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The Kenyan Style of "African Socialism": Developmental Knowledge Claims and the Explanatory Limits of the Cold War

In the late 1950s, the French philosopher Raymond Aron diagnosed a marked affinity between communist and capitalist social systems of which, as he emphasized, analysts on both sides of the Iron Curtain were well aware.[1] This claim was in line with the statements by Talcott Parsons on the organizational convergence of all industrializing societies. And it mirrored the "end of ideology" thesis that was being articulated at the time also by authors like Daniel Bell, Edward Shils, or Seymour Lipset. They argued that all industrial societies—regardless of their ideological grounds—were on their way to solving major social problems through a technical fix. Shared concerns with organizational questions of how to raise economic productivity had replaced the once heated debate over property ownership.[2]

While the systemic dichotomy between the East and the West seemed to wither, Aron drew attention to a new divide that opened up between the North and the South. In 1960, he opened a seminar on the industrial society and the "Three Worlds," hosted by the Swiss Evangelic Church, in Rheinfelden, Switzerland. Political scientists, philosophers, and philanthropic Protestants had gathered to assess the attractiveness of the West to the new postcolonial states. Aron stated that, for industrialized societies, "private property versus public ownership, anarchy of open market systems versus planning, capitalist exploitation versus equality: the three claims of socialist doctrine have largely lost their

1. Raymond Aron, *Sociologie Des Sociétés Industrielles. Esquisse D'une Théorie Des Régimes Politiques* (Paris, 1958).

2. For the discourse on convergence, see David Engerman, "To Moscow and Back: American Social Scientists and the Problem of Convergence," in *American Capitalism: Social Thought and Political Economy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Nelson Lichtenstein (Philadelphia, 2006). Gilman has given interesting examples of this intellectual convergence by analyzing the similarities of the stages concept in Rostow and Lenin. Nils Gilman, "Modernization Theory, the Highest Stage of American Intellectual History," in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, ed. David Engerman et al. (Amherst, MA, 2003). With respect to the "technical fix," see John G. Gunnell, "The Technocratic Image and the Theory of Technocracy," *Technology and Culture* 23, no. 3 (1982): 392–416, 396.

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appeal."[3] But to many leaders of the South, so he assumed, communism still seemed promising as a machinery to speed up industrialization and as a way towards an equitable social order.

How was the "end of ideology" perceived by Africans? At a conference on the social implications of industrialization, which was organized by the German Evangelic Church in Stuttgart in 1961, the Kenyan economist Julius G. Kiano, for example, stated that his country, once it reached independence, would channel all its resources on forced industrialization.[4] The technocratic perspective was taken up by many leading African intellectuals. Once colonial rule was overcome, economic reconstruction was the goal to focus on. In this sense, Julius Nyerere coined the term "Uhuru na Kazi," freedom and work, immediately after Tanganyika's Independence in December 1961. In the same year the Ugandan economist Daudi Ocheng envisioned the future of his country completely in the terms of raising its economic productivity. Concerning the antagonisms of the Cold War he said: "Uganda will tend towards the West if circumstances ever force her to veer slightly off the magnetic North if she has to veer at all slightly off the middle course."[5] In view of the developmental priority, the direction to take was magnetically northbound, and deviations to the East or to the West seemed accidental. The Northern promise of technically enforcing economic change had caught Southern imaginations in its Western and its Eastern variety alike. But still, the 1960s saw a renaissance of socialism on the African continent.

In what follows, the appropriation of development theory in independent Kenya will be scrutinized. Socioeconomic change in the East African country has been strongly promoted by the pro-Western Kenyatta government. Several observers have called Kenya of the 1960s a "laboratory of development" in which key assumptions of Modernization Theory were tested and refined. One key document in this setting was Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, in which the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development presented a strategic vision under the label of an "African Socialism." The basic idea was to design a route for planned economic and social change in which assumedly traditional African forms of solidarity were to coexist with open market structures and forced industrialization.

The Kenyan style of "African Socialism" came under heavy attack from local opposition groups. This heated debate can be analyzed as a reverberation of the ideological confrontation of the Cold War in the periphery. However, I would like to suggest a deeper analysis. It aims at reframing the issue as a product of

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3. Raymond Aron et al., *Die industrielle Gesellschaft und die Drei Welten. Das Seminar von Rheinfelden* (Zürich, 1960), 15. My translation.

4. Julius G. Kiano, "Industrialisierung und Nationalismus," in *Kontinente wachsen zusammen. Gesellschaftliche Auswirkungen der Industrialisierung in Europa, Asien und Afrika*, ed. Klaus von Bismarck and Friedrich Karrenberg (Stuttgart, 1961).

5. Daudi Ocheng, "An Economist Looks at Uganda's Future," *Transition* 1 (1961): 17–20, 20.

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African historical dynamics in which the invention of traditions and the legacy of colonial development initiatives were as important as Western and Eastern political theory. The Kenyan controversy cannot be reduced to a third world instance of the global Cold War. This argument is unfolded in two steps. First, in the new African states, capitalism and socialism were taken up as complementary sources of developmental knowledge rather than as mutually exclusive ethics of distribution. It is however true that the foreign policy objectives of the two competing world powers drastically reduced the maneuvering space between the two alternatives. Second, the Kenyan controversy offers evidence for the convergence of the two systems in the notion of planning. Regardless of ideology, high importance was assigned to economic expertise. The history of the global project of modernization should therefore be reconsidered in the terms of an emerging global knowledge society.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE IN KENYA

To overcome the dramatic problems of the new states, many African leaders sought a massive transfer of technical know-how and capital from the North—from both East and West. In this, they joined a general enthusiasm for technocratic solutions that was shared almost globally. Paul Hoffman, for example, the former administrator of the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe, who headed the United Nations Special Fund for development as of 1958, reportedly motivated his staff by saying: "If we do our jobs well, we will be out of business in twenty-five years."[6] Technical assistance, the transfer of specialized knowledge and financial aid were seen as the appropriate means to efface global inequality within less than a lifetime.

