

**Histories of Development and Modernization: Findings,  
Reflections, Future Research**  
by Corinna Unger

**Abstract**

*„Modernisierung“ und „Entwicklung“ als historische Phänomene haben in den vergangenen Jahren vermehrt Aufmerksamkeit erhalten. Im Zuge der historiographischen „Wiederentdeckung“ von Kolonialismus und Imperialismus ist die koloniale Entwicklungspolitik aus vielen Perspektiven untersucht worden. Ähnlich hat der Aufstieg der neuen internationalen, transnationalen und Globalgeschichte frische Blicke auf die Dekolonisation und den Kalten Krieg ermutigt – Phasen, in denen Ideen und Praktiken von Entwicklung und Modernisierung in vielen Teilen der Welt prominent waren und ihre Spuren hinterließen. Angesichts der Fülle an Untersuchungen, die mittlerweile zur Geschichte von Entwicklung und Modernisierung vorliegen, scheint es an der Zeit, die Erkenntnisse zu sichten und einige konzeptionelle Probleme zu überdenken. Damit verbunden ist das Bemühen, die transatlantische Kluft zu überbrücken, die das Feld in einigen Teilen kennzeichnet.*

*Zu diesem Zweck bietet der Forschungsbericht einen Überblick über die amerikanische und deutsche Forschung etwa des letzten Jahrzehnts und gibt Impulse für zukünftige Studien. Er beginnt mit der Geschichte des Konzepts Entwicklung und einer Skizze der historischen Arbeiten über Entwicklung als politische Praxis. Er wendet sich dann der Forschung über die Entstehung des Konzepts Modernisierung zu und verbindet es mit der Geschichte älterer Entwicklungsideen und -erfahrungen. Im zweiten Teil diskutiert der Bericht Befunde zur Beziehung zwischen Entwicklung, Modernisierung und Experten sowie zur Bedeutung von Gewalt und Geschlecht, gefolgt von einem kurzen Abschnitt über Modernisierung und Globalisierung. Abschließend werden einige methodische und konzeptionelle Fragen mit Blick auf mögliche zukünftige Studien erörtert.*

**Abstract**

*Modernization and development have received much attention from historians in recent years. As part of the historiographical „rediscovery“ of colonialism and imperialism, colonial development policies have been studied from various angles. Similarly, the rise of new international, transnational, and global history has encouraged new perspectives on decolonization and the Cold War, eras in which ideas and practices of development and modernization figured prominently in and left their imprints on many parts of the world. With a wealth of publications on development and modernization available, the time seems ripe to take stock and to rethink some of the conceptual issues at stake. This effort might also help to bridge the transatlantic divide that marks the field in some respects.*

*With these goals in mind, the research report supplies an overview of German and American scholarship of the past decade or so. The report begins with the history of development and provides a sketch of historiographical interpretations of development as political practice. It then turns to research on the evolution of the concept of modernization and its ties to older development ideas and experiences. In the second part, the report presents findings on the relation between development and experts, coercion, and gender, followed by a brief section on modernization and globalization. The report ends with a discussion of some methodological and conceptual challenges of and opportunities for possible future research.*

Corinna Unger: Histories of Development and Modernization: Findings, Reflections, Future Research, in: H-Soz-Kult 09.12.2010, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/2010-12-001>.

**Introduction**<sup>1</sup>

In 1966, in the midst of the Development Decade John F. Kennedy had declared six years earlier, U.S. Senator and Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee J. William Fulbright called for the internationalization of development aid. This, he hoped, would transform aid from a Cold War instrument into a field of American-Soviet cooperation and „thus provide a powerful impetus for world peace as well as economic development.“<sup>2</sup> Aid did become internationalized in the following years, but it did not provide the means to solve global conflicts. Instead, the trust in the power of aid to promote „progress“ and equality has continuously crumbled, and highly pragmatist positions reign in today’s development arena.<sup>3</sup> While the „fight against poverty“ goes on and has gained new meaning in the face of global terrorism, modernization and development as discourses and strategies are said to have become history, only to be discovered by historians somewhat belatedly.<sup>4</sup>

For some years, the dominant narrative on modernization and development went like this: In the postwar era, American foreign policy makers, persuaded by politically engaged social scientists that modernization theory provided the solution to the world’s problems as seen from Washington, used development aid to further American national interests. Extending control over seemingly „chaotic“ regions in non-Western parts of the world appeared imperative in the context of decolonization and the Cold War. Foreign aid was employed to secure access to natural resources and to prevent communism from taking root in the nonaligned nations. Technical and financial support

<sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Stefanie Middendorf, Katja Naumann, Mark Stoneman, an anonymous reviewer, and the members of the Oslo Contemporary International History Network for their help with conceptual and methodological issues. I would also like to thank Claudia Prinz for her editorial and organizational support.

<sup>2</sup>William J. Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power*, New York 1966, pp. 223, 240.

<sup>3</sup>For a distinctly critical view of aid, see Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is Another Way for Africa*, London 2009.

<sup>4</sup>Nick Cullather, *Development? It’s History*, in: *Diplomatic History* 24,4 (2000), pp. 641-653.

was supposed to help modernize „backward“ societies, neutralize their revolutionary potential, and draw them closer to the West. The Western promise did not go uncontested, for the Soviet package deal of progress, social justice, and material equality held its own attraction. Nonetheless, the American concept proved amazingly influential until the demise of development and modernization thinking in the late 1960s under the influence of the Vietnam War and the attendant antiestablishment counterculture.

This narrative makes sense but seems all too predictable. Having learned from critiques of modernization theory to question historical linearity, we should reconsider some of the underlying assumptions and turn our attention to problems that have been overlooked so far. To provide a basis for such reevaluation, this research report supplies an overview of recent scholarship and offers suggestions for future research on development and modernization.

A few words on what the report does and does not do: It does not offer definitions of the terms „development“ and „modernization.“ Both terms are highly charged social constructs whose characters change continuously and whose meanings can only be understood in their specific political and historical contexts. Consequently, the report is not interested in „measuring“ different levels of development or modernization; instead, it focuses on historical constructions, interpretations, and their effects. Furthermore, it aspires neither to bibliographic completeness nor to representing all approaches and fields; accordingly, the selection of the books contains a random element, yet it does so consciously. The aim is not to cover every publication available but to define central themes and issues. To keep the report within the necessary limits, its focus is on American and German publications which have appeared over the course of the last decade or so. Since the majority of them are based on Western sources, the report, too, presents a predominantly Western perspective on development and modernization.

Conceptually, the report is informed by recent research on global,

transnational, and new international history. It considers itself part of an effort to develop new perspectives on twentieth-century history that consider a multitude of state and non-state actors and their respective cultural, social, political, and economic interests without privileging either „soft power“ or „hard politics“, ideas or diplomacy.<sup>5</sup> While their topics and approaches vary greatly, many studies share an interest in reevaluating the historical meanings of imperialism, colonialism, decolonization, and the Cold War; an emphasis on diachronic developments and continuities across caesurae like 1945; and a focus on a broad range of actors. Against this background, the report provides an overview of existing research and tries to carve out themes worth exploring in greater detail.

