

Snapshot Economic Development in the Global South by the Early Twenty-first Century⁵

This table samples the economic performance of fourteen developing countries and five major regions of the Global South by the early twenty-first century. Similar data for the United States, Japan, and Russia are included for comparative purposes. Which indicators of development do you find most revealing? What aspects

Regions/Countries	Population Growth Rate Average Annual 2000–2007 (%)	Gross National Income per Capita, 2007 (U.S. \$)	Purchasing Power per Capita, 2007 (U.S. \$)
East Asia	0.8	2,180	4,937
China	0.6	2,360	5,370
Philippines	2.0	1,620	3,370
Latin America	1.3	5,540	9,321
Mexico	1.0	8,340	12,580
Brazil	1.4	5,910	9,370
Guatemala	2.5	2,440	4,520
Middle East and North Africa	1.8	2,794	7,385
Egypt	1.8	1,580	5,400
Turkey	1.3	8,020	12,090
Iran	1.5	3,470	10,800
Saudi Arabia	2.3	15,440	22,910
South Asia	1.6	880	2,537
India	1.4	950	2,470
Indonesia	1.3	1,650	3,580
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.5	952	1,870
Nigeria	2.4	930	1,770
Congo	3.0	140	290
Tanzania	2.5	400	1,200
For comparison			
High-income countries	0.7	37,566	36,100
United States	0.9	46,040	45,850
Japan	0.1	37,670	34,600
Russia	-0.5	7,560	14,400

of development does each of them measure? Based on these data, which countries or regions would you consider the most and the least successful? Does your judgment about “success” vary depending on which measure you use?

Life Expectancy in years, 2003–2006		Adult Literacy (%) 2005	Infant Mortality (Deaths under Age 5 per 1,000)		CO ₂ Emission per Capita, 2004 (Metric Tons)
MALE	FEMALE		1990	2006	
69	73	91	56	29	3.3
70	74	91	45	24	3.9
69	74	93	62	32	1.0
70	76	90	55	20	2.7
72	77	92	53	35	4.3
69	76	89	57	20	1.8
66	74	69	82	41	1.0
68	72	73	78	42	4.2
69	73	71	91	35	2.2
69	74	87	82	26	3.2
69	72	82	72	34	6.4
71	75	83	44	25	13.7
63	66	58	123	83	1.1
63	66	61	115	76	1.2
66	70	90	91	34	1.7
49	52	59	184	157	0.9
46	47	69	230	191	0.8
45	47	67	205	205	0.0
51	53	69	161	118	0.1
76	82	99	12	7	13.1
75	81	99	11	8	20.6
79	86	99	6	4	9.8
59	73	99	27	16	10.6



Microloans

Bangladesh's Grameen Bank pioneered an innovative approach to economic development by offering modest loans to poor people, enabling them to start small businesses. Here a group of women who received such loans meet in early 2004 to make an installment payment to an officer of the bank. (Rafiqur Rahman/Reuters/Corbis)

Brazil, and Bolivia, for example—once again asserted a more prominent role for the state in their quests for economic development and social justice.

Other issues as well inspired debate. In many places, an early emphasis on city-based industrial development, stirred by visions of a rapid transition to modernity, led to a neglect or exploitation of rural areas and agriculture. This “urban bias” subsequently came in for much criticism and some adjustment in spending priorities. A growing recognition of the role of women in agriculture led to charges of “male bias” in development planning and to mounting efforts to assist women farmers directly (see Document 23.4). Women also were central to many governments’ increased interest in curtailing population growth. Women’s

access to birth control, education, and employment, it turned out, provided powerful incentives to limit family size. Another debate pitted the advocates of capital- and technology-driven projects (dams and factories, for example) against those who favored investment in “human capital,” such as education, technical training, health care, and nutrition. The benefits and drawbacks of foreign aid, investment, and trade have likewise been contentious issues. Should developing countries seek to shield themselves from the influences of international capitalism, or are they better off vigorously engaging with the global economy?