However, for politicians like Kenya's Tom Mboya it was essential to carefully wrap their quest for foreign aid into the language of African sovereignty. The obvious problem was that a replication of the economic successes of the North inevitably went along with the danger of prolonging old dependencies or giving rise to new ones. For Kenya this was especially pertinent with respect to Great Britain. In 1961 Mboya addressed the public at an Oxford meeting: "Stop being paternalistic," he told the British.

> We need a continuing flow of technical, specialist, financial, and other types of aid. We will take it from you and from any other nations ready to offer aid with no strings attached. Do not grumble when we take it. We take it because we need it, and we take it because it is given free. Remember, we are also capable of gauging the ulterior motives of all those who offer to help us.[7]

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6. Craig N. Murphy, The United Nations Development Programme. A Better Way? (Cambridge, England, 2006), 112.

7. Tom Mboya, "Tensions in African Development," in *The Challenge of Nationhood: A Collection of Speeches and Writings*, ed. Tom Mboya (London, 1970 [1961]), 32.

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This was not an unwise caveat, because British experts consciously stressed the continuity between the old colonial economic interactions and the new mode of financial and technical assistance that was supposed to enhance the development of the African states. To quote just one voice, the leading British economist E. A. G. Robinson said at a conference of the International Economic Association in Addis Ababa in Summer 1961: "In the past the foreign administrator and the foreign entrepreneur have brought to Africa the experience and the techniques of the more advanced countries and have helped to apply them to African conditions." In view of the imminent end of the imperial economic system, Robinson concluded that it was now necessary to construct functionally equivalent "new channels for this transfer of knowledge; international aid, both financial and technical, is increasingly supplementing and taking the place of private investment and private enterprise."[8] For the British, the end of colonial rule seemed to produce a vacuum in terms of knowledge and capital that could not be left unaddressed. With respect to the ideological landscape of the Cold War, one might ask how the roles of the "foreign administrator" (representing state planning) and of the "foreign entrepreneur" (representing the free market) were to be redistributed in the postcolonial perspective. It is interesting to see that hardly any economist trusted pure market solutions in this situation. In contrast, even adherents of the neoliberal school around Friedrich von Hayek called for massive state intervention.[9]

When the end of colonial rule seemed inevitable, settlers started to move out of Kenya. The year 1960 saw a severe economic crisis with large amounts of capital flowing out of the economy. In order to stop the impairment of the tea and coffee estates in the White Highlands and to guarantee a minimum degree of continuity, Great Britain obliged the African nationalists not to redistribute the land to squatters in an uncontrolled way but to appropriately compensate the settlers who were bound to leave. A "Million Acre Scheme" was put in place which channeled funding from the World Bank and the British Colonial Development Corporation to the new government in order to buy a million acres of mixed farmland from settlers and settle landless Africans on it. By 1969, 34,000 families had been settled on 490,000 hectares of arable land.[10] The British had

8. Austin G. Robinson, "Introduction," in *Economic Development for Africa South of the Sahara*, ed. Austin Gossage Robinson (London, 1964), x.

9. See, for example, Herbert S. Frankel, "Economic Aspects of Political Independence in Africa," *International Affairs* 36, no. 4 (1960): 440–46. Frankel was an active member of the Mont Pelerin Society. On his biography, see Charles H. Feinstein, "Frankel, (Sally) Herbert (1903–1996)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), available at http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/63990. On neoliberal ideology in the Cold War, see Johanna Bockman, "The Origins of Neoliberalism between Soviet Socialism and Western Capitalism: 'A Galaxy without Borders'," *Theory and Society* 36, no. 4 (2007): 343–71.

10. Colin Leys, "Politics in Kenya: The Development of Peasant Society," *British Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 3 (1971): 307–37, 320; C. Leo, "Who Benefited from the Million-Acre Scheme? Toward a Class Analysis of Kenya's Transition to Independence," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 15, no. 2 (1981): 201–23.; Bethwell A. Ogot, "The Decisive Years 1956–63," in

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unsuccessfully aimed at also including West German and U.S. donors bilaterally, but the scheme nevertheless marks the surprisingly smooth transformation of colonial rule to the postcolonial regime of development assistance.[11]

Such an evolution was not anticipated in the 1950s. In Kenya, the African demand for political emancipation clashed fiercely with colonial economic development efforts in the 1950s in what was one of Africa's most violent freedom struggles.[12] The political quest for freedom focused on the release of Jomo Kenyatta, who was held in prison since 1952. His release in 1961 marked an important step towards independence. *Kenyatta na uhuru*—freedom with and for Kenyatta, was thus the first and most important point in the program of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the leading political party.[13] The *mzee*—the first elder of the nation—consequently became Kenya's first president and deployed considerable symbolic power in integrating the body politic in the 1960s.

But while the political discourse focused on Kenyatta's liberation as a symbol of national sovereignty, economic considerations were of vital importance in the difficult transfer of power. In the series of negotiations at Lancaster House in 1960, 1962, and 1963, which ultimately lead to Kenya's independence, the African nationalists did not at all put political independence first, but followed a pragmatic strategy that envisioned a stable economic outlook. The meaning of the political fight for freedom has remained a controversial issue in national discourse ever since.[14] While the traditional imagery of the proud freedom fighters with their long uncombed hair inspired the Rastafarian movement in the Caribbean, independent Kenya shaped its self-image rather in the style of Tom Mboya: a bright westernized young man full of confidence in the technical promises of modernity, who wore his traditional cap only rarely.[15]

For Tom Mboya, who had emphasized the importance of making economic concessions in the negotiations, Kenyans were about to achieve full sovereignty

Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, ed. Bethwell A. Ogot and William R. Ochieng' (London, 1995), 63.