The report begins with the history of development and provides a sketch of historiographical interpretations of development as political practice. It then turns to research on the evolution of the concept of modernization and its links to older development ideas and experiences. In a second part, the report presents findings on the relation between development and experts, coercion, and gender, followed by a brief section on modernization and globalization. The report ends with a discussion of methodological and conceptual challenges of and opportunities for possible future research.

A note on terminology: It is extremely difficult to discuss the terms „development“ and „modernization“, the underlying concepts and their interrelationship without reproducing the terms' inherent assumptions. The same is true of terms like „Third World“ and „developing countries“, which carry heavy ideological baggage but which are difficult to avoid.<sup>6</sup> In the following, the terms will not be marked

<sup>5</sup>See Sebastian Conrad et al. (eds.), *Globalgeschichte: Theorien, Ansätze, Themen*, Frankfurt am Main 2007; Gunilla Budde et al. (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Göttingen 2006; Birgit Schäbler (ed.), *Area Studies und die Welt: Weltregionen und neue Globalgeschichte*, Wien 2007; Thomas Bender, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, Berkeley 2002.

<sup>6</sup>See Carl E. Plutsch, *The Three Worlds, or the Division of Social Scientific Labor*, circa 1950-1975, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23,4 (1981), pp. 565-590; Mike Mason, *Development and Disorder: A History of the Third World since 1945*, Hanover,

individually but should be read with their multiple connotations in mind.

### Development: Meanings and Histories

This is not the place for a *Begriffsgeschichte* of development. Suffice it to say that the idea of development has been applied to a wide range of political situations and with great conceptual variety. Philosophers, economists, sociologists, political scientists, and many others have studied development from a multitude of angles, usually relying on their own definitions of the topic. Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo, Friedrich List, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Joseph Schumpeter, and John Maynard Keynes are the usual suspects to cite in studies on development theories.<sup>7</sup> The role of the Enlightenment in establishing development as a lead category in modern thought is impossible to overlook. As Zygmunt Bauman puts it, „[t]he modern mind was born together with the idea that *the world can be changed*. Modernity is about rejecting the world as it has been thus far and the resolution to change it. The modern way of being consists in compulsive, obsessive change: in the refutation of what ‘merely is’ in the name of what could, and by the same token ought, to be put in its place.“<sup>8</sup>

### Development Without Borders: Colonialism, Imperialism, and Humanitarianism

The broadest historically-minded definition of development might be by Craig N. Murphy, who argues that „‘development’ is part of the solution to the problems of the Industrial Revolution“, and that it „can be understood as the complex of social practices designed to ameliorate the post-Industrial Revolution problem of inequality across

NH 1997, chapter 1.

<sup>7</sup>For a concise overview of development thinking, see Richard Jolly et al. (eds.), *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice*, Bloomington 2004, pp. 16-45.

<sup>8</sup>Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts*, Oxford 2004, p. 23. Italics in the original.

societies in a sustainable manner.”<sup>9</sup> This benevolent perspective on development stands in contrast to the findings of studies on the nexus between development and nineteenth-century European imperialism. In the imperialistic context, development was, above all, an instrument of rule through the investment of capital in, extraction of raw materials or labor from, and improvement of the infrastructure of hitherto „undeveloped“ areas. As Dirk van Laak shows, „infrastructure“ meant much more than building railroads and bridges. It was also about „opening up“ territories that were considered „empty“, and establishing rule based on technological innovations.<sup>10</sup>

Infrastructures needed people to run and use them, so individuals had to be „developed“ too. As part of that process, „traditional“ mentalities had to be aligned with the calculating demands of „rationality“ and „efficiency“ that accompanied imperial development programs. Consequently, the nineteenth century witnessed a boom in what James Louis Hevia calls the „pedagogy of imperialism“ – the effort to „train“ members of „less developed“ societies or groups in „modern“ ways of behavior and thinking, like children in school.<sup>11</sup> There is agreement that the „civilizing mission“ of colonial times not only served to legitimize colonial rule and the colonizers’ notion of superiority but also to produce „order“ by extending control over colonial subjects.<sup>12</sup> Many scholars have studied development as regulation, viewing it through a governmentalist lens.<sup>13</sup> Akhil Gupta, for example, considers „develop-

<sup>9</sup>Craig N. Murphy, *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better Way?*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 28-29.

<sup>10</sup>Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur: Deutsche Planungen für eine Erschließung Afrikas 1880 bis 1960*, Paderborn 2004.

<sup>11</sup>James Louis Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China*, Durham 2003.

<sup>12</sup>Harald Fischer-Tiné / Michael Mann (eds.), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India*, London 2004; Boris Barth / Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Zivilisierungsmissionen: Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Konstanz 2005; Philipp H. Lepenies, *Lernen vom Besserwisser: Wissenstransfer in der ‚Entwicklungshilfe‘ aus historischer Perspektive*, in: Hubertus Büschel / Daniel Speich (eds.), *Entwicklungswelten: Globalgeschichte der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*, Frankfurt am Main 2009, pp. 33-59, 49-54.

<sup>13</sup>James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human*

mentalism“ a mode of power practiced by institutions or governments that harbor hegemonial aspirations.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, David Ludden speaks of a „development regime“, „an institutionalized configuration of power within a state system ideologically committed to progress that draws its material sustenance from the conduct of development.“<sup>15</sup> In this view, development is a means, not an end, and helps a state to gain or maintain legitimacy.<sup>16</sup>

This perspective can be applied to the situation after World War I, when European progressives and the League of Nations challenged the exploitative colonial policy of „*mise en valeur*“ (making the colonies profitable).<sup>17</sup> To stabilize their overseas rule, France and Great Britain, under the slogan of development, invested in their colonies to improve health and education facilities.<sup>18</sup> At roughly the same time, non-colonial, non-governmental aid campaigns occurred elsewhere. The China International Famine Relief Commission, an American initiative,

Condition Have Failed, New Haven 1998; Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton 1995; Tania Murray Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*, Durham 2007; James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: „Development,“ Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Cambridge 1990; Akhil Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India*, Durham 1998; Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, Berkeley 2002.

<sup>14</sup>Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments*, pp. 36-37 and 33. Italics in the original.

<sup>15</sup>David Ludden, *India’s Development Regime*, in: Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.), *Colonialism and Culture*, Ann Arbor 1992, pp. 247-287, 252.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Sugata Bose, *Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development: India’s Historical Experience in Comparative Perspective*, in: Frederick Cooper / Randall Packard (eds.), *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, Berkeley 1997, pp. 45-63, 52-57.

<sup>17</sup>On the mandate system, see Susane Pedersen, *The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32,4 (2006), pp. 560-582; Anthony Angie, *Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Souveränität im Mandatssystem des Völkerbunds: Rechtshistorische Überlegungen zum kolonialen Gehalt des Völkerrechts*, in: Büschel / Speich (eds.), *Entwicklungswelten*, pp. 61-87.

