



# The Challenge of Third World Development (3rd Edition)

By Howard Handelman

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## **Editorial Review**

### **From the Publisher**

This text explores various aspects of political, economic, and social development and underdevelopment in the broad array of countries that make up the Third World. It identifies the major challenges facing developing nations and the efforts being made to address them.

### **From the Back Cover**

Well-written and comprehensive, the third edition of *The Challenge of Third World Development* presents a degree of sophisticated theory behind development in Third World countries, while examining their shared issues of political, economical, and social underdevelopment. The text explores topics such as religion, cultural pluralism, ethnic conflict, women's effect on development, rural change, urbanization, revolutionary change, and the military.

- Examines modernization theory and dependency theory
- Discusses democratization in the Third World
- Explores major political divisions in the Less Developed Countries and analyzes potential solutions
- Dedicates a full chapter to gender issues
- Reflects recent world events

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Less than a month before this manuscript was sent off to Prentice Hall, America was traumatized by the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. Suddenly, the country was saturated with more media coverage of Third World terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, and civil war in the previously obscure country of Afghanistan than anyone could have imagined. But even before the events of September 11, 2001, Americans had increasingly, and often begrudgingly, been exposed to news coverage of the world's less developed nations. Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda, the Palestinian West Bank, Indonesia, and Mexico now occupy prominent positions on the evening news previously reserved for countries such as Russia, Japan, and Britain. Yet despite their increased importance, phenomena such as Islamic fundamentalism, ethnic warfare, and democratic transitions in developing nations remain shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding for most Americans.

For want of a better term, this book refers to the more than 150 disparate, developing nations as the Third World (the term is defined in Chapter 1). They include desperately poor countries such as Afghanistan and Ethiopia and rapidly developing industrial powers such as South Korea and Taiwan. Some, like Trinidad and Costa Rica, are stable democracies; others, such as Myanmar and Syria, suffer under highly repressive dictatorships. All of them, however, share at least some of the aspects of political, economic, and social underdevelopment that are analyzed in this book.

No text is capable of fully examining the political and economic systems of so many highly diverse countries. Instead, we will look for common issues, problems, and potential solutions. We start in Chapter 1 by exploring the nature of political and economic underdevelopment, and we then analyze the leading explanatory theories. The next chapter discusses what has been arguably the most important political change in world politics during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries—the wave of democratic change

that has swept over the developing nations of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East (as well as the former Soviet bloc of nations and southern Europe).

Because these often still-fragile transitions from authoritarian to democratic government are potentially so important, most of the chapters that follow contain discussion of how democratization is likely to influence issues such as the level of ethnic conflict, the role of women in the political system, and the proper path to economic development.

Chapters 3 to 5 on Religion and Politics, Cultural Pluralism and Ethnic Conflict, and Women and Development analyze broad social forces and gender issues that have often divided developing nations. Chapters 6 to 7 on Rural Change and Urbanization discuss the specific problems and challenges that many countries face in those two sectors of society. Next, Chapters 8 to 9 on Revolutionary Change and Soldiers and Politics consider the records of each of those regime types (e.g., revolutionary governments in China and Cuba and military regimes in Brazil and Indonesia) as alternative models of political and economic development. Finally, Chapter 10, dealing with Third World Political Economies, compares alternative paths to economic development and evaluates the relative effectiveness of each.

It is easy to despair when considering the tremendous obstacles facing most Third World nations and the failures of political leadership that so many of them have endured. Unfortunately, many of us in the First World have suffered from "compassion fatigue" or have become cynical about cooperative efforts with Third World countries. The assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001 and the ensuing war with Afghanistan have reinforced many people's perception of the less developed nations (LDCs) as poor beyond redemption and saturated with fanaticism and authoritarian beliefs. Yet the recent trend toward democratization in the developing world (most notably in Latin America), the increased stability that has come to southern Africa, and the enormous economic growth that has taken place in parts of East and Southeast Asia, all provide new bases for hope. It is incumbent upon the West's next generation of citizens and leaders to renew efforts to understand the challenge of Third World development.

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