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# Writing the History of Development: A Review of the Recent Literature

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- Sharad Chari and Stuart Corbridge, eds., *The Development Reader* (London: Routledge, 2008), 592 pp., \$59.95 (pb), ISBN 9780415415057.
- Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Policies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 288 pp., \$17.49 (pb), ISBN 0226470431.
- Suzanne Moon, *Technology and Ethical Idealism: A History of Development in the Netherlands East Indies* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2007), 192 pp., €39.95 (pb), ISBN 9789057891564.
- Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert. Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 408 pp., \$26.95 (pb), ISBN 9780821417171.
- Helge Ø. Pharo und Monika Pohle Fraser, eds., *The Aid Rush. Aid Regimes in Northern Europe During the Cold War, Volume 1* (Oslo: Oslo Academic Press, 2008), 363 pp., £45 (pb), ISBN 9788274772939.
- Helge Ø. Pharo und Monika Pohle Fraser, eds., *The Aid Rush. Aid Regimes in Northern Europe During the Cold War, Volume 2* (Oslo: Oslo Academic Press, 2008), 298 pp., £37 (pb), ISBN 9788274773806.
- Urban Vahsen, *Eurafrikanische Entwicklungskooperation. Die Assoziierungspolitik der EWG gegenüber dem subsaharischen Afrika in den 1960er Jahren* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), 420 pp., €52.00 (pb), ISBN 9783515096676.

‘Development’ as a ‘process of enlarging people’s choices’ is omnipresent.<sup>1</sup> Constituents of global society – governments, international organisations, non-

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<sup>1</sup> This broad definition of ‘development’ is taken from the first Human Development Report of the UNDP in 1990. See [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr\\_1990\\_en\\_overview.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1990_en_overview.pdf), p. 1.

governmental organisations (NGOs), multinational corporations, the media and individual actors – are deeply involved in its practices and discourses. At universities around the world, development studies mushroom, and development research has become a darling of the social sciences. In particular, development assistance has become big business, involving the flow of \$136 billion dollars in 2009.<sup>2</sup> But more significantly than before, development issues and especially development assistance have become contested terrain, too. While the millennium development goals defined by the United Nations in 2000 and designed to halve global poverty by the year 2015 call on donor and recipient countries to increase their efforts,<sup>3</sup> critics of development assistance are multiplying.

Both positions have found prominent spokespeople in recent years. Those in favour of the millennium development goals typically stick to the position of Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs. His book, *The End of Poverty*, argues that with more aid, careful planning and a determined effort of multiple development actors, it is possible to change the boundary conditions of sub-Saharan African societies – health and education systems in particular – and to effect change in the direction of the modernising ideal of developed societies.<sup>4</sup> Sachs calls for a ‘big push’ to lift sub-Saharan African countries out of poverty, echoing, in effect, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan’s urge to conduct large-scale investment programmes (the latter suggesting investments in industry only, though) some sixty-five years ago.<sup>5</sup> The critics of development assistance, in contrast, mostly line up with William Easterly, a former World Bank official and economics professor at New York University. Written in a fast-paced, anecdotal and easily digestible prose, *The White Man’s Burden*, published in 2006, has also attracted a large audience and has become a global bestseller.<sup>6</sup> Easterly acknowledges some successes in development assistance, most notably in health and education. But all too often, as Easterly argues, Western donors have imposed their aid on recipient countries without due regard to local conditions. They have sustained corrupt elites and prolonged a vicious circle of poverty which developing societies find difficult to escape.

<sup>2</sup> Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Query Wizard for International Development Statistics, <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids>. Official Development Aid, Disbursements.

<sup>3</sup> See United Nations Millennium Goals, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (accessed February 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York, London: Penguin Books, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> P. N. Rosenstein-Rodan, ‘Problems of Industrialization of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe’, *The Economic Journal*, 53 (1943), 202–211; P. N. Rosenstein-Rodan, ‘The International Development of Economically Backward Areas’, *International Affairs*, 20, 2 (1944), 157–65.

<sup>6</sup> William Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest have Done so Much Ill and so Little Good* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 2006). For further examples, see Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 2009). A more detailed and profound critique is provided by Robert Calderisi, *The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid Isn’t Working* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). See also Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

The absence of historians and of historical perspective from this debate is particularly noteworthy. Most, if not all, experts on development draw mainly on sources produced by social scientists, and they make use of only very few historical analyses. Sachs's use of history is confined to his experience as a consultant to Eastern European governments in the 1980s and 1990s, and although Easterly at least zooms back into history time and again to support his argument, his terminology (for example, 'naturally formed states'), methodology (sample choices) and arguments can be contested on many grounds.<sup>7</sup>

Yet historians, too, have engaged thoughtfully and penetratingly with 'development' ever since Nick Cullather published a noteworthy research report ten years ago entitled 'Development? It's History'.<sup>8</sup> Cullather pointed to the long history of (American) development policies and development assistance, and he urged historians to conduct research on the multiple ways in which development shaped the social sciences and politics in general over the past fifty years. Historians, he argued, 'can say a great deal' about past conceptions of modernities and about the task of present and future diplomats.<sup>9</sup> Cullather's call went not unheard. Over the last ten years, American historians have produced a sizeable body of knowledge on the history of development, development assistance and on the concept of modernisation for the history of US foreign policy. In the process of accumulating insight and knowledge, they have not only added an important historical dimension to the current debate about development and development assistance. They have also appropriated as genuinely American the concept of modernisation as well as the practices and discourses of development and development assistance to a point where one could speak of a hegemonisation of the history of development. According to their master narrative, the Point Four Program, initiated by President Harry S. Truman in 1949, inaugurated the development era. Drawing on the ideas of American progressivism, Wilsonianism and New Deal approaches to the depression, Americans invented modern development as a tool of modernisation and diplomacy. In succeeding decades, this knowledge–power complex universalised the notion of linear, progressive development in order to create a global capitalist system conducive to American interests and aims.<sup>10</sup>

A number of important questions derive from these glances at the current field of development and development assistance and at the master narrative of American historians. The first trajectory concerns the problem of knowledge transfer between development experts and historians: is there a dialogue? Do discourse participants

<sup>7</sup> Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*, 272, 278, 281, 285.

