

This book provides a critical evaluation of development approaches, both mainstream and alternative. It considers how theories have been translated into policies, and the practical effects of these policies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It seeks to isolate those ideas and methods that have worked in practice and continue to show promise in meeting development requirements.

The book opens with an analysis of Keynesian and neoliberal development approaches. The author describes the mixed results of their application in Latin America, Africa, and Asia's newly industrializing countries. He also examines the evolution of postwar development in all major regions, tying together economic, social, political, and environmental factors.

John Brohman then looks at alternative development theories and practices. He considers both their positive and negative aspects, and focuses on three critical areas: democratic participation and empowerment, women and gender, and environment and sustainability. He concludes by examining whether popular development – a strategy which rejects formal models – can succeed in providing an approach that will meet the needs and interests of people in diverse political, cultural, and social conditions.

This book is important and timely. It integrates theoretical analysis with practical experience in a wide range of development contexts. Its argument is trenchant, its analysis clear, and its recommendations urgent. It is fully referenced, contains a guide to further reading, and has a comprehensive index.

John Brohman is Associate Professor of Geography and Latin American Studies at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada. His current research focuses on theories and strategies of Third World development. He has worked and traveled widely in all of the South's major regions, most recently in Latin America. During the 1980s he worked on the agrarian reform in Nicaragua and is presently involved in a rural development project there.

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