11. For the planned involvement of West Germany and the United States, see cable from the German ambassador in London, Herwarth, to the Auswärtiges Amt, June 15, 1961, B 34, No. 239, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin.

12. On the Mau-Mau War, see Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London, 2005). British Colonial Development efforts in Kenya have been analyzed by Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya 1925–1952* (Oxford, England, 2000). Causal links between the two have been established by Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905–63* (London, 1987). See also Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (Oxford, England, 1992).

13. Kenya African National Union, *The KANU Manifesto for Independence, Social Democracy and Stability (Signed by Gichuru, Mboya, Kibaki). First Publicly Presented 20 November 1960* (Nairobi, 1960).

14. E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, "Matunda Ya Uhuru, Fruits of Independence: Seven Theses on Nationalism in Kenya," in *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration*, ed. John Lonsdale and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo (Oxford, England, 2003), 177–201.

15. On Tom Mboya, see David Goldsworthy, *Tom Mboya: The Man Kenya Wanted to Forget* (Nairobi, 1982).

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with independence in 1963 and had to build up responsible relationships with all nations and all nationals holding stakes in the country. However, some Kenyans wondered why the new government so strongly embraced the economic necessities of the former colonists. For Oginga Odinga, the Million-Acre-Scheme was proof of the still prevailing colonial ties. It seemed hard to understand why Kenya burdened her balance of payments with a loan to buy land that could just as well be considered her genuine property. Shortly after independence, inside the leading KANU a fundamental conflict broke out over the question how deep a break with the colonial past was necessary for the new nation. Symbolically, the two positions are reflected in the titles of the autobiographies of the two leading politicians. In 1963, Tom Mboya, who dominated Kenyan politics in various positions, published *Freedom and After*, an account of his personal contribution to achieving independence. The book included essays on several domestic and international problems which the sovereign state had to face.[16] Oginga Odinga, in contrast, the first vice president of Kenya, entitled his 1967 autobiography *Not Yet Uhuru*. For him, real freedom *(Uhuru)* was yet to be achieved because the structures of colonial exploitation had not been properly removed.[17]

One could assess the two positions as differing interpretations of freedom. For Mboya, freedom was a fact, and Kenya needed now to take all necessary steps to realize this potential. He pointed to constitutional law, which formally granted civil rights to all Kenyan citizens—and declared Kenya a sovereign state—as of December 1963. He took a problem-laden future into view in the course of which domestic inequality would successively be removed. This outlook was based on the firm belief that modern social engineering could solve social problems by generating economic growth. Since the interwar period, elites of all industrialized countries had taken up such technocratic convictions, and also newly independent countries like India firmly based their domestic policies on the promise of modern science and technology.[18]

In contrast, Odinga called for justice and equality in a more immediate way. For him freedom was still a future promise, and formal independence did not mean a basic rupture in the young nation's history. Odinga argued that an equitable distribution of wealth must be induced by political intervention in order to generate social stability. Only under these conditions could proper nation-building and continuous economic growth be reached. "State versus

16. Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (Boston, 1963).

17. Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru: The Autobiography of Oginga Odinga*, *With a Foreword by Kwame Nkrumah* (London, 1967).

18. For industrialized countries, see Mikael Hard and Andrew Jamison, *Hubris and Hybrids: A Cultural History of Technology and Science* (New York, 2005). In India, Gandhi had articulated doubts concerning the promises of Western science and technology, but the technocratic position of Nehru prevailed. Thomas Pantham, "Gandhi, Nehru und die Moderne," in *Konfigurationen der Moderne. Diskurse zu Indien*, ed. Shalini Randeria, Martin Fuchs, and Antje Linkenbach (Baden-Baden, 2004), 63–80; Partha Chatterjee, "The Social Sciences in India," in *The Modern Social Sciences*, ed. Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross, *The Cambridge History of Science* (Cambridge, 2003), 482–97.

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Freedom"—such was the main dividing line in Kenyan domestic politics of the 1960s, if one follows the historian E. S. Atieno Odhiambo. Paradoxically, the "socialist" Odinga stood for freedom, while the "capitalist" Mboya cherished the state.[19] Such a constellation is difficult to account for in the historical framework of the Cold War.

As far as the interpretation of the colonial past was concerned, Mboya and Odinga differed widely. But with respect to domestic strategies, similarities prevailed. Both heavily drew upon governmental policy interventions and planning. In terms of the European political discourse of the 1960s, one is tempted to identify their positions with the programmatic differences between social democrats and slightly more radical trade unionists or Socialists. But for several reasons in Kenya the difference between Odinga and Mboya was explosive. First, the opposing wings of the ruling party fought their fights largely detached from the general public, as the organization had yet to become a mass movement and to build up its party base. Debates in local constituencies could not form a corrective to the intellectual discourse at the top.[20] Second, there was no conservative party against which the competing wings had to join forces. White and Indian settlers, traders and entrepreneurs formed only a minute political force that was—in addition—also politically organized within KANU. And third, the global Cold War enormously amplified the domestic differences in the political assessment of the colonial legacy.[21]

For the first generation of Kenyan politicians formal training was a crucial matter. Tom Mboya, born 1930, was engaged in local trade unionism in the 1950s and had gained access to a fellowship at Ruskin College in Oxford. His connections to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) opened up additional doors in the United States. In 1960, Mboya sent 222 East African students for further training to several U.S. universities in what became famous as the first "airlift." A fair proportion of them returned to Africa and formed the basis for a growing network of personal relations and ties between Kenya and the United States.[22] Oginga Odinga, who was twenty years older, derived his political power from being the leader of the Luo community, the second most important ethnic group following the Kikuyu. He had received formal training at Makerere College, Kampala, and then tried his luck as an African businessman within the colonial system. Odinga's international network

19. E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, "Democracy and the Ideology of Order in Kenya," in *The Political Economy of Kenya*, ed. Michael G. Schatzberg (New York, 1987), 177–201, 192.

