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# Introduction

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International development is everywhere these days. Every year governments, international organizations, private foundations, and even multinational corporations offer billions of dollars to spur economic growth in the "developing" world. Official assistance alone – not including philanthropic or private investment – amounted to $132 billion in 2015.[1] Beyond those formal engagements, consumers in wealthy countries choose to buy products from corporations that claim to donate part of the proceeds to developing countries. Some watch Bono's TED Talks on the importance of eliminating global poverty. Others donate a few spare dollars in the cashier's line at the supermarket to offer "microloans" to a basket weaver in Uganda. Giant philanthropies such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation spend many billions annually on development programs across many countries, as do the international development agencies of numerous rich-country governments. Thousands of students in the Western world enroll in "development studies" courses at universities with an eye toward making an impact on the lives of underserved populations around the globe. International development captivates public and private attention.

However current this focus on development may seem to us today, it has a long history. At least since the eighteenth century, European thinkers and political economists envisioned economic activity and material abundance as "progressing" or "increasing" or "improving" through time. By the late nineteenth century, imperial powers seeking to legitimate

[1] *Development Cooperation Report: The Sustainable Development Goals as Business Opportunities* (Paris: OECD, 2016), 17.

expanding colonial rule began to promote the "development" of their territories and their subjects as a justification, even as nation-building elites throughout the Global North, from the United States to England, Germany, Russia, and Japan, used development as an argument for increasing the power of government. By the early twentieth century, imperial authorities and national leaders alike used the rhetoric of development as a way to galvanize support for large-scale transformations of economic, political, and social life. In practice, under the rubric of development leaders pursued projects that ranged from inoculating populations against disease to constructing new factories, from counterinsurgency operations to building massive dams to produce electricity, irrigate farmland, and settle populations. Increasingly, moreover, powerful governments and wealthy foundations started to foster development not only within their own nations or colonial possessions but also elsewhere. As development shifted from national and imperial formations toward the global arena, the idea of international development was born.

By the middle of the twentieth century, as global decolonization loomed, much of the world sought reconstruction from global war, and the Cold War began, the push for international development – the process wherein a national government or private foundation seeks to promote development elsewhere – intensified. Over the ensuing decades, the United States, Soviet Union, and European powers, as well as nongovernmental bodies usually based in the Global North, ramped up the provision of foreign aid intended to promote the development of the so-called underdeveloped regions of what became known, by the mid-1950s, as the "Third World." The conflict between the two superpowers was in part a competition over differing forms of economic development, with each trying to persuade Third World countries of the superiority of their respective systems and expand their influence worldwide. All the while, Third World countries adopted their own national developmental aspirations and plans. By the mid-1960s, development was a widespread policy-making focus, a subject of academic and philanthropic interest, and a dominant feature of international politics.[2] Development, in other words, has long been the rage in the global arena.

[2] On the history of the development idea, see Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (London: Zed Books, 2008); Stephen Macekura, "Development and Growth: An Intellectual History," in *History of the Future of Economic Growth*, ed. Matthias Schmelzer and Iris Borowy (London: Routledge, 2017), 110–128.

Our understanding of its history, however, has trailed behind the ever-growing economic and social scientific literature on how to engineer development in the present and future. *The Development Century* brings together cutting-edge work on the history of national and international development in order to highlight critical themes, approaches, and recent advances in our understanding of this central theme in the history of the twentieth century. This book examines development at various scales, with the more familiar international and national development histories placed alongside studies of local manifestations of development as well as of transnational organizing on behalf of alternative approaches.

What the histories assembled here show is that the very meaning of development has never been fixed or stable for very long. Rather, development in history has amounted to a loose framework for a set of assumptions – that history moves through stages; that leaders and/or experts could guide or direct the evolution of societies through these stages; that some places and people in the world are at more advanced stages than others – that have structured how diverse historical actors understood their place in the world and sought to change it. Part of the historian's task is to retrieve the myriad ways in which the pursuit of development framed (and was informed by) imaginings of the future, how it has reshaped the material world, and how it has drawn on historical narratives to explain and justify contemporary choices. *The Development Century* examines the texts and discourses that have inspired ideas about development and shaped its practices; explores the ways in which policymakers and experts attempted to implement development ideas and plans through specific institutions and policies; and analyzes specific development initiatives and their effect on local environments and people. The diversity of perspectives represented in these pages reflects the many different ways historians have studied development to date and offers a set of methodological and analytical approaches that historians of development, and its practitioners, can expand and build upon in the future.