Economic development was never simply a matter of technical expertise or deciding among competing theories. Every decision was political, involving winners and losers in terms of power, advantage, and wealth. Where to locate schools, roads, factories, and clinics, for example, provoked endless controversies, some of them expressed in terms of regional or ethnic rivalries. It was an experimental process, and the stakes were high.

The results of those experiments have varied considerably, as the Snapshot on pages 1100–01 indicates. East Asian countries in general have had the strongest record of economic growth. South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong were dubbed “newly industrialized countries,” and China boasted the most rapid economic growth in the world by the end of the twentieth century, replacing Japan as the world’s second-largest economy. In the 1990s, Asia’s other giant, India, opened itself more fully to the world market and launched rapid economic growth with a powerful high-tech sector and an expanding middle class. Oil-producing countries reaped a bonanza when they were able to demand much higher prices for that essential commodity in the 1970s

and after. Several Latin American states (Chile and Brazil, for example) entered the world market vigorously and successfully with growing industrial sectors. Limited principally to Europe, North America, and Japan in the nineteenth century, industrialization had become a global phenomenon in the twentieth century.

Elsewhere, the story was very different. In most of Africa, much of the Arab world, and parts of Asia—regions representing about one-third of the world’s population—there was little sign of catching up and frequent examples of declining standards of living since the end of the 1960s. Between 1980 and 2000, the average income in forty-three of Africa’s poorest countries dropped by 25 percent, pushing living standards for many below what they had been at independence.

Scholars and politicians alike argue about the reasons for such sharp differences. Variables such as geography and natural resources, differing colonial experiences, variations in regional cultures, the degree of political stability and social equality, state economic policies, population growth rates, and varying forms of involvement with the world economy have been invoked to explain the widely diverging trajectories among developing countries.

Experiments with Culture: The Role of Islam in Turkey and Iran

The quest for economic development represented the embrace of an emerging global culture of modernity—with its scientific outlook, its technological achievements, and its focus on material values. It also exposed developing countries to the changing culture of the West, including feminism, rock and rap, sexual permissiveness, consumerism, and democracy. But the peoples of the Global South also had inherited cultural patterns from the more distant past—Hindu, Confucian, or Islamic, for example. A common issue all across the developing world involved the uneasy relationship between these older traditions and the more recent outlooks associated with modernity and the West. This tension provided the raw material for a series of cultural experiments in the twentieth century, and nowhere were they more consequential than in the Islamic world. No single answer emerged to the question of how Islam and modernity should relate to each other, but the experience of Turkey and Iran illustrate two quite different approaches to this fundamental issue.

In the aftermath of World War I, modern Turkey emerged from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, led by an energetic general, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), who fought off British, French, Italian, and Greek efforts to dismember what was left of the old empire. Often compared to Peter the Great in Russia (see p. 844), Atatürk then sought to transform his country into a modern, secular, and national state. Such ambitions were not entirely new, for they built upon the efforts of nineteenth-century

■ Comparison

In what ways did cultural revolutions in Turkey and Iran reflect different understandings of the role of Islam in modern societies?

Iran, Turkey, and the Middle East





Westernization in Turkey

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, often appeared in public in elegant European dress, symbolizing for his people a sharp break with traditional Islamic ways of living. Here he is dancing with his adopted daughter at her high-society wedding in 1929. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Ottoman reformers, who, like Atatürk, greatly admired European Enlightenment thinking and sought to bring its benefits to their country.

To Atatürk and his followers, to become modern meant “to enter European civilization completely.” They believed that this required the total removal of Islam from public life, relegating it to the personal and private realm. In doing so, Atatürk argued that “Islam will be elevated, if it will cease to be a political instrument.” In fact, he sought to broaden access to the religion by translating the Quran into Turkish and issuing the call to prayer in Turkish rather than Arabic.