20. Kenneth Good, "Kenyatta and the Organization of KANU," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 2, no. 2 (1968): 115–36.

21. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Time* (Cambridge, England, 2005).

22. Jim C. Harper II, *Western-Educated Elites in Kenya, 1900–1963: The African American Factor* (New York, 2006), 87.

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emerged around 1960 during a series of trips to India, China, and the USSR.[23] He made use of these connections in organizing scholarships for fellow nationals. Most famously, his son, Raila Odinga, studied in the German Democratic Republic. But Odinga also secured funds for the building up of a training institution for young KANU officials, called the Lumumba Institute, which opened its doors in Nairobi shortly after independence. The idea was to make use of Communist organizational experience in building up the Kenyan nation. This venture turned out to be devastating to Odinga's political career. In 1965, the government removed one Chinese and two Soviet members from the staff, subjected the institute to state control, and terminated its activities subsequently. Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya had found reason to believe that a coup had been planned.[24] Odinga stepped down from the office of vice president, was excluded from KANU, and formed Kenya People's Union (KPU), an oppositional party that was banned by the government shortly after.[25] He remained an important figure in Kenyan politics until his death in 1994, but he could not return to the center of power.

Cold War categories were repeatedly made use of as resources in local power struggles. Beyond doubt, Odinga would have cut Kenya's alliance with the United States had his struggle for domestic power been successful in the 1960s. As early as 1961, he had a reputation for being a "Communist." International observers like the West German consul-general in Nairobi warned that Odinga was waiting for an opportunity to agitate against the West.[26] But it also seems clear that his local opponents deliberately made use of this labeling in order to keep Odinga low. While, in principle, for Mboya, the exact origin of Northern development assistance did not matter, he, in practice made clever use of the Eastern connections of his opponent. With respect to political programs and policy preferences, however, the differences between the opposing groups were rather small.

"AFRICAN SOCIALISM": IN THE LABORATORY OF MODERNIZATION

African leaders of the first generation like Senghor, Bourguiba, Nkrumah, Touré, Nyerere or Kaunda have argued that socialism was the most appropriate

23. E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, *Jaramogi Ajuma Oginga Odinga, 1911–1994* (Nairobi, 1998).

24. John Kamau, "Secret Cabinet Papers: How Kenya's Best Kept Secret Became a Hotbed of Insurgents," *The Sunday Standard*, July 11, 2004. See also N. N. (Special Correspondent), "The Changing Face of Kenya Politics," *Transition* 25 (1966): 44–50.

25. Odinga, *Not yet Uhuru*, 253; Cherry Gertzel, Maure Goldschmidt, and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Government and Politics in Kenya: A Nation Building Text* (Nairobi, 1969), 143.

26. "In Kenya wartet der kommunistenfreundliche Politiker Odinga auf eine günstige Gelegenheit, gegen den Westen zu agieren." Report by the consul general in Nairobi, von Stackelberg, to the Auswärtiges Amt, July 21. 1961, B 34, no. 239, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin.

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way of politically organizing African communities. Under the keyword of "African Socialism" these authors and others aimed at Africanizing political theory by making use of traditional forms of social organization.[27] This discourse was also of some importance in Kenya.

Already in its founding manifesto dated from 1960, KANU designed an economic system that combined elements of a free market economy with strong government control and the nationalization of key sectors. This blending was later termed "African Socialism" while it in fact aimed at a "mixed economy."[28] The key concept was economic planning. Upon independence the first Kenyan minister for economic development and planning—Tom Mboya—turned his ministry into a "policy formation laboratory."[29] The respective organizational knowledge was derived from several sources. First the tradition of colonial administration was explicitly invoked. A number of colonial planning experts remained in office, among them economic statisticians at the University College of East Africa.[30] Already the 1950s had seen a number of colonial development plans for Kenya of which the 1955 Swynnerton Plan is an example.

This plan had encompassed land consolidation through registration of titles and provided agricultural education, technical services, and direct loans to African farmers in order to raise the production of cash crops and livestock. Also, the plan proposed the creation of democratic institutions for Africans to manage their own agriculture. With these aims it almost perfectly matched the postcolonial goal of rural development. However, the British administration had designed the plan quite explicitly to stabilize colonial rule by addressing the political problems of insecurity experienced by African smallholders. The measures were thought to build up the economy so that growing numbers of landless Africans might find job opportunities and become less vulnerable to the appeal of militant African leadership. As most of the high-potential agricultural land was still under African rather than European cultivation, the main idea was to help Africans intensify the development of these areas within their control rather than worrying about the Europan estates in the Highlands, which, it was believed, would keep them politically at bay.[31]

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27. For a short overview, see Abdul H. K. Jumba-Masagazi, ed., *African Socialism: A Bibliography and a Short Summary* (Nairobi, 1970). Still helpful is the analysis in Ehud Sprinzak, "African Traditional Socialism—A Semantic Analysis of Political Ideology," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 11, no. 4 (1973): 629–47. In general, see Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to the Present* (Westport, CT, 1999).

28. Good, "Kenyatta and the Organization of KANU"; Kenya African National Union, *The KANU Manifesto for Independence, Social Democracy and Stability*; Jomo Kenyatta, "Kenya's Mixed Economy," *East Africa Journal* 1 (November 1964): 17–19.