*The Development Century* proceeds from the assumption that we should understand and evaluate past development initiatives with full regard to their specific historical contexts. Rather than looking to history to derive specific prescriptions or identify potential variables (such as "inclusive institutions" or geographical and environmental endowments) that might provide a blueprint for future action, we investigate how the history of international development illuminates important aspects of the global history of the modern era and how that broad historical context, in turn, illuminates the evolution of

development as idea and practice.[3] The global, international, and transnational histories that come together in the pages that follow provide a useful guide for rethinking not only the history of international development but also the history of the twentieth century writ large.

After all, thinking about the twentieth century as "the development century" can help us see the connections and continuities across the chronological divisions that have long constrained how historians have told the story of the recent past. Narratives of twentieth-century international history often focus on the ideological conflict between liberal capitalism and communism that defined the period from 1945 to 1991; they assume a sharp distinction between the East and West, or between the Global North and Global South; they locate the nation-state and its power at the core of global politics. *The Development Century* moves beyond these narratives. It highlights how development became a shared language, an object of governance, a form of political expectation, and a set of practices that transcended the ideological divisions (capitalist/communist) commonly seen as incompatible and operated across the political domains (empire/state/nonstate) that are often seen as separate and distinct. At the same time, studying the history of development in its diverse meanings and experiences around the world allows us to examine the myriad ways people have tried to narrate the past, envision the future, and transform the natural and human world alike in the name of alleviating suffering, engineering progress, and redressing inequalities between and within countries. The chapters herein each offer separate but interconnected entryways into the meanings, practices, and outcomes of the development century.

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We now have a considerable body of scholarship focused on the history of international development. The first edited volumes appeared in print in the mid-1990s.[4] Dozens of monographs have been published

[3] On institutional explanations for global inequality, see, for instance, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Business, 2012). On geographical and environmental explanations, see Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

[4] Jonathan Crush, ed., *The Power of Development* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Frederique Apffel-Marglin and Stephen Marglin, eds., *Decolonizing Knowledge: From Development to Dialogue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

since.[5] This historical scholarship built on pioneering critiques of development discourse by social scientists such as James C. Scott, Arturo Escobar, Timothy Mitchell, and Frédérique Apffel-Marglin, who critiqued its occlusions of power relations and sought to historicize it in order to examine its origins, evolution, and outcomes.[6] In this, these scholars departed from earlier work that had simply used the history of international development as a collection of case studies or data points in order to build models, theories, or prescriptions for how development should proceed.

The recent historical investigations into international development have yielded many insights. Historians have revealed the power relationships and contentious histories behind the received categories (such as "development," "modernization," or "progress") that continue to shape international development work.[7] Recent scholarship has also elucidated the ideas and motivations behind development and illuminated the key thinkers and theories that shaped major policies, with much of this work focused on the rise and popularity of "modernization theory" in mid-twentieth-century social science and US foreign policy.[8] It has uncovered

[5] Frederick Cooper, "Writing the History of Development," *Journal of Modern European History* 8:1 (2010): 5–23; Marc Frey and Sönke Kunkel, "Writing the History of Development: A Review of Recent Literature," *Contemporary European History* 20:2 (May 2011): 215–232; Joseph Morgan Hodge, "Writing the History of Development (Part 1: The First Wave)," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 6:3 (2015): 429–463; Joseph Morgan Hodge, "Writing the History of Development (Part 2: Longer, Deeper, Wider)," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 7:1 (2016): 125–174.

[6] Nick Cullather, "Development? It's History," *Diplomatic History* 22:4 (2000): 641–653.

[7] Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (London: Zed Books, 1992); Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (New York: Routledge Press, 1996); Cooper and Packard, *International Development and the Social Sciences; Gilbert Rist, The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (London: Zed Books, 2008).