<sup>8</sup> Nick Cullather, 'Development? It's History. Research Note', *Diplomatic History*, 24, 4 (2000), 641–53.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 653.

<sup>10</sup> A recent example (though more differentiated than stated here) would be David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). See also Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), and Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development*, new ed., rev. and expanded (New York: Zed Books, 2002).

learn from each other? What is the connection between the ivory tower of historians and the development universe? The second trajectory concerns, more properly, problems of historical plausibility. How can we best conceptualise the history of development? With which kind of ideas, assumptions and practices have the politics and discourses of development evolved over time, and to what ends? What role did the various actors play? This review essay explores these questions on the basis of a selection of recent publications especially on the history of European development co-operation. Our aim to take a closer look at a number of specific histories of development in order to outline the current status of knowledge in the field. Specifically, we will introduce works on colonial development, early European development policy, donor histories from a nation-state perspective, and local development initiatives (as far as they involve European players as well).

In light of the current debate on development, it seems worthwhile to begin with one particular recent effort to bring together opinions and findings from various disciplines to engage in a discourse on development undertaken by Sharad Chari and Stuart Corbridge, two professors at the London School of Economics. They have compiled an anthology entitled *The Development Reader*, which contains excerpts and articles by scholars from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century.<sup>11</sup> Here we find not only Adam Smith and Karl Marx, Franz Fanon and Walt W. Rostow, Jeffrey Sachs and Amartya Sen. Frederick Cooper's exploration of the 'gatekeeper state' is included as is Arjun Appadurai's analysis of the connection between globalisation and violence. As with any anthology, we can debate choices. For instance, there is a certain neglect of French *développementalisme*, and Friedrich List is omitted, whose writings influenced the macro-economic policy choices (and development strategies) of the industrial late-comers Germany and the United States to a significant degree.<sup>12</sup> But generally, fifty-five authors, connected by short but incisive chapter introductions, provide a complex, deeply historical and philosophical picture of the theories and practices of development.

Among many other issues, *The Development Reader* provides a very basic, but nevertheless important understanding: thinking about development and development assistance goes back to at least the European Enlightenment, and reflecting upon its history is not a current phenomenon. What we witness today, whether we look at

<sup>11</sup> See also Marc Edelman and Angélique Haugerud, eds., *Anthropology of Development and Globalization. From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005). This anthology, though exploring development, is more concerned with globalisation and capitalism.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Jean-François Bayart, *L'Etat en Afrique. La politique du ventre*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Fayard, 2006); an English translation of an earlier edition appeared as *The State in Africa. The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman, 1993). Also see Serge Latouche, *Survivre au développement. De la décolonisation de l'imaginaire économique à la construction d'une société alternative* (Paris: Editions Mille et une Nuits, 2004); Friedrich List, *Das nationale System der politischen Oekonomie* (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta'scher, 1842). There are many English editions and several translations of List's book under the title of *The National System of Political Economy*. On the significance of List in contemporary Chinese popular history and modernisation discourses, see Nicola Spakowski, 'National Aspirations on a Global Stage: Concepts of World/Global History in Contemporary China', *Journal of Global History*, 4, 3 (2009), 475–95, in particular 486ff.

the current debate about the utility of development and aid or about the impressive amount of recent histories of American development policies in the post-war period, turns out on closer inspection to be 'just' another cycle of academic knowledge production, public interest and political debates.

Most historians would define the late nineteenth century as the period when development became an operational concept and histories of colonial development have long been part of the voluminous literature on European colonialism and imperialism.<sup>13</sup> These studies acknowledge that in the wake of the Enlightenment, Europeans (such as Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles and James Mill, to name but two) probed the connection between colonialism and development. But only towards the end of the nineteenth century did the notion of development fuse with ideologies of the civilising mission and turn into a more systematic concept. Strategic planning, public investments, the increasing importance of science and technology for the colonial project, and increasing regard for the role that indigenous populations were to play in modernising economies characterised the novelty of colonial development. Widely quoted as an example of this emerging 'modern' developmentalism is the dictum of Joseph Chamberlain, Britain's colonial secretary, from 1895: '[It is] not enough to occupy certain great spaces of the world's surface unless you are willing to develop them. We are the landlords of a great estate; it is the duty of the landlord to develop his estate.'<sup>14</sup>

Two recent books on the role of agriculture in colonial development look at the ideas and practices of the colonial state to effect and manage socio-economic transformations in the colonies. In her book *Technology and Ethical Idealism: A History of Development in the Netherlands East Indies*, Suzanne Moon explores Dutch 'social welfare projects and [what contemporaries referred to as] "the development of the native peoples"' (p. 1) during the first half of the twentieth century. Likewise, Joseph Hodge, in *Triumph of the Expert. Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism*, examines the way in which development emerged out of efforts to cope 'with the social, economic, and ecological crises of the late colonial world' (p. 2). Both authors emphasise the novel character of science and technology as 'tools of empire' which entered colonial discourses and practices at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Both explore the ways in which science and

<sup>13</sup> Herward Sieberg, *Colonial Development. Die Grundlegung moderner Entwicklungspolitik durch Großbritannien 1919–1949* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), 527–76; D. J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development*, vol. 1: *The Origins of British Aid Policy, 1924–1945* (London: Macmillan, 1979), chapters 10 and 15. See also the extensive documentation in S. R. Ashton and S. E. Stockwell, eds., *British Documents on the End of Empire*, series A, vol. 1: *Imperial Policy and Colonial Practice 1925–1945*, part 2: *Economic Policy, Social Policies and Colonial Research* (London: HMSO for the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in the University of London, 1996); J. J. P. de Jong, 'Colonial Welfare Policies and the Origins of Dutch Developing Cooperation', in C. Schweigman and U. T. Bosma, eds., *Research and Development Cooperation. The Role of the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1990), 50–62; J. Marseille, *Empire Colonial et capitalisme français: Histoire d'un divorce* (Paris, Michel: 1984).