<sup>18</sup>Joseph M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism*, Athens, OH 2007, chapter 4; Frederick Cooper, *Writing the History of Development*, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 8.1 (2010), pp. 5-23, 9-12; Niels P. Petersson, „Großer Sprung nach vorn“ oder „natürliche Entwicklung“? *Zeitkonzepte der Entwicklungspolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*, in: Büschel / Speich (eds.), *Entwicklungswelten*, pp. 89-111, 91-96.

engaged in agrarian and education reform projects in the 1920s, for example.<sup>19</sup> While such undertakings were not called „development aid“, the often religiously inspired idea of helping other nations overcome their „backwardness“ was an important motive of nongovernmental humanitarian undertakings at the time. It was no coincidence that international organizations entered the development field in those years and challenged colonial concepts and structures. Margherita Zanasi argues that the League of Nations was decisive in taking „the ‘civilizing mission’ [...] beyond the colonial framework“. According to Zanasi, „[t]he internationalization of the civilizing mission was accompanied by the emergence of the ‘international development expert,’ who no longer worked for the interests and from the perspective of a single imperial metropole, but for a sublimated notion of assistance to the ‘underdeveloped’“.<sup>20</sup> This description also seems to apply to those American experts who imprinted their domestic experiences with poverty and reform of the 1930s on the international organizations that they helped to found in the 1940s.<sup>21</sup>

In those two decades, the breakthrough of economics as a lead discipline and the establishment of development economics as a sub-discipline provided the ground for the professionalization of the development field. Thanks to statistical analysis and econometric modelling, „development“ and „progress“ became quantifiable entities. Measuring development in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), for instance, permitted the classification of countries and regions according to their level of economic development. Such „trust in numbers“ (Theodore Porter) greatly increased politicians’ trust in academic advisors, who seemed able to „measure progress“ and chart future development paths, which were to be implemented by the managerial

<sup>19</sup>Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission*, pp. 25-31.

<sup>20</sup>Margherita Zanasi, *Exporting Development: The League of Nations and Republican China*, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49,1 (2007), pp. 143-169, 143-144.

<sup>21</sup>Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights*, Cambridge, Mass. 2005; Amy L.S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965*, Kent, OH 2006.

machine of the nation-state.<sup>22</sup> While much work remains to be done on the modes of production of development-related knowledge,<sup>23</sup> there is little doubt that the „numerical turn“ in development thinking gave political leaders in the colonies an instrument with which to challenge colonial rule or at least demand improved public services and infrastructure. By passing colonial development acts, Great Britain and France made development „part of a wider policy“ that gave „modernizing elites [...] a stake in the changing imperial regime“.<sup>24</sup>

### **From Colonial to Postcolonial Development, and from Development to Modernization**

Sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, colonial concepts of development linked the colonial and postcolonial eras, even more so as decolonization was a long-lasting process, not a sharp break with the colonial past.<sup>25</sup> Continuities in development thinking were fostered by continuities in personnel in the colonial services and administrations. For example, numerous British officers who had been active in colonial development programs went to work for the World Bank, private development companies, and government agencies.<sup>26</sup> Sim-

<sup>22</sup>Bergeron, *Fragments of Development*, pp. 4-14, 98-102; Daniel Speich, *Travelling with the GDP through early development economics’ history*, in: *Working Papers on the Nature of Evidence: How Well Do Facts Travel?* 33, (2008) <<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/economicHistory/pdf/FACTSPDF/HowWellDoFactsTravelWP.htm>> (01.12.2010); Nick Cullather, *The Foreign Policy of the Calorie*, in: *American Historical Review* 112,2 (2007), pp. 337-364. On „measuring“ poverty, see Escobar, *Encountering Development*, chapter 1.

<sup>23</sup>Daniel Speich is currently finishing a book entitled „Elend in Zahlen: Entwicklungspolitik und Makroökonomie in der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts“.

<sup>24</sup>Cooper, *Writing the History of Development*, p. 12. Also see Herward Sieberg, *Colonial Development: Die Grundlegung moderner Entwicklungspolitik durch Großbritannien*, Stuttgart 1985; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, Cambridge 1996; Andreas Eckert, *Exporterschlager Wohlfahrtsstaat? Europäische Sozialstaatlichkeit und Kolonialismus in Afrika nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32,4 (2006), pp. 467-488.

<sup>25</sup>Martin Shipwell, *Decolonization and Its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires*, Malden 2008.

<sup>26</sup>Joseph M. Hodge, *British Colonial Expertise, Post-Colonial Careerism and the Early History of International Development*, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 8,1 (2010), pp. 24-46; Marc Frey, *Control, Legitimacy, and the Securing of Interests: European*

ilarly, the European Economic Community employed a significant share of former colonial administrators, several of whom engaged in „developing“ Europe’s own „backward“ regions.<sup>27</sup> One of those regions was Italy’s south in the 1950s, which was considered a threat to the political stability of the West in the context of the Cold War. Also, Turkey was declared a „developing country“ by European development experts in the postwar years and received large amounts of West German development aid in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>28</sup> We know relatively little about the transfer of colonial development approaches to European settings or vice versa, but clearly this issue deserves more systematic attention.

This is also true of the relation between development and modernization. Many contemporaries did not consider the difference significant enough to distinguish clearly between the two. Like American economist Eugene Staley, one of the first scholars to write about modernization in 1943-44, they used the terms synonymously.<sup>29</sup> Both concepts were about economic growth, and both contained a distinct notion of linear „progress“ as measured in terms of the industrialized nations’ standards. From a historical perspective, however, certain differences do come to light. Modernization contained a much stronger claim to remake both entire social orders and individual lives. Whereas development aimed at infrastructure, modernization was about social organization and was thus more heavily interventionist and reliant on social engineering and planning. There was no development equivalent to modernization’s concept of „modern men“. Those modern men were, to a large degree, the product of sociological studies and

Development Policy in South-east Asia from the Late Colonial Period to the Early 1960s, in: *Contemporary European History* 12,4 (2003), pp. 395-412.

<sup>27</sup>Véronique Dimier, Bringing the Neo-Patrimonial State back to Europe: French Decolonization and the Making of the European Development Aid Policy, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 48 (2008), pp. 433-457.

<sup>28</sup>Heinrich Hartmann, *Verwissenschaftlichte Moderne? Bevölkerungspolitische Handlungsfelder in der Türkei als Zonen komplexen Wissenstransfers von den 1940er bis zu den 1970er Jahren. Eine Skizze*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 50 (2010), pp. 335-352.

<sup>29</sup>David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order*, Princeton 2010, pp. 41, 87.

social theory. In that sense, modernization was a by-product of the scientification of the social that characterized the twentieth century in general and the post-1945 period in particular.<sup>30</sup>

One could make the case that the Bolsheviks deserve the patent on modernization, for they were among the earliest and most ambitious advocates of modernization through technology, electrification, and state-run, big-push schemes in the 1920s and 1930s that aimed to produce a new kind of society constituted by the „new Soviet man“. <sup>31</sup> Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy developed their own models of a „new man“ to be engineered by the state.<sup>32</sup> The creation of the American model of modernization was, as David Ekbladh argues in „The Great American Mission“, a reaction to European and Soviet modernization campaigns (regardless of how they were labeled). American observers in the 1930s set out to develop a formula that could compete with the fascist and Stalinist models of modernization and yet secure democracy and individual liberty. The depression helped to convince many that the state would have to play a leading role in remaking society. What became known as the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) model was characterized by social democratic thought combined with Keynesian economic theory, strong support for science and planning, immense trust in the benevolent power of experts, and emphasis on grassroots

<sup>30</sup>Lutz Raphael, Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodische und konzeptionelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 22 (1996), pp. 165-193; Thomas Etzemüller, *Die Ordnung der Moderne: Social Engineering im 20. Jahrhundert*, Bielefeld 2009; Dirk van Laak, *Planung: Geschichte und Gegenwart des Vorgriffs auf die Zukunft*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 34 (2008), pp. 305-326.

