

Trading Power: West Germany's Rise to Global Influence, 1963-1975. By William Glenn Gray. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023. 498 pp. Hardback, \$44.99. ISBN: 978-1-108-34119-6.

doi:[10.1017/S000768052400062X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S000768052400062X)

Reviewed by Christian Kleinschmidt

When the cover of a book on *Trading Power: West Germany's Rise to Global Influence, 1963-1975* features a Starfighter squadron of the Luftwaffe, it gives pause for thought. This book investigates a “new grand strategy under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in the mid-1970s” (p. 3). Gray's thesis assumes that West Germany's path to becoming a major foreign economic power in the period under study between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s was based in particular on its military and political strength, which experienced its breakthrough under a social democratic government in the age of the Cold War. This could also be interpreted as an indication that, in contrast to the post-reunification period after 1989, when Germany's economic strength as a “trading power” was primarily based on the “peace dividend,” on the disarmament of its own troops, and under the protective shield of the Western allies, above all the US, West Germany in the 1970s was a “heavily armed country” “that could hardly be described as ‘civilian.’” Economic and military strength were therefore entirely compatible during this period.

Even though the Federal Republic never achieved a military strength comparable to that of France or Great Britain during the Cold War, the high level of armaments expenditure flanked the country's economic successes, in particular its export successes and currency stability. Under the Brandt and Schmidt governments, the Federal Republic developed into an international, even global, economic power whose success was based on various diplomatic and economic-diplomatic strategies. This included the targeted political promotion of exports as well as the accumulation of large currency reserves, the new Ostpolitik and the associated opening of the economy towards Eastern Europe, the involvement in the European Economic Community, the United Nations (UN), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the increasing development aid under the Brandt and Schmidt governments, and the financial policy under the Social Democratic Economics Minister Karl Schiller and the President of the Bundesbank Otmar Emminger. As Gray shows, this development began at the beginning of the 1960s, but it was only consolidated into a successful strategy under the social-liberal coalition from the end of the

1960s. Accordingly, Schmidt's "grand strategy" of the 1970s followed a phase of "relative passivity of the Erhard and Kiesinger years" (p. 469).

If the term were not so heavily burdened by historical debates, one could almost speak of a social democratic "Sonderweg" of West German foreign trade policy and diplomacy, which Gray deliberately avoids, however. Gray presents his success story of West German "trading power" in 14 chapters, which are largely based on previously published texts and which have now been integrated into a complete monograph. These texts are based on archival source studies from the Federal Archives in Koblenz, the Military Archives in Freiburg, and the National Archives in College Park and London. The overall presentation is quite successful, and at one point or another, the author's preference for allusions, for example, from the world of pop music, seems to shine through, as can be seen from subheadings such as "The Whipping Boy" (Elton John 1983, p. 94), "With a little help" (Beatles/Joe Cocker, 1967, p. 347), or "Leader of the Pack" (The Shangri-Las, 1965, p. 360), whose release dates even largely correspond to the period under investigation.

As remarkable and plausible as Gray's central thesis is with regard to the history of German economic success for the short period between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, there are other interpretations. Looking at the history of German "trading power" from a long-term perspective, as recently presented by Jan-Otmar Hesse (*Exportweltmeister. Geschichte einer deutschen Obsession*, 2023), this success, which is strongly personalized by party politics, is somewhat relativized, but without being completely canceled out. Hesse shows that the German export orientation can be traced back over a very long period of time to the end of the nineteenth century and was deeply anchored in the economic-political system. Overall, Hesse identifies five core elements that characterized this long-term export orientation: a connection between the export industry and the fate of Germany, which was first propagated by Chancellor Caprivi in the German Empire; an institutional anchoring of the export promotion system, such as a corresponding information infrastructure for companies; measures to promote exports and cover risks by involving banks and state insurance and guarantees; the influence of the export industry on the Ministry of Economics; and a semantics that suggests a national coding of the economy and exports.

Gray's research results do not contradict this finding, but they form only a small section over a period of 12 years in the transition from a conservative to a social-liberal coalition in the Federal Republic, which adds a very interesting, original, and more diplomatic-historical short-term perspective within the framework of a very long-term

German export strategy, which above all recognizes the role of the Brandt and Schmidt governments in this context.

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The Life and Death of the Shopping City: Public Planning and Private Redevelopment in Britain since 1945. *By Alistair Kefford.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 340 pp. Online Access, \$34.99. ISBN: 978-1-108-87450-2.

doi:[10.1017/S0007680524000679](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007680524000679)

Reviewed by Richard Longstreth

In the vast literature on planning and redevelopment in the UK after World War II, attention to the retail sector has been minimal at best—that is, until Alistair Kefford's *The Life and Death of the Shopping City*. This is an admirable study in its chronological range, the breadth of contributing factors considered, and the level of detail explored. Complementing the book's chronological arrangement is a meticulous ordering of the text by topic. Numerous case studies afford insights well beyond what generalities covering national trends can accomplish. Kefford has mined a sweeping array of period documents and an equally impressive spectrum of recent scholarly literature. And what in many hands could be a rather dry subject is presented in an engaging and eminently readable form. *The Life and Death of the Shopping City* promises to be an essential text on the history of twentieth-century urbanism in Great Britain for years to come.

World War II's legacy of bombed city centers in the UK ensured the central role of planning in the years that followed, with considerable powers bestowed upon the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, established in 1943. In approving redevelopment schemes, the ministry's role was, in effect, to strike a balance between visionary schemes advanced at the local level and the practical needs of retailers, who continued to experience a rise in consumption that had begun in the 1920s. Achieving that balance was no easy matter. Kefford reveals the ongoing tension among local authorities, often competing with one another in drives for regional supremacy and between them and the ministry. Ultimately, the process greatly favored chains and other major