[8] H. W. Arndt, *Economic Development: The History of an Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Colin Leys, *Rise and Fall of Development Theory* (London: James Murray, 1996); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

the strategic motivations behind development aid.[9] Development projects rarely achieve their stated goals without unintended social, economic, political, and ecological consequences, and the variety of these short- and long-term aftereffects has been explored in these studies as well.[10]

Historians from many different topical and thematic backgrounds have begun to analyze the history of development, too. Historians of empire have drawn out the continuities of people, practices, and ideas between colonial governance and postcolonial development, and they have drawn connections between development efforts in the colonies and governance at home in the metropole.[11] Historians of science, technology, and the environment have analyzed the relationship between development ideas and practice, technocracy, and ecological change.[12] Scholars have

[9] See, for instance, Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Timothy Nunan, *Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[10] On the limits of development schemes to colonize fully the objects of their control, see Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). On the limits of state-led development, see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). On this theme, see also, Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[11] Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Charlotte Lydia Riley, "Monstrous Predatory Vampires and Beneficent Fairy-Godmothers: British Post-War Colonial Development in Africa" (PhD diss., University College London, 2013); Suzanne Moon, *Technology and Ethical Idealism: A History of Development in the Netherlands East Indies* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2007); Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Monica van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office du Niger, 1920–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Benjamin Zachariah, *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, c. 1930–50* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[12] On science, development, and technocracy, see Nick Cullather, "Development and Technopolitics," in *Explaining the History of U.S. Foreign Relations*, rev. ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), 102–118; Christophe Bonneuil, "Development as Experiment: Science and State Building in Late Colonial and Postcolonial Africa, 1930–1970," *Osiris* 15:1 (2000): 258–281. See also, Suzanne Moon, *Technology and Ethical Idealism: A History of Development in the Netherlands East Indies* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2007); Gabrielle Hecht, "Introduction," in *Entangled Geographies: Empire and Technopolitics in the Global Cold War*, ed. Gabrielle Hecht (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 1–12; Ross Bassett, *The Technological Indian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

investigated the evolving cultural dimensions of development and modernization theory, as well.[13] In recent years, too, scholars have begun to study the origins and expansion of development thought and practices in international organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations, especially its so-called specialized agencies.[14] Historians of US foreign relations have argued that international development policy helped to expand American influence abroad during the twentieth century, particularly during the Cold War when the two rival superpowers competed over whose version of modernity would best serve the emerging nations of the "Third World." These works have often focused on showing how and why US officials came to embrace international development as such an integral part of their foreign policy.[15] Recent research has also

2016); Sigrid Schmalzer, *Red Revolution, Green Revolution: Scientific Farming in Socialist China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Gabriela Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects, and the Making of the Pill* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009). On technology and US foreign relations more broadly, see Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). On development and the environment, see Thomas Robertson, "Cold War Landscapes: Towards an Environmental History of US Development Programmes in the 1950s and 1960s," *Cold War History* (2015): 1–25; Thomas Robertson, *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012); David Biggs, *Quagmire: Nation-Building and Nature in the Mekong Delta* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010); Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara S. Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement, and the Delusion of Development: Cahora Bassa and Its Legacies in Mozambique, 1965–2007* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013); Daniel Klingensmith, *'One Valley and a Thousand': Dams, Nationalism, and Development* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007); Stephen Macekura, Of Limits and Growth: The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[13] Peter J. Bloom, Stephan F. Miescher, and Takyiwaa Manuh, eds., *Modernization as Spectacle in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[14] Amy L. S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and the World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945–1965* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2006); Michele Alacevich, *The Political Economy of the World Bank: The Early Years* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Daniel Maul, *Human Rights, Development and Decolonization: The International Labour Organization, 1940–1970* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Eric Helleiner, *Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

[15] Latham, *Modernization as Ideology;* Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future;* David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haefele, and Michael E. Latham, eds., *Staging*

explored the relationship between development practice abroad and at home, the varieties of development approaches the United States employed abroad and how they changed over time, and the connections between development and Cold War security imperatives.[16] Scholars have begun to analyze how and why critics challenged US international development policy, as well as how non-Americans shaped the ways the United States conceived and implemented its development aid.[17] Finally, historians have studied how the other Cold War powers, such as the Soviet

*Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*; David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution*.