<sup>31</sup>Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia*, Princeton 2005; Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization*, Berkeley 1995; Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism*, Seattle 2006.

<sup>32</sup>Peter Fritzsche / Jochen Hellbeck, *The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany*, in: Sheila Fitzpatrick / Michael Geyer (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, New York 2008, pp. 302-344.

practices of self-help.<sup>33</sup>

### **Global Modernization: An American Product? On Transnational Transfers**

The apparent success of the TVA model encouraged American experts and politicians to shape a universalist modernization formula. World War II heightened Americans' awareness of the existence of comprehensive global problems – health, poverty, „backwardness“ – that demanded overarching solutions.<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Borgwardt emphasizes how in this context political security became intimately linked with (an idealized image of) economic stability. A „policy of organized plenty“ not only seemed essential but also feasible.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, a new kind of thinking about economic entitlement entered postwar strategy rooms and papers under Roosevelt's tutelage. His „freedom from want“ slogan implied that individual liberty depended on economic security (an argument that Amartya Sen elaborated on much later in „Development as Freedom“).<sup>36</sup> Economic security could be produced, modernizers believed. Wealth was not a matter of fate but the outcome of elaborate state-led planning underwritten by collective willpower.

The promise of liberal modernization gained new meaning when the Cold War set in and turned the Third World into an arena of competition between the capitalist and socialist models of modernization.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the conflict heavily influenced academic research in the United States. The Center for International Studies at MIT, where

<sup>33</sup>Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission*. For a discussion of Ekbladh's book see the H-Diplo Roundtable Review XI, 35 (2010), <<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XI-35.pdf>> (01.12.2010).

<sup>34</sup>David C. Engerman, *American Knowledge and Global Power*, in: *Diplomatic History* 31,4 (2007), pp. 599-622.

<sup>35</sup>Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*, pp. 93-99. For a critical reading of the idea of economic stability based on the national economy see Suzanne Bergeron, *Fragments of Development: Nation, Gender, and the Space of Modernity*, Ann Arbor 2006 (1st ed. 2004), chapters 1 and 2, esp. pp. 44-50.

<sup>36</sup>Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*, pp. 136-137, 257; Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford 1999.

<sup>37</sup>Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, New York 2005.

several of the most prominent representatives of modernization theory worked and which was funded by a range of public and private agencies with pronounced political agendas, embodied such scholarship.<sup>38</sup> A range of studies on modernization theory's formulation and the institutional structures and networks upon which it was based have supplied us with detailed knowledge about the social scientists and their networks; the means by which these experts succeeded in paving the way for their concepts to become integral parts of American foreign policy-making in Latin America, Africa, and Asia; and the leftist critique that modernization theory's proponents began to face in the late 1960s.<sup>39</sup> The effects of modernization theory and its application in the so-called Third World have come to be studied in recent years.<sup>40</sup>

For all their achievements, the above-cited studies have contributed to establishing a picture of modernization as a genuinely American phenomenon, while the international and transnational dimensions of development and modernization discourse before and after World War II have been neglected. To some degree, this perspective reflects post-1945 American history. Nils Gilman has noted that American discussion about development and modernization after the war was „strikingly insular“. In his view, „the lack of engagement with European colonial and postcolonial discourses is best explained by a

<sup>38</sup>Among others: Noam Chomsky et al., *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years*, New York 1997; Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex*, Princeton 2001; Joel Isaac, *The Human Sciences in Cold War America*, in: *Historical Journal* 50 (2007), pp. 725-746.

<sup>39</sup>Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America*, Baltimore 2003; David C. Engerman et al. (eds.), *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, Amherst 2003; Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and „Nation Building“ in the Kennedy Era*, Chapel Hill 2000.

<sup>40</sup>For an overview, see David C. Engerman / Corinna R. Unger, *Introduction: Towards a Global History of Modernization*, in: *Diplomatic History* 33,3 (2009), pp. 375-385. For case studies, see Roland Popp, *An Application of Modernization Theory during the Cold War? The Case of Pahlavi Iran*, in: *International History Review* 3,1 (2008), pp. 76-98; Sönke Kunkel, *Systeme des Wissens, Visionen von Fortschritt: Die Vereinigten Staaten, das Jahrzehnt der Modernisierungstheorie und die Planung Nigerias 1954-1965*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 48 (2008), pp. 155-182.

widely held but under-articulated belief that the United States' mode of engagement with the postcolonial world was of an entirely different kind than 'Old Europe's' colonial and racist mindset. Because of this 'exceptionalist' conceit, American social scientists apparently felt as if American modernizers had nothing to learn from the Europeans."<sup>41</sup> This observation leads to the question of what exactly American modernizers might have learned from their European counterparts and how this knowledge could have influenced U.S. modernization theory and politics. As Frederic Cooper argues, „Academic modernization theory was in large part social scientists' effort to take account of and provide a theoretical basis for the modernizing policies developed in colonial bureaucracies“.<sup>42</sup>

The similarities between American modernization projects and European ones, colonial and postcolonial, were conspicuous. For instance, French and American civilian and military planners, seemingly independently from each other, established resettlement camps as part of their counterinsurgency programs in Algeria and Vietnam, respectively, and planners from each country were convinced of these camps' „modernizing“ effects.<sup>43</sup> Did American advocates of so-called strategic hamlets find inspiration in the Algerian camps? The fact that they talked about „agrovilles“ might suggest that they knew about the French strategy.<sup>44</sup> If so, did they regard the French approach as exemplary? Or did they consider it an ill-conceived attempt and adapted the model to their own priorities? Inquiry into these questions would greatly enrich scholarship about Western modernization programs and transatlantic networks. Equally important are studies about the

<sup>41</sup>Nils Gilman, Email to the author, October 23, 2008.

<sup>42</sup>Cooper, *Writing the History of Development*, p. 14.

<sup>43</sup>On Algeria, see Moritz Feichtinger / Stephan Malinowski, „Eine Million Algerier lernen im 20. Jahrhundert zu leben“: Umsiedlungslager und Zwangsmodernisierung im Algerienkrieg, 1954-1962, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 8,1 (2010), pp. 107-135. On Vietnam, see Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*; Jonathan Nashel, *The Road to Vietnam: Modernization Theory in Fact and Fiction*, in: Christian G. Appy (ed.), *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966*, Amherst 2000, pp. 132-154; Gilman, *Mandarins*.

<sup>44</sup>Ekblad, *The Great American Mission*, p. 202.

similarities and differences between Soviet and Western models of modernization and their possible interdependence. While a good amount of research on Soviet overseas activities has been conducted, the historiography on it is still considerably smaller than that on its Western counterparts, and it does not mirror the extent of the USSR's global engagement.<sup>45</sup> More scholarship on this topic would be most welcome, especially from a comparative point of view.