29. David William Cohen and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, *The Risks of Knowledge: Investigations into the Death of the Hon. Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya, 1990* (Athens, OH 2004), 182.

30. T. A. Kennedy, H. W. Ord, and David Walker, "On the Calculation and Interpretation of National Accounting Material in East Africa," in *African Studies in Income and Wealth*, ed. L. H. Samuels (Chicago, 1963), 350–432.

31. John W. Harbeson, "Land Reform and Politics in Kenya, 1954–70," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (1971), 231–51, 236; Michael Chege, "The Political Economy

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Second, Mboya enlisted African economists like Mwai Kibaki or Philipp Ndegwa who had received formal training during colonial times. Third, several foreign expert missions from West Germany, Switzerland, and the United States visited the country between 1961 and 1963 and offered policy advice. Finally, Mboya built up working relationships to U.S. centers of competence in economics and planning. Here, Jacob Oser of Syracuse University was of major importance.[32]

The result of these efforts was Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, which explained the Kenyan style of "African Socialism" in some detail and sketched guidelines for economic policy. The principal objectives stated in the paper were social justice and humane living conditions for all citizens. However, the means to achieve these goals were entirely economic. The paper argued that aside from the fundamental lack of investment capital Kenya's main problems were a lack of training opportunities for Africans and the racial segregation of the economy. The paper stated: "The only permanent solution to all of these problems rests on rapid growth . . . If Africanization is undertaken at the expense of growth, our reward will be a falling standard of living; if free primary education is achieved by sacrificing growth, no jobs will be available for the school-leavers. Growth, then, is the first concern of planning in Kenya."[33] In view of limited resources, developmental priorities had to be set that were, in the case of medical services, welfare institutions, and schools, difficult to communicate. The new government repeatedly declared that it would provide medical and hospital services, old age and disability benefits, as well as free and universal primary education, but it made quite clear that "to provide them fully and freely now would bankrupt the nation and mortgage economic growth for generations." Thus, the bulk of government development expenditure was to be channeled to directly productive activities like intensifying agriculture and forming incentives for industrial investment. These measures were thought to "establish a foundation for increased and extended welfare services in the future."[34]

Until his assassination in 1969, Tom Mboya firmly believed that economic growth could be induced through the application of technical knowledge and that such a process would inevitably solve the fundamental problem of unequal distribution of wealth. Like many wealthy Kenyans, Mboya drove a white

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of Agrarian Change in Central Kenya," in *The Political Economy of Kenya*, ed. Michael G. Schatzberg (New York, 1987), 93–116, 101; William R. Ochieng', "Structural and Political Changes," in *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya*, ed. Bethwell A. Ogot and William R. Ochieng' (London, 1995), 83–109, 87; See also the critical assessment of the Swynnerton Plan by the UN Economic Commission for Africa in UNECA, "Survey of Development Programmes and Policies in Selected African Countries and Territories," *Economic Bulletin for Africa* 1, no. 1 (1961), 79.

32. Jacob Oser, *Promoting Economic Development: With Illustration from Kenya* (Evanston, IL 1967).

33. Republic of Kenya, *African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1965), 18.

34. Ibid., 30, 52.

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Mercedes Benz and argued that this form of conspicuous consumption was not a provocation to his poor fellow citizens, but a device to raise their ambitions. The German car showed the possibility of individual economic success in modern Kenya. Mboya argued that a country without symbolic goals for the exertions of its citizens was a "colorless society" in which social justice would materialize only in uniform grey. "In Russia" he added, "it was decided that no one should earn more than three hundred roubles regardless of his job, his station in life and so on. This is the kind of attitude or approach which is really negative because it can lead people to assuming that things are not going to happen."[35]

At the same time the Kenyan style of "African Socialism" was not so distant from Soviet plans in that it swore in all individual efforts on the common goal of national economic reconstruction. It would be highly misleading to identify Mboya's position with the liberal concept of freedom, let alone democracy. He called upon the entrepreneurs to not only focus on the maximization of profit, but to adopt his vision of national unity.[36] And he repeatedly expressed very restrictive views concerning the freedom of the press. To his view, the nation could not afford a critical public sphere in which alternative political perspectives could be discussed.[37] His stance towards parliament was accordingly fully instrumental. "Politically speaking it can be argued that we are in such a state of crisis that authoritarian rule is justified. It is said that opposition is a luxury we cannot afford, since it will divert us from the progress whose general direction is widely agreed within the nation," he stated in 1969. He did allow for a potential political opposition in Parliament, but primarily to prevent opponents from seeking unconstitutional ways of making themselves heard.[38]

The antidemocratic argument was completely in line with Mboya's scientific mentor, Jacob Oser, who wrote in his 1967 book on Kenya:

> The extremely underdeveloped economies of Africa require the utmost exertion to close the gap somewhat between them and the rich countries. A multiplicity of parties and factions will dissipate the energies that must be concentrated on the effort to promote growth. Democracy as we know it is a luxury that may prevail in time, but the time has not yet arrived in Africa, and may not for a generation or more.[39]

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35. "Interview with Viviene Barton," *Sunday Nation*, Nairobi, April 27. 1969, cited in Ali A. Mazrui, *Cultural Engineering and Nation-Building in East Africa* (Evanston, IL, 1972), 254.

36. Jomo Kenyatta also strongly stressed collective solidarity by introducing the concept of "harambee." See Peter M. Ngau, "Tensions in Empowerment: The Experience of the 'Harambee' (Self-Help) Movement in Kenya," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 35, no. 3 (1987), 523–38.