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton, 'The Origins and Course of Fabian Colonialism in Africa', *Journal of Sociology*, 4, 2 (1991), 145.

technology became institutionalised within the colonial state. But where Moon sees this as an instrument to provide ‘some kind of improvement to indigenous society’ (p. 1), Hodge interprets it as a means to ‘develop the natural and human resources of the empire and manage the perceived problems and disorder generated by colonial rule’ (p. 8).

Moon claims that, throughout the nineteenth century, colonial authorities debated how best to govern Indonesia in ways that would raise living standards for Dutch and Indonesians alike. This debate oscillated between prescriptions for ‘policies of protection and those of transformation’. These contradictory notions would dominate agricultural development policies down to the end of colonial rule. We see in the ethical policy (*ethische politiek*) the Dutch version of an applied civilising mission around the turn to the twentieth century, more of a break with past practices. Already towards the end of the nineteenth century contemporaries characterised the state-directed agricultural economy of colonial Indonesia as particularly exploitative – and as far from being protective.<sup>15</sup> Concern about the exploitative policies in Indonesia, paternalistic notions about ‘uplifting’ Indonesians and the command over interventionist technologies prompted the rise of developmentalism. Scientific studies of agricultural practices, experimentation with new seeds, and irrigation projects were conducted. Moon convincingly demonstrates that Dutch scientists and experts gradually came to appreciate indigenous agricultural practices and incorporated these in their recommendations and projects. Nevertheless, agricultural development was a ‘top-down’ process, desired by the state and implemented by experts and the colonial bureaucracy. Some projects worked, while others did not. After the First World War, the mixed results of agricultural development led to a reassertion of development strategies. Experts no longer regarded the proper application of technology as the key to success. Planners now felt that not all farmers were ready to embrace new technologies. Hoping for trickle-down effects, they identified larger farmers as agents of change, and correspondingly sought them out as privileged partners of the development project. The great depression with its severe repercussions on the Indonesian economy put a temporary halt to state-driven development. For reasons Moon does not sufficiently explain (probably financial constraints), the colonial state now reversed course, and the government began to sponsor grassroots initiatives from the communities. This bottom-up approach, Moon asserts, ‘took for granted that there would be initiative and active interest in development coming from the indigenous people themselves, something that had happened often over the previous thirty years of development work’ (p. 129). Meanwhile, Indonesian nationalists became increasingly dissatisfied with changes in strategy and the Dutch emphasis on agricultural development. They addressed technological questions and became attracted by the development strategies of both Japan and the Soviet Union. Moon concludes that state-planned and state-driven agricultural

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, the classic Multatuli (pen name for Douwes Dekkert), *Max Havelaar of the koffieveilingen der Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* (1907), 10th ed. (Amsterdam: Maatschappij voor Goede en Goedkope Lectuur, 1917).

development in Indonesia showed only modest results. Nevertheless, by refining strategies and methods, experts and the colonial bureaucracy held on to the concept of development.

Overall, Moon has written an important book that puts agricultural development squarely at the centre of the debates on late colonialism. Her findings mirror the debates of the present, linking up to Easterly's distinction between planners and seekers, to the problems of top-down development approaches, and to the expectation of experts in the field that people will embrace change readily.

Hodge arrives at strikingly similar conclusions. However, he identifies more clearly and critically the rationales behind colonial development. As his analysis moves into the 1950s, his book also brings to light the continuities between colonial and post-colonial development discourses and practices. While Moon focuses on Indonesia, Hodge looks at sub-Saharan Africa and, to a lesser degree, at British-controlled Caribbean islands, with occasional references to Malaya.

Hodge also narrates concepts of empire and of colonialism during the nineteenth century, culminating in the 'Chamberlainite development doctrine' (mirroring the rationale of the ethical policy) that 'the peoples of the tropical regions were incapable of running their own affairs; that responsibility therefore had fallen to the British to act as imperial trustees; and that this implied a move toward greater state intervention and control' (p. 53). He then describes the incremental, contingent process of setting up a nascent bureaucratic infrastructure dealing with public health, medicine and tropical agriculture. What had become obvious by the 1910s, though, was that 'trained scientific officers and research practitioners were needed to work in the field, as part of the colonial technical services, intimately aware and knowledgeable of local conditions and problems' (p. 88). During the 1920s and 1930s, medical and public health studies were conducted on a more systematic basis, and particular emphasis was put on infant and maternal mortality rates as well as on what experts regarded as 'malnutrition'. In the wake of the great depression, the introduction of new cash crops and the expansion of agricultural production became increasingly criticised. There was growing concern about the environmental costs of exploitative methods of production. Civil society actors in Britain argued that the 'development of the people' should be prioritised, and they demanded that more emphasis should be put on a broadly defined concept of education. While until the 1920s experts had identified population scarcity and labour shortages as a major problem of development, by the mid-1930s perceived population growth and unemployment entered the discourse. As Hodge reminds us, 'It is with this backdrop of growing deprivation and the threat of rural emigration in mind that we need to read the emerging consensus in favour of state-managed colonial development in the late 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s.' As a result, 'state-centred ideologies and development structures' triumphed and 'remained largely intact even after the transfer of formal colonial power. Hand in hand with this was the depoliticization of poverty and power achieved by recasting social and economic problems as technical ones that could be fixed by rational planning and expert knowledge' (p. 18ff).