But comparisons between nation-states or blocs are not sufficient. Any study of modernization discourses and practices must take into account that modernization expertise, like development expertise, was a transnational affair. The increasing diversification of the international policy-making landscape since 1945 at the latest is of special importance in this regard. Cooperation between governments in the field of development aid became increasingly institutionalized in the 1960s, and international bodies and nongovernmental institutions took on many responsibilities that had formerly belonged to national governments. The United Nations and its sub-organizations provided important forums for the evolution of development thinking as well as for the discussion and transfer of modernization discourses and practices. Furthermore, institutions like the World Bank engaged as political actors and thereby challenged the hegemony of the nation-state as the lead promoter of modernization.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup>For an overview, see David C. Engerman, *The Second World's Third World*, in: *Kritika* 12,1 (2011, forthcoming), pp. 183-211. Also see Tobias Rupprecht, *Die Sowjetunion und die Welt im Kalten Krieg: Neue Forschungsperspektiven auf eine vermeintlich hermetisch abgeschottete Gesellschaft*, in: *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 58,3 (2010), pp. 381-399.

<sup>46</sup>Daniel Maul, *Menschenrechte, Sozialpolitik und Dekolonisation: Die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (ILO) 1940-1970*, Essen 2007; Staples, *The Birth of Development*; Richard Jolly, *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice*, Bloomington 2004; Olav Stokke, *The UN and Development: From Aid to Cooperation*, Bloomington 2009; Devesh Kapur / John P. Lewis / Richard Webb, *The World Bank: Its First Half-Century*, Washington, DC 1997. For an overview, see Marc Frey / Sönke Kunkel, *Writing the History of Development: A Review of the Recent Literature*, in: *Contemporary European History* 20 (2011, forthcoming).



### Reevaluating the Role of the Cold War

Yet international institutions and non-state organizations had been involved in shaping development policies and programs to a high degree since the interwar period. So what was different after 1945? Undoubtedly, the Cold War and decolonization made a serious difference. As the superpowers tried to extend their respective spheres of influence, development aid gained a new and diplomatically much more important meaning. However, „While there is no denying the significance of Cold War geopolitics and American strategic interests in elevating the idea of development to the status of a hegemonic, global doctrine after 1945, it is important to realize the continuities that exist with [...] earlier doctrines and debates“, Joseph Hodge argues.<sup>47</sup> His statement comports with a broader effort to reevaluate the extent of the Cold War’s global impact, that is, the question which phenomena were directly related to – or outcomes of – the Cold War and which incidents merely happened during the Cold War but were not caused by it.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, with regard to modernization, David Ekbladh emphasizes that while „Modernization ideas worked their way into Cold War policies, they were not created by them.“<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the call for modernization was not limited by the Cold War dichotomy of aligned and nonaligned nations. It also mattered whether the respective country was considered „underdeveloped“ and whether its leaders were willing to take the necessary steps to overcome its „backwardness“. Development aid played a vital role in this regard, not the least because once the colonial powers had granted independence to their former colonies and no longer felt obliged to support them, „independence turned entitlement into supplication“.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, the newly

<sup>47</sup>Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, p. 20.

<sup>48</sup>Matthew Connelly, *Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for Independence*, in: *American Historical Review* 105,3 (2000), pp. 739-769; Daniel Speich, *The Kenyan Style of „African Socialism“: Developmental Knowledge Claims and the Explanatory Limits of the Cold War*, in: *Diplomatic History* 33,3 (2009), pp. 449-466.

<sup>49</sup>Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission*, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup>Cooper, *Writing the History of Development*, p. 15.

independent nations were able to expand their freedom of action by choosing who to approach for financial and technical support and by „shopping around for patrons“ best suiting their needs.<sup>51</sup>

### Which Side Are You On? Donors and Receivers of Development Aid

The American motives for granting aid to developing nations have been studied in detail. Most scholars agree that the initially humanitarian impetus in the aftermath of World War II was marginalized by Cold War-inspired geostrategic concerns in the late 1940s.<sup>52</sup> Thus, while modernization thinking in many ways constituted a revised and expanded version of earlier development discourses, its implementation in the form of professional development aid was very much a post-1945 phenomenon. This was also due to the Soviet Union’s entry into the international development arena in the second half of the 1950s. Third World interest in the Soviet path to modernity was strong, fostered by the generosity with which the USSR offered credit, tools, and experts; the willingness of those experts to engage with the inhabitants of developing countries face to face; and Soviet anti-colonial rhetoric.<sup>53</sup> In addition to immediate Cold War concerns, national interests strongly influenced aid policies. The West German case of employing aid to prevent nonaligned nations from recognizing

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics*, Chicago 2006; Louis A. Picard / Terry F. Buss, *A Fragile Balance: Re-examining the History of Foreign Aid, Security, and Diplomacy*, Sterling, VA 2009; Jeffrey F. Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America*, New York 2007. On food aid, Christopher B. Barrett / Daniel G. Maxwell, *Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role*, London 2005.

<sup>53</sup>Andreas Hilger, *Revolutionsideologie, Systemkonkurrenz oder Entwicklungspolitik? Sowjetisch-indische Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in Chruschtschows Kaltem Krieg*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 48 (2008), pp. 389-410; Ragna Boden, *Die Grenzen der Weltmacht: Sowjetische Indonesienpolitik von Stalin bis Brežnev*, Stuttgart 2006; Maxim Matusевич, *No Easy Row for the Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960-1991*, Trenton 2003; Constantin Katsakioris, *Soviet Lessons for Arab Modernization: Soviet Educational Aid to Arab Countries after 1956*, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 8,1 (2010), pp. 85-106.

East Germany is perhaps the most obvious one.<sup>54</sup> Aid, like few other policy fields, offered itself to a variety of strategic, diplomatic, business, and philanthropic interests. It was therefore not surprising that, by the 1960s, most industrialized nations mingled and competed with each other in the aid arena.<sup>55</sup>

Whereas the institutional structures and the motives and considerations of many donor countries are well known by now, historians have tended to neglect the receiving side. The focus on the (conditional or non-conditional) granting of aid has produced an imbalanced perspective that suggests those receiving aid did so helplessly and passively. In fact, though, many of the new nations gladly accepted technical and financial aid but consciously did not fulfill the donors' political expectations tied to it.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, many of the new nations' leaders had begun debating development issues long before the end of colonial rule. Although much of their thinking was based on European writings, they generated their own understandings of development and modernization. While their ideas were not uncritical borrowings, defining such knowledge as „indigenous“ would also be questionable, for the term suggests the existence of a pre-existing, timeless body of values, ideas, and structures that – at some point in time – became „contaminated“ by „foreign“ influences.<sup>57</sup> Yet diagnosing an acute case of „hybridity“ does not provide an altogether satisfying alternative. To overcome these inherent analytical limitations, it would be useful

<sup>54</sup>William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969*, Chapel Hill 2003; Amit Das Gupta, *Handel, Hilfe, Hallstein-Doktrin: Die bundesdeutsche Südasiapolitik unter Adenauer und Erhard 1949 bis 1966*, Husum 2004.

<sup>55</sup>See the contributions in the *Journal of Contemporary European History* 12,4 (2003); Helge Pharo / Monika Pohle Fraser (eds.), *The Aid Rush: Aid Regimes in Northern Europe During the Cold War*, 2 vol., Oslo 2008; Thorsten Borring Olesen / Helge Pharo (eds.), *Aid Norms and Aid Realities: Foreign Aid and Its Dynamics in a Historical and Comparative Context*, Oslo 2011 forthcoming.

