piecemeal.

The collection of data disaggregated by gender has revealed women's roles in the economies of developing countries and the differential impact of development on men and women. It is now clear that benefits accruing to the male head of household do not automatically trickle down to wives and children. Women's work and women's role in society is radically changed by development, but different groups of women are affected in opposing ways. Young educated women may be drawn into modern industrial employment whereas the work of older craftswomen becomes obsolete. Such changes upset the traditional hierarchy based on age and sex, and generational conflict may result with pressure groups urging the preservation of traditional age-sex hierarchies. This is often blamed on Western influence despite the fact that colonialism and later Western experts undermined women's traditional position and strengthened that of men.

Gender issues came into the development field largely through the influence of the women's movement in the United States, but they have become institutionalized. Only through continued pressure from both North and South will the benefits to society as a whole of ending gender bias be fully appreciated. Many of the young women in Third World countries who have completed their education and taken up employment in the industrialized economy over the past decade are unwilling to follow in the footsteps of their mothers. Global communications have brought even the most remote villages within reach of the American soap opera, and although Bolivian villagers found that the most impressive aspect of *Dallas* was the size of the cows, the overall impact of exposure to more equal gender relations and roles and to the consumption patterns of rich societies is a rapid rise in expectations. The demand for change is now coming from the grassroots, and many of today's most competent and charismatic leaders of the international movement for women and development are themselves citizens of Third World countries.

**References**

Gender Bias in Development


References


Although this chapter is based on several decades of research on the subject and the examination of comparable work by scores of other scholars, the ideas and interpretations presented are largely my own. Some conform with conventional evaluations and some do not. The reader is encouraged to view it all with a degree of caution and accept those aspects that appear to be most sensible in the context of personal experience and education. In addition, it must be recognized that any such evaluations are aimed at moving targets; conditions change continually and what has been true may change tomorrow. The thrust of my analyses, however, is that improvements in fundamental human conditions are spreading worldwide at an accelerating pace and that awareness of this reality enhances global understanding.

References


facturing, and technology innovation. Several places, Panama, the Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands in particular, have thrived as "offshore" banking and financial centers (an approach currently being tried in the Turks and Caicos Islands), but for most, only commerce and assembly-type manufacturing have been pursued. Yet the human resource base to expand the latter is present. How quickly the differing societies adapt to incorporate aspects of technology into their economic systems may become a measure of their relative success in a changing modern world.

References


currently being tried, with notable success (in some aspects) in the 1990s, especially in Argentina and Chile. This approach is now favored, to varying degrees, in virtually all countries of the continent and in the Third World in general.

The governments of these countries, for probably the first time without direct military control of any government, whether through the electoral system or the fiat of an elite, have some interesting questions or options to consider. Who is to develop and control the mineral resources (or other resources, for that matter)? Most countries surely would prefer to control the resource but do not possess sufficient capital or technology to develop it. In a somewhat similar vein, what about agribusiness, especially if foreign? There appeared to be a fetish in the recent past against “dependency on imported food,” but if imports are less costly than local production (food or manufactured goods) the result that must be faced is that consumer prices will be higher or government subsidies will be costly. Although other considerations may be involved (encouragement of local producers, security of production, perhaps social benefits), governments must take the economic costs into account. The present trend is to allow the open market to exert a greater role in determining prices, but these policies frequently result in greater unemployment (supposedly short-term) and failed local businesses. Some countries appear to be prepared to accept the economic and social costs of restructuring their economies from government intervention and import-substitution policies to more open economies based on private initiative and investment (including foreign-based assets).

The way ahead for South America is certainly not clear. The potential is considerable but the problems are formidable. The options have to be weighed, and the question is whether the decision will be made via a free and honest electoral process or by an elite group (with or without popular support). And the basic question to be resolved regarding policy is who will benefit and who will bear the cost.

Notes

1. “South America” as used in this chapter refers to the whole of that continent, except for the Guianas (Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana) and the Falkland Islands, which are culturally distinct from the remainder of the continent and have a different historical background. These excluded areas constitute less than 3 percent of the area and less than one-half of 1 percent of the population of the continent.

2. The “southern cone” refers to the southern portion of the continent of South America. It comprises Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and the south and sometimes the southeast of Brasil. In some cases even Paraguay is included. In this study, Brasil and Paraguay are not included as southern cone countries.
“Brasil” is the spelling in Portuguese for that country and, therefore, is the correct spelling rather than the Anglicized “Brazil.”