During what D. A. Low and John Lonsdale call the ‘second colonial occupation’ after the Second World War, large mechanised projects such as the Sukumaland Development Scheme or the Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme were devised. But throughout the empire, Hodge observes, these mechanised projects failed. Land reform also became an important issue, as planners were convinced that this would increase production. He writes: ‘But the granting of [individual property rights] threatened to dissolve the very communities officials wished to preserve and control.’ (p. 250). What emerges from Hodge’s detailed account of the 1950s are increasing contradictions within the colonial development project. As in Indonesia, nationalist groups during the 1940s and 1950s capitalised on these contradictions, and criticised the colonial bureaucracy for focusing too much on agriculture and for being too timid in regard to development. In the post-independence period, rapid industrialisation, therefore, became the modernising vision of nationalists. As Frederick Cooper has written:

In the 1950s, the model colonial official was a technical expert, who knew how to eradicate malaria, organize a school system, teach new cultivation techniques, or manage labor disputes. The 1960s African state sought to take over the interventionist aspect of the colonial state, and indeed to intensify it, in the name of the national interest and (for a time being) to demonstrate to voters that the state was improving their lives.<sup>16</sup>

Hodge’s *Triumph of the Expert* is an excellent book that deserves a wide readership of development experts, and historians of colonialism, environmentalism and development.<sup>17</sup> It deals with many important issues of which we pick up only some here: the rise of the concept of the interventionist development state; the role of experts, science and technology; the continuities of colonial and post-colonial development; and the cycles of perceived problems impeding the modernising vision planners’ project.

If historical studies of post-Second World War development discourses and practices refer to colonial development at all, they briefly note antecedents of the colonial era and mention in passing, if at all, the continuities of strategies, personnel and institutions in ex-colonial European donor countries. But the story is more complex. To begin with, the relation between former colonies and former colonial powers changed in a dual sense: on a formal level, sovereignty turned these relations into one among equals; but, as Cooper has recently pointed out, ‘independence turned entitlement into supplication’. Europeans relinquished their empires following cost–benefit analyses of the years 1956 and 1957 which revealed that ‘shedding obligations’, coupled with the introduction of development assistance,

<sup>16</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940. The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 88.

<sup>17</sup> One of the unfortunate consequences of writing agricultural development history as interdisciplinary colonial history is that both books were rarely reviewed, and then only in more minor or specialised journals.



was much less costly.<sup>18</sup> Second, by the 1950s there was ample knowledge available in the emerging development machine. Third, many of the colonial experts continued to stay in newly independent countries as ‘consultants’ (both state-employed and private), staffed the ranks of newly created development outfits, or moved on to the newly created United Nations and their specialised agencies. Fourth, colonial ministries, research institutions and think tanks either re-invented themselves or fused with existing bureaucratic structures, providing the organisational infrastructure for French, Dutch and British development policies.<sup>19</sup> Thus, at the moment the much heralded ‘development era’ crystallised, there was already in place a European knowledge–power complex which consisted of hundreds, or thousands, of experts, administrators, scientists, bureaucracies and financial resources which, due to the ending of colonial wars and control, could now be disbursed as grants and loans to the ‘underdeveloped world’.

These important continuities, and the implications of the fundamental change in the relationship between colonisers and colonised, have not yet been sufficiently explored.<sup>20</sup> Equally unexplored is the connection, fraction or competition between this post-colonial development infrastructure and emerging development outfits in international organisations, non-colonial countries, and in the United States.

Still, some historians have begun to trace more thoroughly continuities from colonial to post-colonial times, focusing on the evolution of early multilateral European development policy. One of them, Urban Vahsen, looks specifically at the ‘association agreements’ between the European Economic Community (EEC) and French colonies. Based on in-depth research in European, French and German archives, *Eurafrican Development Cooperation* sheds light on the twists and turns of the negotiations about the initial agreements, and it reconstructs meticulously the diplomatic wrangling about subsequent conventions reached in Yaoundé in 1963 and 1969 by what by then were already independent African states. As Vahsen points out, the driving force behind association was France. Eager to share the costs of its empire with its European partners, the French government made association a precondition for signing the Roman treaties and so association agreements were the result of a package deal. Colonial markets would be associated with the EEC through trade

<sup>18</sup> Frederick Cooper, ‘Writing the History of Development’, in Corinna R. Unger, Stephan Malinowski and Andreas Eckert, eds., *Modernizing Missions: Approaches to ‘Developing’ the Non-Western World after 1945* special issue, *Journal of Modern European History*, 8, 1 (2010), 5–23, here 15.

<sup>19</sup> Veronique Dimier, ‘Bringing the Neo-Patrimonial State Back to Europe: French Decolonization and the Making of the European Development Aid Policy’, in Anja Kruke, ed., *Dekolonisation. Prozesse und Verflechtungen 1945–1990* (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz, 2009), 433–58; Marc Frey, ‘Dutch Elites and the End of Empire in Indonesia’, in Jost Dülffer and Marc Frey, eds., *Elites and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Joseph M. Hodge, ‘British Colonial Expertise, Post-Colonial Careerism and the Early History of International Development’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 8, 1 (2010), 24–46.