<sup>56</sup>Jeffrey James Byrne, *Our Own Special Brand of Socialism: Algeria and the Contest of Modernities in the 1960s*, in: *Diplomatic History* 33,3 (2009), pp. 427-448; Speich, *The Kenyan Style of „African Socialism“*.

<sup>57</sup>Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments*, pp. 166-183.

to analyze in greater detail how ideas about development and modernization circled the globe, how they were appropriated, and who transported them. In this context, we need to pay special attention to the roles of experts as carriers and mediators of knowledge.

### **Knowledge and Power: Experts on Development and Modernization**

Historians have scrutinized the interrelation of knowledge, science, experts, and policy-making in recent years.<sup>58</sup> The specific dimensions of development expertise have been studied by sociologists and ethnologists. They have analyzed the role of experts in development organizations and how their decisions are shaped by the intrinsic logic of institutional structures.<sup>59</sup> Others have looked at how expert knowledge translates into development recommendations, highlighting how experts render political issues technical in order to offer operational solutions.<sup>60</sup> While many historians are interested in development experts, the role of expert knowledge on development, and the modes of production of expert knowledge, relatively few historical studies on these issues have appeared so far. Joseph Hodge's book on the role of British experts in shaping a colonial „imperialism of science“ is a notable exception.<sup>61</sup> More recently, development experts have become the subject of biographical studies, among them Albert O.

<sup>58</sup>Margit Szöllösi-Janze, *Wissensgesellschaft in Deutschland: Überlegungen zur Neubestimmung der deutschen Zeitgeschichte über Verwissenschaftlichungsprozesse*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 30 (2004), pp. 277-313; Alexander Nützenadel, *Stunde der Ökonomen: Wissenschaft, Politik und Expertenkultur in der Bundesrepublik 1949-1974*, Göttingen 2005; David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts*, Oxford 2009. Most recently, see the contributions in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 50 (2010) on „Verwissenschaftlichung von Politik nach 1945“.

<sup>59</sup>Richard Rottenburg, *Weit hergeholte Fakten: Eine Parabel der Entwicklungshilfe*, Stuttgart 2002; Thomas Hüsken, *Der Stamm der Experten: Rhetorik und Praxis des Interkulturellen Managements in der deutschen staatlichen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*, Bielefeld 2006.

<sup>60</sup>James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine; Mitchell, Rule of Experts*; also Rottenburg, *Weit hergeholte Fakten*, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup>Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*.

Hirschman<sup>62</sup>, W. Arthur Lewis<sup>63</sup>, and Walt W. Rostow.

Rostow has become so identified as the stalwart of modernization theory that he has overshadowed not only other actors but also the existence of other schools of modernization theory. David Milne, in his „America’s Rasputin: Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War,“ describes the economic historian as a self-important hawk who had come to believe in the calculability of human behavior during World War II, when he helped to identify German military targets.<sup>64</sup> Not that Rostow believed in a bombing-only strategy. He became one of the most prominent voices calling for foreign aid, and he supported the plan to develop South Asia’s economy by setting up a TVA in the Mekong Delta. But he had no doubt that „one can champion foreign aid and the bombing of communist-infected nations at the same time“.<sup>65</sup> An ardent advocate of broad, all-encompassing concepts and much less known for his interest in history’s subtleties, Rostow clung to the belief that industrialization was the ultimate goal of mankind, and he lobbied that belief all over Washington.<sup>66</sup>

The belief in the singular importance of industrialization is a rare parallel between Rostow and Nobel laureate W. Arthur Lewis. One of the few scholars of color who managed to rise through the ranks of European academia in the 1930s, Lewis formulated the idea of the developing countries’ unlimited supply of labor in the agrarian sector that could be employed to accelerate the industrialization process. He worked as an advisor to Great Britain’s Colonial Office and, between 1957 and 1958, as chief economic advisor to the Ghanaian government under Kwame Nkrumah. Lewis’ relations with Ghana’s leader began

<sup>62</sup>Anna Barbara Sum, „The Visiting Economist Syndrome“: Albert O. Hirschman und die Expertenkultur in der Entwicklungsökonomik ca. 1945-1970. MA Thesis, Free University Berlin, 2010.

<sup>63</sup>Robert L. Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*, Princeton 2006.

<sup>64</sup>David Milne, *America’s Rasputin: Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War*, New York 2008, pp. 150-151.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7. On the attempt to establish a TVA in the Mekong Delta, see Ekbladh, *The American Century*, chapter 6.

<sup>66</sup>Milne, *America’s Rasputin*, pp. 64-65.

to deteriorate after he criticized Nkrumah for using economic development projects to gain political support. This incident highlighted his and other economists’ assumption that „the economic sphere was separable from the political arena and that politicians, if properly instructed by expert economic advisers, could become benevolent promoters of economic development.“<sup>67</sup>

Lewis and many others believed in the existence of universal, „neutral“ economic laws and „rational“ economic measures that would promote growth and produce market equilibrium. In practice, this belief tended to place a high burden on the most vulnerable parts of the society in question. If considered at all, gender, class, and race were seen as irrelevant to development processes.<sup>68</sup> As studies on knowledge production have taught us, we need to historicize the formulation of such seemingly „objective“ knowledge and recognize its roots in specific social, political, and institutional structures.<sup>69</sup>

The „global TVA story“ offers a good example. Highly publicized as an instrument of regional development, the TVA received thousands of visitors from all over the world. Although its planners emphasized that the TVA was no blueprint that could be transferred without adaptations, the eagerness to establish similar institutions elsewhere was immense. A 1958 map showed the global spread of the model, with individual symbols for „TVA Type Projects“ and „Variations on TVA“. The first category alone consisted of 21 sites covering China, Australia, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and India.<sup>70</sup> Studies of how the TVA

<sup>67</sup>Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis*, p. 192; on Lewis in Ghana, see also Murphy, *The United Nations Development Programme*, chapter 5.

<sup>68</sup>Bergeron, *Fragments of Development*, pp. 37-50, 103-104.

<sup>69</sup>Daniel Speich, *Der Blick von Lake Success: Das Entwicklungsdenden der frühen UNO als „lokales Wissen“*, in: Büschel / Speich (eds.), *Entwicklungswelten*, pp. 175-206; Susan Greenhalgh, *The Social Construction of Population Science: An Intellectual, Institutional, and Political History of Twentieth Century Demography*, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38,1 (1996), pp. 26-66; Renate Mayntz et al. (eds.), *Wissensproduktion und Wissenstransfer: Wissen im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft, Politik und Öffentlichkeit*, Bielefeld 2008; Sheila Jasanoff (ed.), *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*, Abingdon 2004.

<sup>70</sup>Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission*, p. 165.

model traveled to these places have demonstrated that the transfer of development knowledge and methods was anything but a straight, one-way street from the industrial metropolises to the developing countries. Multiple points of transfer need to be investigated to do justice to the complexity of the transnational transmission of modernization ideas and methods.<sup>71</sup> Taking a cue from the history of knowledge, we must assume that the „original“ model underwent changes at each station and at various times along the way, so that the final product differed from the „prototype“. Experts, both theoreticians and practitioners, were vital in this process, and deserve to be studied more closely.