37. Mboya, *Freedom and After*, 92 and Tom Mboya, "The Future of Kenya," *African Affairs* 63, no. 250 (1964), 6–12, 11.

38. Tom Mboya, *The Challenge of Nationhood*, 8.

39. Oser, *Promoting Economic Development*, 136.

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Out of the theoretical background of American Modernization Theory, Mboya and Oser derived an understanding of politics that was in essence antipolitical. For them, the political process did not consist of an organized balance of diverging interests, but remained constricted to the implementation of technical procedures.[40] As from its inception, development in postcolonial Kenya shared some features of an "antipolitics machine."[41] The goal of the endeavor was to generate national wealth, which presumably met the interests of all Kenyans. Such a strong claim could only be made convincingly if one thought to possess adequate resources of scientific and technical knowledge. This knowledge, of course, was not available at all. And the dissent of Oginga Odinga shows quite clearly that politics, also in Kenya after independence, encompassed a whole set of diverging interests.

When the authors of Sessional Paper No. 10 made rhetorical use of socialism, they did so in order to disqualify the left wing of KANU. The idea was to detach the notion of "socialism" from Marxism-Leninism.[42] Instead, it was applied to a specific interpretation of the precolonial African past. The inventors of "African Socialism" recurred to the absence of private property, to a specific sense of community, and to the mutual social responsibility, which assumedly was the glue of African societies. In a famous formulation, Julius Nyerere termed socialism in postcolonial Africa quite generally an "attitude of mind" and not primarily an answer to the question of property ownership within the national economy.[43] The main intention was to open sources of distinct individual and collective identities for the new nations that were not derived from European history. African Socialism was a reaction to the colonization of the African mind. In the logic of colonial dominance a specific double bind was at play, which would allow for the most Westernized colonial subjects to imagine their own path towards modernity only at the expense of their self-respect. Becoming a fully modern person only seemed possible by completely disposing of all cultural

40. I follow the definition of technocracy by Hermann Lübbe. "Technokratie—das ist die Idee der Abschaffung der Politik mittels der Errichtung einer Herrschaft der Sachgesetzlichkeit mit ihren technischen Imperativen" Translated freely: "Technocracy—that is the idea of abolishing politics by instituting the governance of factualness and technical imperatives." Hermann Lübbe, "Technokratie. Politische Und Wirtschaftliche Schicksale Einer Philosophischen Idee," *WeltTrends. Zeitschrift für internationale Politik und vergleichende Studien* 18, no. Frühjahr (1998), 39–62, 40.

41. James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge, England, 1990). However, the material presented here suggests not a monolithic apparatus, but—paradoxically—a multitude of conflicting views inside this a-political body. In this sense, my evidence strengthenes the critique of Ferguson's concept put forward by Elizabeth Harrison, "The Monolithic Development Machine?" in *A Moral Critique of Development: In Search of Global Responsibilities*, ed. Philip Quarles van Ufford and Anta Kumar Giri (New York, 2003), 101–17.

42. Soviet ideologues reacted strongly. See Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *Soviet Perspectives on African Socialism* (Rutherford, NJ, 1969).

43. Julius Nyerere, "Socialism: An Attitude of Mind," *East Africa Journal* 4, no. May (1967), 24–30.

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roots.[44] To counter this mechanism of subjugation, as early as 1938 Jomo Kenyatta had composed an ethnography of the Kikuyu people with the explicit aim of regaining positive modes of identification with African traditions.[45] One discursive element, which offered a welcome opposition to Western individualism, was the dependence of the individual on the community. In view of the socialist modernization successes, this element gained enormous plausibility at the moment of decolonization, because it seemingly allowed for a reconciliation of modernity with the distinctly African community value. However, as Bethwell Ogot brilliantly analyzed, it remained controversial whether these ethics could successfully be used in the construction of a postcolonial national identity. Capitalist dynamics tended to separate the different groups of the body politic too strongly.[46]

The party's left reacted harshly against the instrumental use of the word "socialism." Bildad Kaggia, a political companion of Odinga, used quite explicit words in the parliamentary debate on the paper: "I do not mind, Mr. Speaker, calling our socialism African socialism, Kenya socialism, Kikuyu socialism, or even Luo socialism, but I believe that whatever prefixes we use, it must be socialism and not capitalism."[47] Also less radical intellectuals challenged Mboya's belief that forced economic growth would automatically increase the living standard of all Kenyans. In the interest of equitable distribution of wealth, the economist Dharam Ghai suggested government control of salaries. Overall economic growth would not happen quickly enough to avoid the emergence of a new African upper class, he argued. In fact, class formation could already be observed. Barak H. Obama Sr., another Kenyan economist, who later left Kenya for the United States, conceded that a certain degree of social equality had existed in traditional African social organization. But he insisted that political recourse to this distant past was ethically and scientifically unsound.[48]

Tom Mboya ignored these learned voices. He dismissed them by arguing that their authors made use of foreign political ideas to hide personal material interest.[49] Repeatedly he accused his opponents of having fallen victim to Soviet

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44. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, 6th impr. ed. (Delhi, 1992).

45. Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gikuyu. With an Introduction by B. Malinowski* (Nairobi, 1992 (1938)). See the analysis by Bruce Berman, "Ethnography as Politics, Politics as Ethnography: Kenyatta, Malinowski, and the Making of *Facing Mount Kenya*," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 30, no. 3 (1996): 313–44.

46. Bethwell A. Ogot, "Reintroducing the African Man into the World: Traditional Communalism and European Socialism in African Politics," *East Africa Journal* 4, December (1967), 31–36.

47. Republic of Kenya, Official Report, House of Representatives, First Parliament, Second Session, vol. IV, May 7, 1965, cited in Gertzel, Goldschmidt, and Rothchild, eds., *Government and Politics in Kenya: A Nation Building Text*, 139.