Ataturk largely ended, however, the direct political role of Islam. The old sultan or ruler of the Ottoman Empire, whose position had long been sanctified by Islamic tradition, was deposed as Turkey became a republic. Furthermore the caliphate, by which Ottoman sultans had claimed leadership of the entire Islamic world, was abolished. Various Sufi organizations, sacred tombs, and religious schools were closed and a number of religious titles abolished. Islamic courts were likewise dissolved, while secular law codes, modeled on those of Europe, replaced the *sharia*. In history textbooks, pre-Islamic Turkish culture was celebrated as the foundation for all ancient civilizations. The Arabic script in which the Turkish language had long been written was exchanged for a new Western-style alphabet that made literacy much easier but rendered centuries of Ottoman culture inaccessible to these newly literate people. (See Document 24.1, pp. 1167–68, for an example of Atatürk’s thinking.)

The most visible symbols of Atatürk’s revolutionary program occurred in the realm of dress. Turkish men were ordered to abandon the traditional headdress known as the *fez* and to wear brimmed hats. According to Atatürk,

A civilized, international dress is worthy and appropriate for our nation, and we will wear it. Boots or shoes on our feet, trousers on our legs, shirt and tie, jacket and waistcoat—and of course, to complete these, a cover with a brim on our heads.⁶

Although women were not forbidden to wear the veil, many elite women abandoned it and set the tone for feminine fashion in Turkey.

In Atatürk’s view, the emancipation of women was a cornerstone of the new Turkey. In a much-quoted speech, he declared:

If henceforward the women do not share in the social life of the nation, we shall never attain to our full development. We shall remain irremediably backward, incapable of treating on equal terms with the civilizations of the West.⁷

Thus polygamy was abolished; women were granted equal rights in divorce, inheritance, and child custody; and in 1934 Turkish women gained the right to vote and hold public office, a full decade before French women gained that right. Public beaches were now opened to women as well.

These reforms represented a “cultural revolution” unique in the Islamic world of the time, and they were imposed against considerable opposition. After Atatürk’s death in 1938, some of them were diluted or rescinded. The call to prayer returned to the traditional Arabic in 1950, and various political groups urged a greater role for Islam in the public arena. In 1996, a moderate Islamic political party came to power, and in early 2008 the Turkish parliament voted to end the earlier prohibition on women wearing headscarves in universities. Nevertheless, the essential secularism of the Turkish state, backed by a powerful military establishment, remained an enduring legacy of the Atatürk revolution. But elsewhere in the Islamic world, other solutions to the question of Islam and modernity took shape.

A very different answer emerged in Iran in the final quarter of the twentieth century. By that time all across the Islamic world, disappointments abounded with the social and economic results of political independence and secular development, while hostility to continuing Western cultural, military, and political intrusion grew apace. These conditions gave rise to numerous movements of Islamic revival or renewal that cast the religion as a guide to public as well as private life. If Western models of a good society had failed, it seemed reasonable to many people to turn their attention to distinctly Islamic solutions.

Iran seemed an unlikely place for an Islamic revolution. Under the government of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (ruled 1941–1979), Iran had undertaken what many saw as a quite successful modernization effort. The country had great wealth in oil, a powerful military, a well-educated elite, and a solid alliance with the United States. Furthermore, the shah’s so-called White Revolution, intended to promote the country’s modernization, had redistributed land to many of the Iran’s impoverished peasantry, granted women the right to vote, invested substantially in rural health care and education, initiated a number of industrial projects, and offered workers a share in the profits of those industries. But beneath the surface of apparent success, discontent and resentment were brewing. Traditional merchants, known as *bazaaris*, felt threatened by an explosion of imported Western goods and by competition from large-scale businesses. Religious leaders, the *ulama*, were offended by secular education programs that bypassed Islamic schools and by state control of religious institutions. Educated professionals found Iran’s reliance on the West disturbing. Rural migrants to the country’s growing cities, especially Tehran, faced rising costs and uncertain employment.