#### **From Discourse to Practice: Modernization Turned Violent**

Many of the experts involved in development and modernization campaigns shared a strong belief in individuals' capacity to make rational decisions coupled with impatience regarding those individuals' reluctance to give up their „traditional“ ways. Modernization in its Western version was supposed to free individuals from the burdens of „tradition“ and make room for personal liberty. Yet what if individuals opted to continue their „inefficient“ modes of work and „irrational“ forms of thought? Resistance to modernization schemes frustrated Western observers who shuddered at the sight of age-old practices and „intolerable“ living conditions. For a variety of political and personal reasons, they considered it essential to crush the locals' „stubborn ignorance“, and in some cases they embraced violence in the name of progress.<sup>72</sup>

Resistance to modernization also presented a challenge to the

<sup>71</sup>Abou Bamba, *Triangulating a Modernization Experiment: The United States, France, and the Making of the Kossou Project in Central Ivory Coast*, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 8,1 (2010), pp. 66-84; Richard P. Tucker, *Containing Communism by Impounding Rivers: American Strategic Interests and the Global Spread of High Dams in the Early Cold War*, in: John R. McNeill / Corinna R. Unger (eds.), *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*, New York 2010, pp. 139-163.

<sup>72</sup>Stephan Malinowski, *Modernisierungskriege: Militärische Gewalt und koloniale Modernisierung am Beispiel des Algerienkrieges (1954-1962)*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 48 (2008), pp. 213-248.

newly independent nations' governments, which struggled to gain political legitimacy and solve the urgent administrative and socioeconomic problems at hand. For example, employing the manpower of rural populations in „civic action programs“ was considered a sensible measure to accelerate economic development, even if it meant instituting compulsory labor service and resettling people by force.<sup>73</sup> Some of the new nations' militaries played a prominent role in this effort „by helping to build civilian infrastructure, establishing closer links between the military and rural populations, and serving as transmission belts for Western ideas, all while expanding military control in areas threatened by real or imagined insurgency.“<sup>74</sup> In „Economists with Guns,“ Brad Simpson shows how American foreign policy experts came to favor „military modernization“ in the late 1950s, arguing that the military was the most efficient agent of modernization in societies that lacked the requisite structures to promote development. Yet, „The discourse and practice of military modernization was not forced on unwitting Indonesians by imperial bureaucrats, philanthropists, and academics“, Simpson argues, and emphasizes that Indonesian elites were highly in favor of the concept themselves.<sup>75</sup>

The „antidemocratic bias“<sup>76</sup> of modernization was especially strong in the field of „population control“. Many Third World leaders viewed their nations' high population growth rates as a threat to economic growth and hence as a potential source of social conflict. This conclu-

<sup>73</sup>On the issue of compulsory labor and the ILO's effort to sanction it, see Maul, *Menschenrechte, Sozialpolitik und Dekolonisation*, pp. 362-375. On forced resettlement in the case of Tanzania as part of Julius Nyerere's Operation Planned Villages, see Andreas Eckert, *Herrschen und Verwalten: Afrikanische Bürokraten, staatliche Ordnung und Politik in Tanzania, 1920-1970*, München 2007, pp. 256-258.

<sup>74</sup>Brad Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968*, Stanford 2008, pp. 74-75.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4. Also see Marc Frey, *Dekolonisierung in Südostasien: Die Vereinigten Staaten und die Auflösung der europäischen Kolonialreiche*, München 2006, pp. 232-233, 249; Mark T. Berger, *Decolonisation, Modernisation and Nation-Building: Political Development Theory and the Appeal of Communism in Southeast Asia, 1945-1975*, in: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34,4 (2003), pp. 421-448, 440-444.

<sup>76</sup>Simpson, *Economists with Guns*, p. 256.

sion comported with neo-Malthusian thinking and, more specifically, demographic transition theory. According to the latter, modernization would have to be accelerated if the developing countries' rapid population growth was not to cancel out their economic growth.<sup>77</sup> The use of pressure, coercion, and, in some cases, violence by the state to reach ambitious birth control „targets“ in the 1970s and the ways in which non-state actors contributed to establishing a political climate in which such interventions were considered acceptable have been the topic of several studies.<sup>78</sup> This is not the place to discuss in more detail demographic discourses and practices, which have been studied elsewhere.<sup>79</sup> Suffice it to say that interdependence between population policies and politics and modernization thinking was strong. What has received insufficient attention in this regard is the gender dimension.

#### **Adding Actors and Perspectives: Gender in Development and Modernization**

As Suzanne Bergeron shows in „Fragments of Development: Nation, Gender, and the Space of Modernity,“ gender blindness was embedded in economic theories since the 1930s. The concept of the national economy, which relied on the supposedly neutral, but actually heavily gendered image of the nation-state, carried a strong „masculine“ bias

<sup>77</sup>Greenhalgh, *The Social Construction of Population Science*.

<sup>78</sup>Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*, Cambridge, Mass. 2008; Brad Simpson, *Indonesia's „Accelerated Modernization“ and the Global Discourse of Development, 1960-1975*, in: *Diplomatic History* 33,3 (2009), pp. 467-486, 480; Sunniva Engh, *From northern feminists to southern women: Scandinavian population aid to India*, in: Pharo / Fraser (eds.), *The Aid Rush*, vol. 1, pp. 253-284.

<sup>79</sup>See the articles in the thematic issue on 20th century global demographic discourses and practices, *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 33,3 (2010), eds. Heinrich Hartmann / Corinna R. Unger; Marc Frey, *Experten, Stiftungen und Politik: Zur Genese des globalen Diskurses über Bevölkerung seit 1945*, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 4,1-2 (2007), <<http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Frey-2-2007>> (01.12.2010); Sabine Höhler, *Die Wissenschaft von der ‚Überbevölkerung‘: Paul Ehrlichs ‚Bevölkerungsbombe‘ als Fanal für die 1970er-Jahre*, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 3,3 (2006), pp. 60-64, <<http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Hoehler-3-2006>> (01.12.2010); Thomas Etzemüller, *Ein ewigwährender Untergang: Der apokalyptische Bevölkerungsdiskurs im 20. Jahrhundert*, Bielefeld 2007.

that reinforced the private-public dichotomy relegating women to the household. Since female work was not included in GNP statistics, women were not considered relevant to the economic development process.<sup>80</sup> It would be shortsighted, though, to argue that gender was wholly neglected in development concepts. For example, French late-colonial modernizers proved to be acutely aware of the role of gender differences and organized domesticity campaigns aimed at women.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, postcolonial nation-building efforts designated women „as the bearers of ‘traditions’ associated with the historical or mythical past of the nation“.<sup>82</sup> Hence, while women were assigned various roles in the development process, they rarely figured as self-determined agents of modernization in those scenarios. Similarly, the assumption that men had the responsibility to act as motors of modernization was rarely criticized.