<sup>20</sup> For instance, the noted historian of Dutch development policies, Marc Dierikx, simply refers to ‘colonial traditions’ in explaining the Dutch response to Point IV and the introduction of the United Nations technical assistance programme. See Marc Dierikx, ‘Developing Policy on Development. The Hague, 1945–1977’, in Helge Ø. Pharo and Monika Pohle Fraser, eds., *The Aid Rush. Aid Regimes in Northern Europe During the Cold War*, vol. 1 (Oslo: Oslo Academic Press, 2008), 223–52.

arrangements, and, in turn, EEC members agreed to set up a multilateral European Development Fund (EDF) for overseas territories. In charge of the fund would be the European Commission's Development Directorate General, DG VIII. The deal allayed West German fears of being involved too closely with the French empire, and at the same time it laid the groundwork for a common European development policy. Vahsen shows how the EDF turned from a supplement to colonial French development policies into a player in its own right whose officials toured African countries, staged information campaigns or received African officials in Brussels. Concurrently, the EDF expanded its funding schemes from infrastructure measures, agricultural production schemes, and other technical assistance projects into the fields of diversification assistance and price stabilisation measures for commodities.<sup>21</sup>

More specifically, Martin Rempe looks at an internship programme for African civil servants which the European Commission launched in 1960. Among Commission officials, according to Rempe, the programme was deemed important for recruiting informal African liaison officers who would balance the loss of influence caused by the dismantling of colonial administrations. In Brussels, African interns were trained in the art of running an administration and were educated about all aspects of the EEC and its policies. Written examinations not only made sure that motivation remained high, but also indicated the degree to which European paternalism continued to prevail.<sup>22</sup>

The Development Directorate General, DG VIII, in the meantime, became the 'recycling ground' for 'ex-colonial officials',<sup>23</sup> as Veronique Dimier argues. Large parts of its staff were recruited from former French or Belgian colonial offices. At the top, the presiding Commissioner Robert Lemaignen could count on long-standing connections with African elites and many future heads of governments. His head of Cabinet, Jacques Ferrandi, came from the French colonial ministry and had supervised the implementation of projects commissioned by the French development fund in West Africa before (the fund was called Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social; abbreviated to FIDES). Ferrandi drew many friends and colleagues from colonial times to Brussels. Not surprisingly, the financial management of the EDF, too, was in the hands of a former colonial official, Jacques Lefebvre, who had worked at the Belgian colonial ministry. These

<sup>21</sup> Vahsen's work also points to the changing role of international organisations, a more recent field of development history. See, for example, on the World Bank, Michele Alacevich, *The Political Economy of the World Bank. The Early Years* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) and Amy S. Staples, *The Birth of Development. How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945–1965* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2007). On the United Nations, see the volumes published within the United Nations Intellectual History Project, most recently, for example, Olav Stokke, *The UN and Development. From Aid to Cooperation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Tagi Sagafi-Nejad with John H. Dunning, *The UN and Transnational Corporations. From Code of Conduct to Global Compact* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> See Martin Rempe, 'Crashkurs zum europäischen Entwicklungsexperten? Das Praktikantenprogramm der EWG-Kommission für afrikanische Beamte in den 1960er Jahren', in Lorraine Bluche, Veronika Lipphardt and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Der Europäer – ein Konstrukt. Wissensbestände, Diskurse, Praktiken* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2009), 207–28.

<sup>23</sup> Dimier, 'Bringing the Neo-Patrimonial State Back to Europe', 433.

officials not only infused the Development Directorate General, DG VIII, with values and administrative practices they had learned during their colonial careers, but also employed their intimate local knowledge and impressive networks for building what Dimier calls 'neo-patrimonial' client systems with African states. Accordingly, allocation procedures resembled very much the procedures of the FIDES where projects were chosen according to lofty criteria after opaque decision-making processes, yet at its core the 'Ferrandian style'<sup>24</sup> was always tailored to the concerns of the post-colonial clients in order to strengthen the position of African elites within their respective political systems and reassure their continuing loyalty. By the early 1970s, as former European Community Commissioner Claude Cheysson once observed in retrospect, Ferrandi's neo-patrimonial system had indeed proven tremendously successful: in contrast to the French empire it had established an efficient and indirect administration of francophone Africa.<sup>25</sup>

While these 'European' histories of development assistance address the issues of continuity with regard to colonial heritage and operational procedures of the European development apparatus, Carol Lancaster, a former US government aid official and scholar of development policies, raises another basic but nevertheless fundamental research question in her book *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Policies*: why do governments give foreign aid? After all, most of the donors do not have a colonial past. In what can only be called an excellent introduction to donor policies, Lancaster approaches this question from two perspectives: a historical one and a current one. In particular, she looks at five donor countries: the United States, Japan, France, Germany and Denmark. Though her findings refer to these five countries, they have implications for understanding donor objectives, interests and policies at large. Following up on her research question, the emphasis of the book is on domestic politics in these countries. The analytical framework of the book is divided into two parts, one dealing with motivations for aid, the other dealing with the domestic settings in which development aid is being discussed. Lancaster uses a matrix of interests consisting of four variables: diplomatic, developmental, humanitarian relief, and commercial. The domestic setting is divided, again, into four factors: ideas, political institutions, interests, and the aid organisations. To historians, this may look somewhat mechanical, but it is successful in identifying the main driving forces of aid in each country under consideration, and it allows for an insightful comparison of the cases. The book is based on a great number of interviews and published English and French language sources.