48. Dharam Ghai, "African Socialism for Kenyans," *East Africa Journal* 2, no. June (1965), 15–18; Barak H. Obama, "Problems Facing Our Socialism," *East Africa Journal* 2, July (1965), 26–33.

49. Ochieng', "Structural and Political Changes," 96.

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"intellectual imperialism."[50] At the same time, he himself was accused of being a puppet of the United States who too easily surrendered to American neocolonialism. Indeed the intellectual resources he drew upon were closely linked to U.S. foreign policy.[51] Developmental knowledge always found itself exposed to ideological claims in the context of the global Cold War. But both American planning procedures and Soviet economics relied on a certain technocratic expertise. In U.S. economic history, the comprehensive planning under the Tennessee Valley Authority, but also the engineering of the U.S. economy during World War II under the auspices of Simon Kuznets, are cases in point.[52] On the level of macroeconomic abstractions, regarding the construction of indices and aggregates like the gross domestic product and with respect to the quantitative modeling of, say, the overall effect of capital investment on growth, there never was a scientific Iron Curtain. In analyzing these mechanisms, it did not matter whether capital was in private hands or owned by the state.[53]

In Tom Mobya's construction of a development economic independence, the problem was not that the underlying knowledge claims were biased in the sense of the Cold War. The main problem was the sheer lack of knowledge about the Kenyan economy. His ministry wanted to introduce a form of economic policy that had recently been applied—for example—in the Netherlands. But the Dutch experiments could build upon the theoretical and empirical work of Jan Tinbergen. Soviet economic planning was based on a huge apparatus of statisticians, and even in the United States the connection between knowing the economy and aiming at steering it can easily be traced, for example by looking at the National Bureau of Economic Research or the Cowles Commission.[54] No such resources were available in Nairobi. Indeed, the colonial administrators had tried to estimate some key figures and the East African Statistical Department published a substantial documentation on the methodological problems of African economic statistics in 1959.[55] But at the time of independence, there

50. Tom Mboya, "African Socialism," *Transition* 8 (March 1963), 17–19, 17.

51. For an overview see Corinna Unger, "Cold War Science. Wissenschaft, Politik Und Ideologie Im Kalten Krieg," *Neue Politische Literatur* 51, no. 1 (2006): 49–68; and Joel Isaac, "The Human Sciences in Cold War America," *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 3 (2007): 725–46. In detail Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, 2003), and the contributions to David C. Engerman, ed., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst, MA, 2003).

52. Michael A. Bernstein, *A Perilous Progress: Economists and Public Purpose in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ, 2001).

53. Peter J. Boettke and Steven Horwitz, "The Limits of Economic Expertise: Prophets, Engineers, and the State in the History of Development Economics," *History of Political Economy* 37 (2005), 10–39, 26.

54. Marcel Boumans, *How Economists Model the World into Numbers* (London, 2005). For the USSR, see Heiko Haumann, *Beginn der Planwirtschaft. Elektrifizierung, Wirtschaftsplanung und Gesellschaftliche Entwicklung Sowjetrusslands 1917–21* (Düsseldorf, 1974); see also Chapter 6 in Thomas P. Hughes, *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm 1870–1970* (New York, 1989).

55. Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, *The Domestic Income and Product in Kenya—A Description of Sources and Methods with Revised Calculations for 1954–1958* (Nairobi, 1959).

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were no trustworthy population census and no established facts concerning the price system. Officers of the Statistical Department stated quite clearly: "It is, therefore, not possible to construct a useful series of *per capita* real incomes. Nor, because of the absence of useful price indicators is it possible to produce a satisfactory series showing changes in aggregate real domestic product."[56] But in order to accelerate future economic growth by means of planning, it would have been indispensable to understand the mechanisms of past growth and to name the sectors in which it had mainly taken place.

The Kenyan government worked hard on generating the necessary knowledge for planning. Already in 1961 the Kenya Institute of Administration had been founded by the British to generate knowledge for development. In 1965, an Institute for Development Studies (IDS) opened its doors at University College Nairobi. Thanks to generous funding by the Rockefeller Foundation, its social science department quickly became a world-leading center for development studies.[57] Visiting economists conducted several quantitative investigations.[58] At one time Mboya's ministry ordered a study on the economics of Africanization. Dharam Ghai and others showed that a forced handing over of management positions to Africans would be devastating for the performance of the enterprises. The finding was of course politically incorrect, and Mboya personally came to the institute to debate the controversial topic in front of a large crowd of students and scholars.[59] Some of the most original thinkers in economics and development studies like Joseph Stiglitz, Robert Chambers, James Tobin, John Harris, and Michael Todaro were associated with the IDS and used the Kenyan case to further substantiate their theories.[60] One of the most crucial insights that resulted from this intellectually stimulating atmosphere concerned the importance of redistribution in the process of economic growth. A series of studies conducted at the institute—and in other places, of course—disproved the assumption that general economic growth would automatically lead to an improvement of the living conditions of all Kenyans. In 1972, the International

56. Kennedy, Ord, and Walker, "On the Calculation and Interpretation of National Accounting Material in East Africa," 393.

57. N. N., "The Institute for Development Studies Nairobi," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 36, no. 2 (1966): 201. The history of the Institute is reconstructed in great detail by the historian Bethwell A. Ogot who directed its cultural studies department. Bethwell A. Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time* (Victoria, Canada, 2003), chap. 7. See also Dharam Ghai, *Building Knowledge Organizations: Manuscript* (Geneva, 2007). I am grateful to Dharam Ghai for allowing me to make use of this unpublished manuscript.

58. H. E. Dahl, *Household Demand for Consumer Goods in Kenya 1963–1965, with Projections for 1966–1973* (Bergen, 1971); Benton F. Massell and Judith Heyer, "Household Expenditure in Nairobi: A Statistical Analysis of Consumer Behaviour," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 17, no. 2 (1969): 212–34.