[16] On the connections between development at home and abroad, see Daniel F. Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Sheyda F. A. Jahanbani, *"The Poverty of the World": Discovering the Poor at Home and Abroad, 1935–1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Amy C. Offner, "Anti-Poverty Programs, Social Conflict, and Economic Thought in Colombia and the United States, 1948–1980" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2011). On varieties of development, see Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Nicole Sackley, "Cosmopolitanism and the Uses of Tradition: Robert Redfield and Alternative Visions of Modernization during the Cold War," *Modern Intellectual History* 9:3 (November 2012): 565–595. On development and the Cold War, see Nicole Sackley, "Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 37:4 (September 2013): 749–778; Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); James M. Carter, *Inventing Vietnam: The United States and State Building, 1954–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009); Amanda Kay McVety, *Enlightened Aid: U.S. Development as Foreign Policy in Ethiopia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Thomas C. Field, *From Development to Dictatorship: Bolivia and the Alliance for Progress in the Kennedy Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Edward G. Miller, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). Scholars have also studied the US south as an "underdeveloped region" within the country. Tore Olsson, *Agrarian Crossings: Reformers and the Remaking of the US and Mexican Countryside* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Natalie Ring, *The Problem South: Region, Empire, and the New Liberal State, 1880–1930* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012); Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[17] Macekura, *Of Limits and Growth*.

Union and China, actively promoted and funded their own visions of development abroad, too.[18]

The time is now ripe, therefore, to reflect on where all of this scholarship has led us and what course future research should take. What are the most important insights that we have learned about development history? In what ways has the scholarship on international development challenged or reshaped the dominant narratives of twentieth-century history? And how might historians continue to expand the study of international development in the future in ways that matter to scholars and practitioners alike? Taken together, the chapters in this book seek to expand our perspective on the history of international development in three main ways: by showcasing its thematic and conceptual diversity; by casting it as a fully global story that nevertheless operates on multiple spatial scales, from local to national to regional to international; and by considering it in its full chronological breadth, from its pre-twentieth-century origins to the present day.

First, this book engages a wide range of theories and practices of international development across a broad swathe of time and space. Early histories of development focused on social scientific theories of modernization that became popular in the United States and Western Europe during the 1950s and 1960s. Scholars charted how Cold War geopolitics led policymakers and intellectuals to promote and adopt such theories as the basis for state-to-state foreign aid projects. Here, however, we venture beyond the history of modernization theory and its influence on US foreign policy to explore other traditions – from community development to sustainability and beyond – that have shaped the practices of development from the colonial era to the present day. The actual implementation of development policies and projects rarely matched the grand design or expectations of modernization theorists, and this book captures some of the diversity of development ideas, discourses, and practices on the ground and explores their political, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions.

[18] Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956–1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Oscar Sánchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); David C. Engerman, "Learning from the East: Soviet Experts and India in the Era of Competitive Coexistence," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33:2 (2013): 227–238; Jamie Monson, *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

This book brings together historians of empire, historians of international relations and international institutions, and scholars of regional and area studies to show how development emerged as a powerful concept that drew from diverse sources and in a variety of locations far removed from elite universities in the United States or Western Europe. For instance, Cyrus Schayegh explores the evolution of developmental thinking and policy among elites across the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Julia Irwin demonstrates that in the case of many US experts during the early twentieth century, development practices implemented in the Caribbean derived not from high theory but from the experiences on the ground responding to natural disasters, less preplanned programs than ad hoc reactions shaped by encounters with political and institutional arrangements different from those of the United States. Nathan Citino argues that, even at the height of the Cold War, there was rarely consensus about how to pursue development by tracing the wide-ranging debates over the development trajectory of the Middle East during the middle twentieth century, as national leaders and international experts debated how national and regional development goals fit together – if at all. Recovering some of these differing meanings, aspirations, and practices of development throughout its history reveals development not as a universal concept but rather as a contingent, messy, and often-contested process of explaining the past and imagining the future.

Second, the history of development should be viewed as a fully global project, exploring the far-flung and wide-ranging networks of actors, spaces, and institutions that have been involved in it. This requires examining development across the world from multiple perspectives: national and local politics in the Third World; the focus on international development assistance policies from the Soviet Union, Europe, the United States, and even countries within the Third World itself; the role of international organizations and transnational expert networks in defining development ideas, policies, and practice; and the place of private actors, such as philanthropic foundations, in shaping development history. The contributors to this book include scholars with specialties in US, European, African, Middle Eastern, Asian, Latin American, Soviet, and international history, and the chapters rely on a wide range of sources, drawing on archives on four continents and on material in many different languages.[19] Such a global approach to the history of development allows

[19] See also, Erez Manela, "Reconceiving International History," *Reviews in American History* 37:1 (March 2009): 69–77. On the opportunities and challenges posed by