Lancaster argues that the origins of development assistance were very much related to the cold war. 'Aid,' she says, 'is a child of hardheaded, diplomatic realism.' (p. 25). Nevertheless, its durability and its rise to an 'international norm' had much to do with a correlation of interests and domestic settings. During the 1950s, the United States put pressure on its European allies to establish or expand their aid programmes. This was taken up, and by the 1960s there existed institutional frameworks in each

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 449.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted by Rempe, 'Crashkurs', 226.

of the politics to manage foreign aid. Incentives for responding to US pressure varied and were derived from interests in 'managing decolonisation, gaining access to raw materials and export markets, and reintegrating with the world community of states' (p. 213). Lancaster attributes the overall increase in aid between the 1970s to the mid-1980s to three factors. During this period, there was a rising international concern about the need for more aid. Second, the communication revolution raised awareness about the plight of poor people in the Third World (famines, civil wars). Third, by this time, there existed a political constituency for development aid in most countries. This constituency consisted, on the one hand, of government bureaucracies and politicians concerned about development, and, on the other hand, of the rise of NGOs which promoted the issue in many countries (where civil society actors were weak, as in France or Japan, bureaucracies and politics had powerful and vested interests in aid).<sup>26</sup> The end of the cold war marked the beginning of yet another period of development aid. Already during the 1980s, humanitarian relief increased, but due to the end of the cold war overall development aid decreased. Lancaster contributes the reversal of this trend towards the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s to two factors: domestic constituencies, especially NGOs, were able to raise awareness and put pressure on governments; and second, the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on the United States and other terrorist attacks in Europe again drew attention to the interconnectedness of global society, to problems of poverty and conflict.

The country comparisons reveal that US aid was marked by cold war concerns, as well as development purposes based on economic interests and humanitarian concerns. Civil society actors were very important in raising awareness campaigns and promoting the issue of foreign aid from the beginning until the present day. In Japan, commercial interests and a desire to reintegrate into the region after the Second World War prevailed until the 1970s, and due to the weakness of civil society groups, economic interests continue to play a decisive role. Then and now, Japanese development assistance focuses very much on economic infrastructure. France's aid efforts, on the other hand, were driven mainly by political interests; they were designed to uphold France's influence in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa. NGOs were weak and played a minor role. German development assistance, Lancaster maintains, was motivated by cold war concerns (German-German competition in the Third World between West and East Germany) and by economic interests. Here, however, domestic constituencies, most notably leftist politicians, the aid administration, the churches and a vibrant civil society helped to prioritise humanitarian concerns. Finally, in the case of Denmark, commitment to the United Nations and strong politically defined commercial interests initiated early aid programmes. During the 1970s, Denmark was 'unusually responsive' to the calls for more aid, because by that time politics and civil society were convinced that more aid was necessary for humanitarian reasons. Nevertheless, the relatively high degree

<sup>26</sup> See, in particular, Akira Iriye, *Global Community. The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 126–56. See also Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768–2004* (Boulder and London: Paradigm Publishers, 2004).

of tied aid shows that Danish aid has been disbursed throughout its history with a close view on promoting Danish business interests.

Another important contribution to the history of development assistance from the perspective of the donors is the two-volume history edited by Helge Pharo and Monika Pohle Fraser, entitled *The Aid Rush. Aid Regimes in Northern Europe during the Cold War*. It contains sixteen chapters that deal mainly with aspects of Scandinavian development co-operation. Germany and the Netherlands are covered as well, as are India and Ethiopia with one chapter each. What distinguishes most contributions is their recourse to archival sources, many of which have been consulted here for the first time. A useful historical overview on development aid since the Second World War starts off the volumes. Richard Griffiths reminds us that the history of development entails many elements: development economics, institutions, theories and ideas about human development beyond economics, international relations and international political economy, policy analysis, and input-output analyses.<sup>27</sup> This is a large agenda and one difficult to implement for individual researchers.

Without going into each chapter individually, we outline some contours. Scandinavian (and Dutch) development co-operation evolved very slowly, and remained relatively insignificant until around 1970. Promotion of the United Nations system was a major incentive, as multilateralism seemed to provide an opportunity for small countries to make their voice heard. As in the case of the Netherlands and Germany (then West Germany), US pressure to contribute to the strengthening of the 'Free World' played an important role in allocating modest funds for development aid as well. With the exception of the Netherlands, which, until the 1960s, channelled more than 50 per cent of its aid to its colonies (West New Guinea, Surinam, Curacao), the identification of recipients followed no clear priorities at first, but conformed to some degree with the overall decolonisation process. Business relations and the search for markets proved to be an important rationale for giving aid. This could take two forms: either established commercial relations and/or business ties could be reinforced (for example, the Middle East and Asia Minor for Germany), or new markets established (for example, India and East Africa for Denmark). Ideological motives played a certain role as well: witness, for example, the wish to forge social-democratic alliances, or demonstrate solidarity, with regimes perceived as like-minded.<sup>28</sup> The Norwegian flirtation with Julius Nyerere's Tanzania is but one example.<sup>29</sup>

A significant degree of development aid from the countries under consideration was tied. In the case of Germany, this was not necessary, because 80 per cent of the aid was used for purchasing German products, and therefore politicians

<sup>27</sup> Richard T. Griffiths, 'Development Aid. Some Reference Points for Historical Research', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 1, 17–52.