3. “Middle America” refers to the northern 13 percent of the Latin American region (i.e., the southern portion of the North American continent). Middle America comprises the mainland and islands between the United States and South America, and therefore includes Mexico, Central America, and the Antilles (West Indies).

4. Although incomes, even in real terms, increased for virtually all South American countries in both decades, compared to the world leaders (in the industrialized world) all countries in South America (except Suriname, which is excluded in this study) experienced a relative decline in their income position from 1960 to the early 1990s overall.


References


Sustained growth in many Arab countries has been threatened by the sharp drop in oil prices on the international market, leading to decrease in exports. In much of the Arab World the GDP growth is smaller than the population growth. Historically these countries have relied heavily on public investment. Poverty and unemployment must be countered by developing private sector enterprises, mainly small and medium-size businesses.

Developing human resources will require the improvement and expansion of basic services. Most Arab countries still lag behind other middle-income countries on all basic indicators, especially adult illiteracy and infant mortality rates.

Managing environmental resources is an urgent issue for the region. The water tables are dropping in much of the Arab World due to increased urbanization and demographic growth. Technology development for the agricultural sector, demand management, desalination and wastewater plants are options that must be explored quickly before withdrawals exceed freshwater potentials. Agreements among neighboring nations will increasingly be needed due to the sharing of underground aquifers and rivers crossing national borders.

The economic development of the region is crucial if the promises of political stability and financial prosperity are to be tangible dividends of the ongoing peace process.

References


democracy but struggles for economic reform, China has economic reform but resists democracy. India has the advantages of both economic reform and an established democracy.

Bangladesh and Pakistan have used planning haphazardly without proper coordination; however, there is a marked improvement in agricultural production. The region has the landlocked countries of Nepal and Bhutan and the island nations of Sri Lanka and the Maldives and it contains the large nation states of India and Pakistan. Politically, South Asia ranges from the democracies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives (one party democracy) to the elected government of Nepal, which advises the king who has the authority to accept or reject the advice, to Bhutan, which has limited freedom. Thus, South Asia is like a museum of races and cultures, cults and customs, faiths and tongues, with a vast gap between the rich and poor and between the educated and the illiterates. Nevertheless, despite this diversity there is a considerable degree of unity due to common historical bonds, cultural similarities, economic necessities, and common interests of the region that bind all nation states together.

References


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Since independence, the region's politics have been dominated by military dictatorship and one-party rule. But recent moves toward liberalization and democracy are gaining strength; over half of the region's countries have now held elections and are moving toward pluralism.

What is the region's potential for the future? First, economic recovery and political freedoms are already gaining ground. Second, its diverse peoples are energetic and resourceful. The area contains rich mineral resources; land is still available. Given their initial moves toward democracy, Sub-Saharan Africans will surely move to improve their lot with benefits they have long yearned for—better education and health, expanded industries and trade, enlightened government, and other advancements that self-rule brings.

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justing to global fluctuations and its own weaknesses, it is very vulnerable to stagnation and regression in its economic growth.

In the final analysis, it must be emphasized that there are numerous indicators of economic development with disagreement on what should be considered and their relative importance. Logically, there will always be differing opinions about which countries are NICs. There are countries other than those mentioned earlier that can be discussed. The tables presented here can be expanded to include more countries, but countries have been omitted owing to a lack of published, reliable data describing them. Even if such information were available, there are domestic factors through which such statistical information must be filtered qualitatively to gain an appreciation of the underlying conditions. In addition, there are qualitative indicators such as acceptance of foreign ideas and changing perceptions that are useful in contributing to an assessment of the level of development. This provocative thought speaks to the need for expanded field observations and in-country experience required to render a credible interpretation of the data.

References


ingly difficult for politicians to divorce the issue of big versus small government from the corollary issue of "who pays" and "who benefits," "us" or "them"? Barring the emergence of a new progressive reform movement, perhaps the most likely scenario is continued population growth, environmental degradation, social and economic decline, and political fragmentation and conflict.

Notes

1. Immigration experts now believe that almost as many illegals enter the U.S. as tourists as those who cross the border illegally. If true, then perhaps as many as 600,000 illegals and up to 1.5 million total new immigrants are actually entering the country each year (Dunn 1995).

2. About one million Americans are incarcerated in prisons, another million in jails. The prison population is double what it was in 1985. Moreover, about one-half the prison population is black.

References