Historical scholarship on development and modernization has largely replicated the contemporary marginalization of gender issues.<sup>83</sup> Many questions remain to be studied: Whether and how the fact that most of the bureaucrats, experts, and staff members of development institutions were men imprinted itself on development concepts and practices; whether development and modernization projects challenged or strengthened existing gender roles and relations, and how; and whether those effects were mirrored in changes in welfare, education and economic policies. As of today, most of the available publications on gender and development are social scientific ones which pay little attention to the historical perspective.<sup>84</sup> This is

<sup>80</sup>Bergeron, *Fragments of Development*, pp. 4-6, 18-23.

<sup>81</sup>Malinowski, *Modernisierungskriege*, pp. 229-235.

<sup>82</sup>Bergeron, *Fragments of Development*, p. 3. For a case study, see Nilanjana Chatterjee / Nancy E. Riley, *Planning an Indian Modernity: The Gendered Politics of Fertility Control*, *Signs* 26,3 (2001), pp. 811-845.

<sup>83</sup>Among the exceptions are Andrew J. Rotter, *Gender Relations, Foreign Relations: The United States and South Asia, 1947-1964*, in: Peter L. Hahn / Mary Ann Heiss (eds.), *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World since 1945*, Columbus, OH 2001, pp. 195-213; Christina Klein, *Musicals and Modernization: Rodgers and Hammerstein's The King and I*, in: Engerman et al. (eds.), *Staging Growth*, pp. 129-162.

<sup>84</sup>See, for example, *Geschlechterperspektiven in der Entwicklungspolitik*. Thematic

a general problem of research on modernization and development: Although many historians and social scientists share an interest in socioeconomic transformation processes, they rarely speak with each other to exchange their ideas. The lack of communication is regrettable because development and modernization possess a genuinely interdisciplinary character that suggests itself to cooperation between historians, sociologists, and economists. For example, sociological studies on modernity might help historians to better understand the complex relationship between modernization and modernity.<sup>85</sup> Vice versa, sociologists might profit from working with historical approaches. This is what Wolfgang Knöbl suggests in his „Die Kontingenz der Moderne: Wege in Europa, Asien und Amerika,“ with which he aims to increase macrosociology’s awareness of historical contingencies.<sup>86</sup>

### Modernization, Modernity, and Globalization

Stronger cooperation between history, sociology, and economics would also be helpful in addressing the question whether and, if so, how modernization and globalization are related. The question arises because of the widespread perception that modernization, as a historical phenomenon, has contributed to the convergence of societies across the globe through the spread of „modern“ ways of living – a process that some believe to be a characteristic, result, or motor of globalization. Undoubtedly it would be shortsighted to understand modernization and its universalist aspirations solely as an expression of imperialistic quests by self-confident nations or status-anxious elites. Doing so would disregard the ways in which images and ideas about „progress“ and „modernity“ have undergone changes in the process of transnational transfer and local adaptation. Individuals and collectives have integrated varieties of „modern“ into their lives, but they have done so

issue of *femina politica* 13,2 (2004); Lourdes Beneria, *Gender, Development and Globalization: Economics As If All People Mattered*, New York 2003.

<sup>85</sup>See the contributions in Thorsten Bonacker / Andreas Reckwitz (eds.), *Kulturen der Moderne: Soziologische Perspektiven der Gegenwart*, Frankfurt am Main 2007.

<sup>86</sup>Wolfgang Knöbl, *Die Kontingenz der Moderne: Wege in Europa, Asien und Amerika*, Frankfurt am Main 2007.

without necessarily embracing whatever vision of social order might be attached to the modernity-bearing products, behaviors, or mentalities that they have acquired. Who can control individual or collective definitions of modernity in a global realm?

With no quick solution in sight, we might consider choosing a pragmatic way out: we could decide to focus on the historicization of concepts and experiences of modernization and modernity, with modernization and modernity being what contemporaries understood them to be in their respective contexts. For example, we could study how promoters of modernization positioned themselves vis-à-vis different reflections of modernity – the nation-state, civil society, gender relations, anti-modernism, to name but a few – and how the objects of the modernizers’ attention reacted to and appropriated those concepts.<sup>87</sup>

In doing so, we should not rest on the comfortable assumption that, by historicizing ideas about development and modernization, we are working in a politically neutral zone. Just as development scholars in the 1960s were entangled in various political and institutional contexts, historians today are invested in disciplinary interests and strategies, and they are affected by political debates and phenomena, many of them tied to globalization. The resulting structures champion some topics and marginalize others, and they affect the conditions under which historical knowledge is produced.

### Where Can We Go From Here?

Nils Gilman has recently called for a historiographical approach to the study of development and modernization that combines a variety of methods and sources to „compose narratives that connect theory, policy, and action, and to do so comparatively“.<sup>88</sup> Gilman defines five interrelated elements of modernization and development: social the-

<sup>87</sup>A good example is Srirupa Roy’s *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*, Durham 2007, which includes chapters on films, architecture, and science as fields that contributed to producing a postcolonial Indian national identity.

<sup>88</sup>Nils Gilman, Review Article No. 238-B, in: *H-Diplo*, July 29, 2009, <<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/reviews/PDF/AR238-B.pdf>> (01.12.2010), p. 5.

ory, development theory, development policy, development practice, and the lived experience of development. Instead of assuming that ideas about modernization were turned into theories and then applied in the field, Gilman argues that we should consider the back and forth between the academy, the political arena, and the field, paying special attention to the „bi-directional causal dynamics“, that is, the ways in which practical experiences with modernization resulted in changes in development discourse and theory and vice versa.<sup>89</sup>

Realizing such a complex approach would greatly improve our understanding of modernization; however, we would still lack a sufficient understanding of the lived experience of development and modernization. Trying to study experiences is a difficult task for historians, but it is essential if we are to overcome the severe conceptual and epistemological limitations that we currently face. By focusing on written sources from aid organizations, governments, aid workers, and so on, we tend to replicate the modernizers' perspective, which encourages the assumption that modernization was, first and foremost, about governing other people, about telling them how to live and what to do. Undoubtedly, modernization was, in large part, a regulatory regime. But if we end our inquiry at this point, we ignore the actual agents of modernization. To fill that void, we need to listen and talk to scholars who have studied the local level of development and modernization.<sup>90</sup> More anthropologically informed, yet context-conscious historical case studies could give us a better understanding of how development and modernization actually happen, and how the related experiences of both lay people and experts translate back into theory and policy.<sup>91</sup> At the same time, we must be careful not to assume that

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>90</sup>See, for example, Jason Pribilsky, Development and the „Indian Problem“ in the Cold War Andes: Indigenismo, Science, and Modernization in the Making of the Cornell-Peru Project at Vicos, in: *Diplomatic History* 33,3 (2009), pp. 405-426; Li, The Will to Improve; Mike Woost, The Common Sense of Development and the Struggle for Participatory Development in Sri Lanka, in: Jeffrey H. Cohen / Norbert Dannhaeuser (eds.), *Economic Development: An Anthropological Approach*, Walnut Creek 2002, pp. 107-122.

<sup>91</sup>Jutta Nowosadtko, *Erfahrung als Methode und als Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher*

the subaltern's voice is the „authentic“ one that speaks the truth about modernization and development. Experts and non-experts, politicians and grass-roots activists are all historical actors who follow their own interests, just as all locales follow their own logics.<sup>92</sup> If we are to make more of the history of development and modernization than interpret it as a reflection of the rise and fall of high-modernity, we need to take this „universal particularity“ seriously.

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