<sup>28</sup> See the contributions by Helge Pharo, Heide-Irene Schmidt, Jan Pedersen, Marc Dierikx and Peter Brunbech in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Jarle Simensen, 'Aid Symbioses and its Pitfalls. The Nordic/Norwegian-Tanzanian Aid Relationship, 1962–1986', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 2, 153–78; Hilde Selbervik, 'The Norwegian-Tanzanian Aid Relationship in the 1990s: Still Trapped in a Samaritan's Dilemma?', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 2, 179–216.

obviously saw no need to tie aid flows. Apart from the problem of tied and untied aid, the issue of bilateral *versus* multilateral aid occupied (and occupies) politicians, civil society actors and aid administrators. Historically speaking, the differentiation makes perhaps less sense than the heated normative debate about this issue would suggest. For instance, 50 per cent of Denmark's miniscule contribution to the United Nations Technical Assistance Program in the 1950s (multilateral aid) was reserved for Danish-language courses for Third World bureaucrats, experts and businessmen. The contributions show furthermore how, by the early 1960s, all these countries had effective government machineries in operation to administer aid flows. Indeed, a not insignificant part of the country analyses centre around institution-building processes within the wider fields of domestic politics, thus appealing perhaps more to historians of political history of individual countries than to historians specialising in the wider issues of North–South relations.

These contributions admirably demonstrate that the origins of the development regime were multi-causal and multi-functional. Development served political and economic interests; its beauty laid in the fact that realist aims could be camouflaged by humanitarian concerns. In the first two decades of development, aid, whether tied or untied, and whether bilateral or multilateral, functioned as stimulation packages for domestic economies.

The studies on individual countries confirm what social scientists say about the importance of institutions. Once they are there, they take on a life of their own. They integrate vertically and horizontally, their staff members develop specific interests and identities in line with the institutions, and while they are not immune to reforms, they are adamantly opposed to becoming oblivious. The histories of the various development outfits are a testimony to these findings.

Varying somewhat from country to country, the rationale for giving aid changed progressively since the end of the 1960s. The reasons for this were manifold: high expectations were frustrated; the communications revolution visualised Southern poverty to a degree unknown before; international donor agencies, most notably the World Bank, changed their strategy towards a 'basic-needs approach'; more NGOs in the North became involved in aid programmes; and the Global South began to press for change, which became encompassed in demands for a New International Economic Order (NIEO).<sup>30</sup> Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands were receptive to the demands for a NIEO and increased aid substantially. But they did not seriously aim at changing the overall mechanisms of the global economic systems. Domestic constraints and the relative weakness vis-à-vis rule makers such as the United States or the World Bank were responsible for this.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Helge Pharo analyses the evolution of the aid regime over time. Though he looks at the Norwegian experience, his overall assessment can be generalised. See Helge Pharo, 'Reluctance, Enthusiasm and Indulgence: The Expansion of Bilateral Norwegian Aid', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 1, 53–90.

<sup>31</sup> Thorsten B. Olesen, 'Between Words and Deeds. Denmark and the NIEO Agenda, 1974–1982', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 1, 145–82, and Hanne Hagtvedt Vik, 'Small, Not Weak?

Some contributions address the question of asymmetric relations between donors and recipients. Quite strikingly, they tend to discredit post-structuralist notions of a Western hegemonic knowledge–power complex seeking to impose an unwanted modernity on the rest of the world. Case studies from India, Tanzania and Middle Eastern countries show that recipients of aid ignored, circumvented or changed contractual commitments without having to face sanctions. This might suggest that instead of operating with reductionist models of globalising Western capitalism, more flexible assumptions might be more appropriate. Tony Smith's concept of the cold war as a pericentric system (instead of a bipolar configuration) comes to mind.<sup>32</sup> A good example for the richness and validity of pericentric modelling is, for instance, the history of population control. Though originating in the West, and in particular the United States and Scandinavia, population control as a means to generate economic growth proliferated and attracted Southern policymakers and activists as well as international organisations.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast to donor histories, historical studies that explore the actual local implementation of development projects remain rare.<sup>34</sup> Yet investigating how such projects changed local experiences, perceptions, dynamics and expectations is doubtless one of the most pressing tasks ahead of future researchers. Under what specific local circumstances did 'white elephants' come into being? Which effects did they have on local populations? And how were they appropriated by locals? Only a few recent studies exist on this score and hence they merit a closer look.

On Senegal, a welcome contribution is Martin Rempé's essay on the modernisation of the Senegalese groundnut economy during the 1960s, which is, again, also an example for what Cooper termed the transition from colonial 'entitlement' to post-colonial 'supplication'. Since the Yaoundé agreement with the EEC cancelled French subsidies for Senegalese groundnut production, the Senegalese government commissioned a French development agency, the Société de l'Aide et de la Coopération (SATEC), to help raise output. The underlying rationale was that the loss of subsidies could be countered by a rise in production. The SATEC set to work quickly. It devised a programme under which groundnut farmers were

Nordic Strategies to Influence the World Bank in the 1980s', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, 333–63.

<sup>32</sup> Tony Smith, 'New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History*, 24, 4 (2000), 567–91.

<sup>33</sup> Sunniva Engh, 'From Northern Feminists to Southern Women: Scandinavian Population Aid to India', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 1, 253–84. See also Marc Frey, 'Experten, Stiftungen und Politik: Zur Genese des globalen Diskurses über Bevölkerung seit 1945', *Zeithistorische Studien/Studies in Contemporary History*, 4, 2 (2007), 137–59; Marc Frey, 'Neo-Malthusianism and Development: Shifting Interpretations of a Contested Paradigm', in *Journal of Global History*, 6, 1 (2011), 75–97. See also Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception. The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2008); Warren C. Robinson and John A. Ross, eds., *The Global Family Planning Revolution. Three Decades of Population Policies and Programs* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> For a historically informed present-day analysis, see Roger C. Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

educated about new growing methods and techniques by fellow farmers who were recruited and introduced to new techniques in short SATEC workshops before being dispatched as multipliers. By 1965, the SATEC had deployed thirty-seven French experts and recruited 509 farmers. But it had achieved more than this. With its actions it also became an integral part of the Senegalese public administration, having broadened its mission from modernising agricultural production to demonstrating 'good governance'. Development, in this case, entailed once more the forceful return of the former colonisers.<sup>35</sup>

