

## BOOK REVIEWS

Mark Solovey and Christian Dayé, *Cold War Social Science: Transnational Entanglements* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 400, CHF 153.50 (hardcover). ISBN: 9783030702458.

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Over the last two decades, scholars have produced a rapidly growing literature on the social sciences during the Cold War, complete with multiple edited volumes, special issues, and major essay reviews. Indeed, research on Cold War social sciences has formed the backbone of a new professional society (Society for the History of Recent Social Sciences) with its own journal (*History of Social Science*). Not surprisingly, closer attention to the Cold War has revealed heterogeneity rather than uniformity: the stories of the social sciences from the 1950s through the 1980s vary across locations, disciplines, institutions, projects, and even individual scholars.

Given such proliferation, it would seem difficult for a single edited volume to tell us something substantively new about “Cold War social science” writ large. But Mark Solovey and Christian Dayé have done just that. Through iterative revisions and sustained reflection, the two editors and their contributors have marshaled a diverse set of individually engaging essays toward a sustained thematic focus, making *Cold War Social Science* more than the sum of its parts. The subtitle, *Transnational Entanglements*, suggests the direction of their major intervention: these histories are both global and genuinely cross-national. The collection pushes us beyond familiar analytic frames such as the effects of the Cold War on American social science, or on Soviet social science, or even on the (attempted) use of social science as a tool in a global political struggle. Instead, the picture that emerges from *Cold War Social Science* is both more decentered (recognizing, but not privileging, the mid-century power of the US and USSR) and more dialogic: ideas, people, and practices move in multiple directions, shifting and transforming as they cross boundaries, sometimes in unexpected ways.

Solovey and Dayé have grouped their essays into four categories. The first, “Exchanges across the Iron Curtain,” examines the movement of theories, information, and projects between the US and the Soviet bloc. Ekaterina Babintseva describes how Soviet psychologists reformulated B[urrhus] F[rederic] Skinner’s “programmed instruction” for education by grounding it anew in Soviet cybernetics, laying out a vision (never fully realized) for computer-aided education that would improve the “algorithmic thinking” of Soviet students. Ironically, the prime developer of this approach, Lev Landa, had to relocate to the US in the 1970s after his son immigrated, where Landa incorporated his techniques into a successful corporate consulting business. Elena Aronova tells a similar back-and-forth story about the Science Citation Index (SCI). The SCI was created by a US scholar to facilitate American Cold War scientific research but found its most enthusiastic audience in the Soviet

Union, where it formed the basis for Soviet scientometrics. Aronova argues that Soviet use of the SCI provided crucial support for its early development and eventual success in the US. Simon Ottersbach describes the surprising role of Radio Free Europe, the CIA-funded radio broadcaster for Eastern Europe, as a site for creating and disseminating valuable research on the Soviet bloc to both social scientists and non-academics.

The second set of essays examines the intersection of Western modernization theory and development studies with post-colonial nation-building. Sebastián Gil-Riaño analyzes the career of US anthropologist Charles Wagley, whose extensive travels and research in Brazil gradually shifted his own understanding both of Brazilian society and of area studies itself, such that his work cannot be understood as either an Americanist projection or a simple reflection of Brazilian self-understanding. Christa Wirth follows another anthropologist, Felipe Landa Jocano, a Filipino social scientist who trained at the University of Chicago before returning to the Philippines to become a highly decorated ethnographer who built close ties to the Marcos regime. Wirth highlights the ambiguities of Jocano's career: trained in modernization theory (which aimed to explain how "traditional" societies could become "modernized"), he rejected both the American vision of modernity and theories of a single path to modernization. Yet his vision for an authentically Filipino modernization melded easily with the authoritarian Marcos regime, which was itself conducive to American Cold War political interests. The last essay in this section, by Magarita Fajardo, will be of most interest to historians of economics. Fajardo recounts the origin of "dependency theory," an explanatory framework for global inequities that situates them within the global history of capitalism. Fajardo describes how dependency theory grew from the work of economists associated with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, who were immersed in intra-Latin American, left-wing debates about economic development. Only after dependency theory migrated to the US did it become recast by radical US scholars as a socialist counter-narrative to Western capitalist modernization theory.

In the third section, two contributors examine how scholars outside the US and western Europe attempted to use social scientific knowledge to form good citizens. Vítoslav Sommer describes how Czechoslovak sociologists both used and critiqued Western work in their own studies of leisure, building a research program that was roundly criticized after increasing disillusionment with Marxist-Leninism toward the end of the Cold War. Zhipeng Gao's account of Chinese state-supported educational science reveals how it fluctuated in response to broader political realignments. Initially, the Chinese Communist Party rejected the American educational theories that had once held sway in favor of Soviet, Pavlovian psychology. But after de-Stalinization, Pavlovian psychology itself gave way to new pedagogical approaches that merged academic training with productive industrial labor.

The final section of *Cold War Social Science* considers how transnationalism affected debates over the character and goals of the social sciences. Per Wisslgrén recounts Alva Myrdal's evolution toward a "polycentric" conception of the social sciences in her role as director of the Department of Social Sciences for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a vision that eschewed one-way knowledge transfer from powerful nations for a more dialogic model that recognized differences in social structures, values, and priorities. Begüm

Adalet unveils the complexities lying underneath the outward personae of two American scholars of comparative politics, who touted the ideals of “quantitative analysis and detached objectivity” (p. 317) even while struggling with a more complex reality in their work in Turkey. In the final essay, Markus Arnold surveys debates about the place of planning and free markets in the creation of a vibrant “knowledge society.” Although much of this is familiar ground (including, for example, well-known figures such as Friedrich Hayek, Karl Popper, Daniel Bell, and Jürgen Habermas), Arnold emphasizes the multi-disciplinary and cross-national character of these arguments.

What should historians of economics take from this collection? As the summary above suggests, economists per se play a major role in only one chapter (Fajardo’s history of dependency theory), though they have minor parts in others (most notably Hayek in Arnold’s study of the knowledge society). In that respect, the key lesson is a general historiographic point about Cold War social science: the value of global accounts that pay close attention to the transformations that accompany transnational movements and that permit a decentering in which the binary struggle of global superpowers remains important but not always dominant. Certainly histories of economics have been moving in that direction: consider recent special issues from *History of Political Economy* on development economics (2018) or “Economic Knowledge in Socialism” (2019) or the burgeoning new work on Latin American economics. Yet reading through *Cold War Social Science* suggests another historiographic prompt, at least insofar as one thinks of the history of economics not just as the history of a twentieth-century academic discipline but as the history of systematic reflections on political economy. The latter, of course, gave rise to economics as a professional field, but as *Cold War Social Science* reminds us, it was also, and continues to be, the province of many scholars throughout the social sciences. Though economists are relatively rare in Solovey and Dayé’s volume, questions about economic development, economic planning, labor, markets, and trade are not. Research reports from Radio Free Europe included information about Eastern bloc production and agriculture; the anthropologist Charles Wagley was closely attentive to questions about economic development and planning in Brazil, just as his fellow anthropologist Felipe Landa Jocano was in the Philippines. Indeed, the entire debate over modernization theory was in no small part a debate about capitalism and colonialism in economic development. And of course the place of planning and market-based analyses in arguments about the production of knowledge is well known.

Perhaps it is no surprise that under the shadow of a global struggle characterized in part by competing economic systems, questions of political economy would impinge on all of the social sciences. But as the title of *Cold War Social Science* suggests (with its reference to *science*, not sciences), its essays illuminate not only transnational entanglements but disciplinary entanglements as well. The sciences of society both diverge and circle back, forming boundaries only to transgress them once more.

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