59. Personal communication with Dharam Ghai in Coppet, Switzerland, February 14, 2008. Ghai was then deputy director of the social sciences department of the Institute. He later became its head before changing to the ILO.

60. Paul Collier, "Africa and the Study of Economics," in *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. Robert H. Bates, V. Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr (Chicago, 1993), 58–82, 58.

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Labor Organization (ILO) sent an expert mission to Kenya headed by Hans W. Singer and Richard Jolly. The economists at the IDS ensured that Western economists used their local expertise.[61] The subsequent ILO report was instrumental in promoting a new development economical paradigm which put forward the notion of "redistribution with growth."[62] In 1973, World Bank President Robert McNamara announced in a Nairobi speech that his institution would from now on focus on projects securing basic needs.[63] It had become standard knowledge that direct government intervention was necessary to prevent a further increase in social inequality.

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, it might be interesting to relate this paradigmatic shift in development economics to the domestic differences between Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga. Mboya had promised his fellow Kenyans that the Northern technical fix would solve all social problems and generate general wealth. Odinga, in turn, argued that direct interventions were necessary to break up the maldistribution of wealth created through colonial rule. Mboya relied on expertise and built up a laboratory situation in which world-leading economists reached new insights into the economics of growth. But their main finding was very near to the political conviction of Odinga in that they called for measures for redistribution. In 1972, when the ILO report appeared, domestic politics in Kenya had changed to such an extent that there was nobody left who was willing to hear its message. In what was a small masterpiece of Machiavellian strategy—most probably including the assassination of Mboya!—Jomo Kenyatta had consolidated his position. An African upper class with vested interests in state resources had come into existence. The recommendations of the ILO report completely ignored this new constellation. In a fundamental critique of the report, Colin Leys argued that the authors were highly naïve in recommending political measures to reduce class antagonisms because the ruling clique was essentially interested in keeping the present distribution of wealth.[64] The ILO analysis was correct in scientific terms, but it could not be implemented. The strong connection between political power and scientific expertise, which had been built up by Mboya, had broken up.

61. Personal communication with Dharam Ghai in Coppet, Switzerland, February 14, 2008.

62. Hans W. Singer and Richard Jolly, *Employment, Incomes and Equality: A Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment in Kenya* (Geneva, 1972); Hans W. Singer and Richard Jolly, "Poverty, Employment and the Informal Sector: Some Reflections on the ILO Mission to Kenya," in *Renewing Social and Economic Progress in Africa: Essays in Memory of Philip Ndegwa*, ed. Dharam Ghai (Basingstoke, England, 2000), 91–101. See also the contribution by Daniel Maul to this volume.

63. Martha Finnemore, "Redefining Development at the World Bank," in *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley, CA, 1997), 203–27.

64. Colin Leys, "Interpreting African Underdevelopment: Reflections on the ILO Report on Employment, Incomes and Equality in Kenya," *African Affairs* 72, no. 289 (1973): 419–29.

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Consequently, the IDS at the University of Nairobi lost its international standing during the 1970s and fell into oblivion.

Two issues deserve further discussion. First, in the account of Kenyan domestic politics outlined above, categories of the Cold War were important. All players in the local power struggle had to orient their positions within a global system of reference. The foreign policies of the two world powers structured the local maneuvering spaces and could be utilized domestically. But still the explanatory power of the Cold War seems limited. The offers of assistance from East or West were not structurally different. Even the respective assessment of the role of government planning and intervention was largely congruent. In historical hindsight, the distinctive feature of the developmental constellation in the 1960s seems to have been a practically unlimited trust in scientific and technical expertise. This finding suggests reconstructing the history of development assistance and foreign aid not only in the context of foreign interventions and world politics, but also within the global emergence of a knowledge society. Such an approach should focus on the interconnectedness of science and society.[65]

Second, having studied the intricate relations between development expertise and political power in the Kenyan case, one sees a number of reciprocal interactions. It is a commonly held belief that unambiguous expert recommendations should be helpful for political bodies to make their decisions. But at no time has expertise been politically neutral in this way. In historical analysis, in contrast, the political system and the scientific system cannot be separated easily. Instead, the mere availability of technical assistance changed local outlooks, and the promise of a technical fix worked as a political asset. Within the vast body of theoretical work on development and modernization that was composed in the 1950s and the 1960s, this political dynamic of the production and the application of knowledge received relatively little attention. Most of the authors were convinced that the process of modernization could be understood in a general way and that universally applicable policy advice could be derived from this understanding. The empirical material presented above suggests a different view. It is promising to further investigate the question, how the existence of Modernization Theory—or other models of socioeconomic change—has influenced historical experiences of modernization. To such a perspective it seems rather simplistic to denounce the political entanglement of development knowledge in the context of the Cold War or to recast the history of development economics and Modernization Theory as one ideological cornerstone of the postcolonial exploitation of the third world.[66] Critics like Serge Latouche or

65. Frank Fischer, *Technocracy and the Politics of Expertise* (Newbury Park, CA, 1990). Such a perspective has been put forward by Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, CA, 2002).

66. Serge Latouche, *The Modernization of the World: The Significance, Scope, and Limits of the Drive Towards Global Uniformity* (Cambridge, MA, 1996); James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT, 1998).

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James C. Scott tend to underestimate the diversity in locally appropriating Northern knowledge claims. The Kenyan case rather suggests assuming that, historically, a multitude of regional modernities unfolded that cannot easily be subsumed under one single theoretical model.[67]

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67. See for India K. Sivaramakrishnan and Arun Agrawal, eds., *Regional Modernities: The Cultural Politics of Development in India* (New Delhi, 2003).