Even if the Senegalese government gave free rein to the SATEC, though, cross-cultural implementation of development practices often proved far more difficult in other regions of the world, being contested and negotiated between different actors and complicated by mutual misunderstandings or unintended consequences. As Corinna Unger illustrates, a steel mill built in Rourkela, India, and the 'green revolution' became especially notorious cases of all those complexities that no modernisation manual would mention.<sup>36</sup> Built by over 3000 West German firms, the steel mill responded to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a quick Indian industrialisation, yet its construction was fraught with cultural misunderstandings and problems from the beginning. The West German experts had insufficient knowledge of local conditions and, as they did not take much interest in Indian values and culture, offended Indian mores with promiscuous lifestyles and Indian pride with frequent charges of laziness. Serious infrastructure problems did not ease the tense atmosphere. Under these circumstances, what had initially been conceived of as a role model of modernisation turned gradually into a 'symbol of inflated expectations, opposing value-systems, and misguided cultural assumptions'.<sup>37</sup> In comparison, the modernisation of Indian agriculture was certainly more successful, significantly reducing Indian dependence on American wheat until 1972. Yet, here again, unforeseen consequences emerged: pesticides caused substantial environmental damage and the commercialisation of agriculture undermined social solidarity in village communities, setting off violent clashes between conflicting parties.

Violence, in fact, often surfaced wherever modernising practices were introduced. It was as much embedded in the rhetoric of modernisation which praised the removal of traditions as it was built into routine practices that enforced modernisation. As Stephan Malinowski describes for the context of the Algerian 'war of modernisation',

<sup>35</sup> Martin Rempe, 'Fit für den Weltmarkt in Fünf Jahren? Die Modernisierung der senegalesischen Erdnusswirtschaft in den 1960er Jahren', in Hubertus Büschel and Daniel Speich, eds., *Entwicklungswelten. Globalgeschichte der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2009), 241–74.

<sup>36</sup> Corinna Unger, 'Rourkela, ein Stahlwerk im Dschungel. Industrialisierung, Modernisierung und Entwicklungshilfe im Kontext von Dekolonisation und Kaltem Krieg 1950–1970', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 48 (2008), 367–88.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 387. Tirthankar Roy argues that foreign aid actually impeded Indian national development. See T. Roy, 'End of Aid. External Assistance and Development Strategy in India', in Pharo and Pohle Fraser, *The Aid Rush*, vol. 2, 95–114.



violence involved large-scale resettlements and the destruction of villages, turning subjects into objects of state control.<sup>38</sup> In the development era, even a seemingly harmless principle like community development would become a vehicle of repression. In 1960s Tanzania, the classic example ever since James Scott described the failure of 'ujamaa', community development entailed complex processes of social exclusion, control and punishment that had much in common with colonial techniques of domination.<sup>39</sup> Lately, Hubertus Büschel has mined a number of important documents from local districts – quite an accomplishment if one takes into account that Tanzanian archival conditions often make research a lottery – that illustrate vividly the high degree of local coercion and violence. Particularly those who chose not to participate actively in the local development endeavour could encounter harsh punitive actions such as collective contempt or even physical violence.<sup>40</sup>

Increasingly, the history of competing visions of modernity, especially as it relates to the formulation of local or non-Western forms of modernity, is emerging as another subfield of development history, with post-colonial theorists such as Dipesh Chakrabarty or Shmuel Eisenstadt providing important new lenses through which to look at the past.<sup>41</sup> What these histories underline is that we can no longer think of modernisation as a mere ideological chimera, the by-product of 1960s cold war America.<sup>42</sup> The history of twentieth-century modernisation is broader and more complex, involving, among others, European metropolitan bureaucrats, American experts, global knowledge providers, local expectations and agendas, and not least troubling historical continuities from colonial to post-colonial times. Development was and is local and global in scope. Historians need to draw attention to that multi-layered experience in human history.<sup>43</sup>

We know a lot more today than we did ten years ago about colonial development practices and discourses, interests and infrastructures of the donors, and local desires. Yet in all those areas there is much left to explore, particularly as we move forward into the 1970s and the 1980s. Moreover, other pressing issues such as gender, environmental

<sup>38</sup> Stephan Malinowski, 'Modernisierungskriege. Militärische Gewalt und koloniale Modernisierung im Algerienkrieg (1954–1962)', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 48 (2008), 213–48.

<sup>39</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>40</sup> Hubertus Büschel, 'Eine Brücke am Mount Meru. Zur Globalgeschichte von Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe und Gewalt in Tanganjika', in Büschel and Speich, *Entwicklungswelten*, 175–206.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Marc Frey, ed., *Asian Experiences of Development in the 20th Century* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2010) (special issue of *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 19, 4 (2009)); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Shmuel Eisenstadt, *Die Vielfalt der Moderne* (Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2000).

<sup>42</sup> See Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology. American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2000). See also recently the H-Diplo Roundtable Review 11.35 (20 July 2010) on Ekbladh's *Great American Mission*.

<sup>43</sup> David C. Engerman and Corinna Unger, eds., 'Special Forum: Modernization as a Global Project', *Diplomatic History*, 33, 3 (2009), 375–505.

matters or public health issues will undoubtedly play a more important role in future research projects, thereby deepening our understanding of development and moving its history beyond the technical layers of bureaucracy towards grasping the real and material consequences that development programmes have had for the life-choices of people. Ten years after Nick Cullather's call, development has indeed become history. But as it seems, we are really just at the beginning.