A repressive and often brutal government allowed little outlet for such grievances. Thus, opposition to the shah’s regime came to center on the country’s many

mosques, where Iran's Shi'ite religious leaders invoked memories of earlier persecution and martyrdom as they mobilized that opposition and called for the shah's removal. The emerging leader of that movement was the high-ranking Shia cleric Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini (1902–1989), who in 1979 returned from long exile in Paris to great acclaim. By then, massive urban demonstrations, strikes, and defections from the military had eroded support for the shah, who abdicated the throne and left the country.

What followed was also a cultural revolution, but one that moved in precisely the opposite direction from that of Atatürk's Turkey—toward, rather than away from, the Islamization of public life. The new government defined itself as an Islamic republic, with an elected parliament and a constitution, but in practice it represented the rule of Islamic clerics, in which conservative ulama, headed by Khomeini, exercised dominant power. The Council of Guardians, composed of leading legal scholars, was empowered to interpret the constitution, to supervise elections, and to review legislation—all designed to ensure compatibility with a particular vision of Islam. Opposition to the new regime was harshly crushed, with some 1,800 executions in 1981 alone for those regarded as “waging war against God.”⁸

Khomeini, whose ideas are illustrated more fully in Document 24.3 on pages 1171–73, believed that the purpose of government was to apply the law of Allah as expressed in the sharia. Thus all judges now had to be competent in Islamic law, and those lacking that qualification were dismissed. The secular law codes under which the shah's government had operated were discarded in favor of those based solely on Islamic precedents. Islamization likewise profoundly affected the domain of education and culture. In June 1980 the new government closed some 200 universities and colleges for two years while textbooks, curricula, and faculty were “purified” of un-Islamic influences. Elementary and secondary schools, largely secular under the shah, now gave priority to religious instruction and the teaching of Arabic, even as about 40,000 teachers lost their jobs for lack of sufficient Islamic piety. Pre-Islamic Persian literature and history were now out of favor, while the history of Islam and Iran's revolution predominated in schools and the mass media. Western loan words were purged from the Farsi language, replaced by their Arabic equivalents.

As in Turkey, the role of women became a touchstone of this Islamic cultural revolution. By 1983, all women were required to wear the modest head-to-toe covering known as *hijab*, a regulation enforced by roving groups of militants or “revolutionary guards.” Those found with “bad hijab” were subject to harassment and sometimes lashings or imprisonment. Sexual segregation was imposed in schools, parks, beaches, and public transportation. The legal age of marriage for girls, set at eighteen under the shah, was reduced to nine with parental consent and thirteen, later raised to fifteen, without it. Married women could no longer file for divorce or attend school. Yet, despite such restrictions, many women supported the revolution and over the next several decades found far greater opportunities for employment



and higher education than before. By the early twenty-first century, almost 60 percent of university students were women. And women's right to vote was left intact.

While Atatürk's cultural revolution of Westernization and secularism was largely an internal affair that freed Turkey from the wider responsibilities of the caliphate, Khomeini clearly sought to export Iran's Islamic revolution. He openly called for the replacement of insufficiently Islamic regimes in the Middle East and offered training and support for their opponents. In Lebanon, Syria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and elsewhere, Khomeini appealed to Shi'ite minorities and other disaffected people, and Iran became a model to which many Islamic radicals looked. An eight-year war with Saddam Hussein's highly secularized Iraq (1980–1988) was one of the outcomes and generated enormous casualties. That conflict reflected the differences between Arabs and Persians, between Sunni and Shia versions of Islam, and between a secular Iraqi regime and Khomeini's revolutionary Islamic government.

After Khomeini's death in 1989, some elements of this revolution eased a bit. For a time enforcement of women's dress code was not so stringent, and a more moderate government came to power in 1997, raising hopes for a loosening of strict Islamic regulations. By 2005, however, more conservative elements were back in control and a new crackdown on women's clothing soon surfaced. A heavily disputed election

Women and the Iranian Revolution

One of the goals of Iran's Islamic Revolution was to enforce a more modest and traditional dress code for the country's women. In this photo from 2004, a woman clad in hijab and talking on her cell phone walks past a poster of the Ayatollah Khomeini, who led that revolution in 1979. (AP Images)

in 2009 revealed substantial opposition to the country's rigid Islamic regime. Iran's ongoing Islamic revolution, however, did not mean the abandonment of economic modernity. The country's oil revenues continued to fund its development, and by the early twenty-first century, Iran was actively pursuing nuclear power and perhaps nuclear weapons, in defiance of Western opposition to these policies.

Reflections: History in the Middle of the Stream

Historians are usually more at ease telling stories that have clear endings, such as those that describe ancient Egyptian civilization, Chinese maritime voyages, the collapse of the Aztec Empire, or the French Revolution. There is a finality to these stories and a distance from them that makes it easier for historians to assume the posture of detached observer, even if their understandings of those events change over time. Finality, distance, and detachment are harder to come by when historians are describing the events of the past century, for many of its processes are clearly not over. The United States' role as a global superpower and its war in Iraq, the fate of democracy in Latin America and Africa, the rise of China and India as economic giants, the position of Islam in Turkey and Iran—all of these are unfinished stories, their outcomes unknown and unknowable. In dealing with such matters, historians write from the middle of the stream, often uncomfortably, rather than from the banks, where they might feel more at ease.

In part, that discomfort arises from questions about the future that such issues inevitably raise. Can the spread of nuclear weapons be halted? Will democracy flourish globally? Are Islamic and Christian civilizations headed for a global clash? Can African countries replicate the economic growth experience of India and China? Historians in particular are uneasy about responding to such questions because they are so aware of the unexpectedness and surprising quality of the historical process. Yet those questions about the future are legitimate and important, for as the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard remarked: "Life can only be understood backward, but it is lived forward." History, after all, is the only guide we have to the possible shape of that future. So, like everyone before us, we stumble on, both individually and collectively, largely in the dark, using analogies from the past as we make our way ahead.

These vast uncertainties about the future provide a useful reminder that although we know the outcomes of earlier human stories—the Asian and African struggles for independence, for example—those who lived that history did not. Such awareness can perhaps engender in us a measure of humility, a kind of sympathy, and a sense of common humanity with those whose lives we study. However we may differ from our ancestors across time and place, we share with them an immense ignorance about what the future holds.

Second Thoughts

What’s the Significance?

decolonization	Muhammad Ali Jinnah	democracy in Africa
Indian National Congress	African National Congress	economic development
Mahatma Gandhi	Nelson Mandela	Kemal Atatürk
<i>satyagraha</i>	Black Consciousness	Ayatollah Khomeini
Muslim League	Soweto	

To assess your mastery of the material in this chapter, visit the **Student Center** at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer.

Big Picture Questions

1. In what ways did the colonial experience and the struggle for independence shape the agenda of developing countries in the second half of the twentieth century?
2. To what extent did the experience of the former colonies and developing countries in the twentieth century parallel that of the earlier “new nations” in the Americas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?
3. How would you compare the historical experiences of India and China in the twentieth century?
4. From the viewpoint of the early twenty-first century, to what extent had the goals of nationalist or independence movements been achieved?

Next Steps: For Further Study

Chinua Achebe, *Anhills of the Savannah* (1989). A brilliant fictional account of postindependence Nigeria by that country’s foremost novelist.

Fredrick Cooper, *Africa since 1940* (2002). A readable overview of the coming of independence and efforts at development by a leading historian of Africa.

Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World’s Largest Democracy* (2007). A thoughtful account of India’s first six decades of independence.

John Isbister, *Promises Not Kept* (2006). A well-regarded consideration of the obstacles to and struggles for development in the Global South.

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (1995).

Mandela’s account of his own amazing life as nationalist leader and South African statesman.

W. David McIntyre, *British Decolonization, 1946–1997* (1998). A global history of the demise of the British Empire.

Complete site on Mahatma Gandhi, <http://www.mk Gandhi.org>. A wealth of resources for exploring the life of Gandhi.

For Web sites and additional documents related to this chapter, see **Make History** at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer.