In 1958–59, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) built a new embassy in New Delhi, India. When West German craftsmen imported a power drill to drill holes into the marble panels used for construction, the Indian workers protested for fear that their manual labour would become dispensable and they would lose their jobs. To calm the heated atmosphere, the German engineer on-site assured them that the tool would only be used in constructing the embassy. According to the German ambassador in New Delhi, this incident, which he considered an expression of the alleged Indian «weakness of indolence», undermined Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's belief that India could skip several stages of development. Obviously, India was anchored much too deeply in «anachronistic» social structures to become «modern» any time soon.¹

This anecdote is telling of the West German perception of India in the post-war era. Having gained independence from Great Britain in 1947, India received much attention from West German observers in the 1950s and 1960s. It also obtained a large part of the FRG’s financial aid: DM 38.5 million between 1956 and 1960 alone, i.e., more than fourteen per cent of all West German development aid.² As the world’s largest democracy and a direct neighbour of communist China, India possessed immense strategic importance and became one of the most prominent battlegrounds of the Cold War. Economically, the subcontinent’s rapid population growth and its largely «undeveloped» markets caused excitement among industrialists and economists alike. While the FRG fully recognized Great Britain’s «special interests» vis-à-vis India, West German companies competed fiercely for contracts and investment opportunities. Symbolically, India was considered vital to Bonn’s Alleinvertretungsanspruch, i.e., the FRG’s exclusive claim of representing Germany and its policy of sanctioning countries that recognized the GDR. India, as the larg-

¹ West German embassy in New Delhi, Report No. 1160/60, June 23, 1960, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA), B 34/209.

est and most outspoken of the non-aligned nations, was considered vital in this regard.³

Under Nehru’s leadership, the country followed a pragmatic development approach. Nehru propagated what he called «democratically planned collectivism» – a socio-economic system based on a combination of democratic and socialist elements that would provide the basis for egalitarian development and make India a modern, independent power.⁴ Nehru’s socialist rhetoric, his contacts to the Soviet Union and his critique of American capitalism made Western observers fear that India might join forces with the Soviet Union at some point. Once that happened, other Third World countries might feel encouraged to follow India’s example, triggering a process that would greatly improve Moscow’s chances of deciding the Cold War in its favour.

Therefore, the Western governments, led by the United States, offered development aid to India, which, like many new nations, was considered to be suffering from «backwardness» – a concept measured in terms of a country’s annual growth rate, GNP and literacy rate.⁵ By supporting economic growth and improving the overall standard of living, the donor countries hoped to undermine socialism’s attraction.⁶ Accelerating economic growth through foreign investments would not be sufficient, though. To make overall development possible, the individuals involved had to change, too. The concept of modernization embodied this universalistic approach: It implied abandoning «traditional» forms of social behaviour, religion and politics; becoming efficient and rational; and trusting in the power of science. Becoming modern would make «them» like «us» – «us» being the industrialized countries and the elites of the so-called developing nations.⁷ Proponents of modernization rarely defined the exact kind of modernity they had in mind; rather, they stressed that the «old ways» had to make way for change.

As Odd Arne Westad has argued, the Cold War in the Third World can be understood as a competition between East and West over the best model of moderniza-

⁶ See, for example, Foreign Office, Referat 407, Memorandum: Cooperation with the developing countries (foreign policy design and measures), October 1, 1958, PA, B 58–8/13a, 9.
⁷ I use terms like «development», «modernization», «Third World» and «developing countries» without marking them individually but am aware of their ideological overtones.
West German Modernization Policy in India in the 1950s and 1960s

With regard to industrialization, however, the contrast between the two models was much less pronounced than many contemporaries liked to portray it. Both concepts relied on economic planning, emphasized science and technology, and had little patience with remnants of "traditional" life. The Soviets propagated their own state’s success in turning an agrarian society into a highly industrialized nation within a period of thirty years without sacrificing social justice and equality (according to their terms). The Western countries talked about freedom and democracy but came to realize that those concepts appeared less attractive than the promise of fast economic growth and individual wealth, however modest. What was therefore needed was an all-encompassing model that could counter the Soviet promise.

Modernization theory, as it was formulated by American social scientists in the mid-1950s, was such a model. Inspired by liberal anti-communism, it provided existing practices of foreign aid with a scientific basis and professionalized them, and it offered a lingua franca of progress. Conveniently, modernization also served private and state economic interests: it implied higher levels of consumption in the respective countries, and industrialization required large amounts of foreign investments and imports, which the Western nations were eager to offer. Applying the rhetoric of modernization made economic interests appear politically responsible and helped to garner public support for business interests. Hence, one needs to differentiate between the "ideology" of modernization and its appropriation by proponents of the liberal market economy. This does not mean reducing Western modernization agents to Cold War warriors or money-hungry imperialists. Economic, political and modernization interests were not mutually exclusive. In fact, many development experts truly believed in their mission to improve the living conditions in the former colonies (which they found unacceptable) as well as in their capability of doing so. The FRG’s Wirtschaftswunder suggested that it was possible to overcome destitution and poverty with external support, and many felt a responsibility to pass on the help they had enjoyed after the war. Apart from its symbolic value, West Germany’s reconstruction had very real political significance in the conduct of the Cold War in the Third World. Whether called Magnettheorie, modernization theory, or convergence theory, all of these models relied on capitalism’s potential to convince non-aligned nations to reject communism because it could not match the West’s promise to satisfy ever-increasing consumer demand and, simultaneously, ensure individual freedom and democracy.

9 See, for example, Foreign Office, Memorandum, October 1, 1959, PA, B 12/340. Also see Ministry of Economics (BMWi), V A 4 to the Under-Secretary of the Chancellery, July 13, 1960, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), B 102/55957.
So was there a specific West German approach to modernization and development? As one step toward answering this question, I will analyse West German development policies vis-à-vis India in the 1950s and 1960s by discussing two case studies: an industrialization project, the steel mill Rourkela and an agrarian reform project, the co-operative district project Mandi. Rourkela and Mandi represent two different modernization approaches: top-down via industrialization and bottom-up via agrarian reform.

1. Modernization via Industrialization? Rourkela as a Test Case

Rourkela, a steel mill built by West German companies in the Indian state of Orissa, close to Kolkata (then Calcutta), in the 1950s, mirrored the Federal Republic’s post-war economic success with its massive export capacity, its high-quality industrial products and its innovative technologies, and all of that only a decade after the end of the war. Excelling economically helped West Germany to reinvent itself as a peaceful, productive nation, regain international respect and freedom of action and enhance its visibility on a global scale.12

In the early 1950s, West German businessmen and bureaucrats in the Ministry of Economics began to emphasize the potential of India’s markets. A member of the FRG’s embassy in New Delhi summarized their arguments in 1953: «India is the only remaining area […] that is awaiting development and that is destined to be developed. Our economy would […] be affected if it did not participate in […] solving the challenges India is confronted with wisely and generously out of self-interest.»13 Fearing that India was too fragile to withstand Soviet influences, Bonn’s strategists theorized that the country’s industrialization would result in socio-economic prosperity, which would make India less dependent on the USSR and draw the country closer to the West via commerce, culture and consumption.14

India’s own development policies focused on rapid industrialization, too, as the Second Five-Year Plan (1956–61) stated most clearly.15 To achieve the projected increase in steel production, foreign investments and technology imports were imperative. Accordingly, the Indian government approached the Krupp Company about the construction of a steel mill in the early 1950s. Krupp accepted the offer and, in co-operation with other West German companies, founded the so-called India Consortium. In 1956, its representatives signed a contract with the Indian

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13 West German embassy in New Delhi, Report No. 352/53, April 27, 1953, BAK, B 102/6403, folder 1.

14 See BMWi, V C 1 c, Memorandum, December 20, 1955, BAK, B 102/55858.

government, agreeing to sell and ship all necessary material and to advise the (state-owned) Indian company, Hindustan Steel Ltd., on the construction of a mill that would produce one million tons of raw steel per year. The Indian government would pay the companies USD 4.6 million for their work and counsel. The size of the planned steel mill – equipped with the most advanced, largely automated technology – and the construction of a workers’ village for 100,000 persons required the participation of more than 3,000 West German subcontractors. To prepare the designated area for the industrial complex, more than 30 villages were torn down, and about 40,000 inhabitants – most of them Adivasis – were resettled coercively.  

Construction started in 1956. Soon the West Germans came to realize that their idea of «building a steel mill in the jungle» (the state of Orissa was considered one of India’s less developed areas) was far more difficult than anticipated. Logistics were insufficient, the Indian bureaucracy worked in complicated ways, and transportation was slow. Competition among West German companies and conflicts within the Indian administration threatened to keep the steel mill from being completed on time. In 1958, the India Consortium, the Federal Republic and Hindustan Steel agreed to share the costs of sending West German experts to Rourkela and training Indian engineers in the FRG. Arguing that the transfer of knowledge was an essential part of technical aid, the Foreign Office paid for this programme out of its development aid fund. Consequently, Rourkela, which had started out as a private enterprise, became an integral part of the FRG’s development aid programme.

The fact that West German corporations received such broad support from the government was characteristic of the FRG’s development aid policy: Bonn rejected the multilateral approach favoured by many other Western nations, especially the United States, and pleaded for bilateral, privately organized projects; this was supposed to increase efficiency and favour German as well as Third World interests.
Apart from its economic importance, Rourkela presented the Federal Republic with a diplomatic challenge: if the project failed, Indian goodwill might crumble and Nehru might recognize East Germany. For that reason, the FRG was willing to invest a lot of money and diplomacy to guarantee Rourkela’s success and India’s loyalty. Hence, it agreed to restructure the Rourkela debts by granting India a long-term credit – a decision that effectively undermined Bonn’s policy of granting short-term credits only.\footnote{See Das Gupta, *Handel*, 82, 134–135, 312; J. White, “West German Aid to Developing Countries”, *International Affairs* 41 (1965) 1, 74–88, 78; Foreign Office, III B 7, Memorandum: Historical development of the metallurgical plant Rourkela, not dated (1964), PA, B 61 III B 7/132. The Foreign Office emphasized that the credit was part of the FRG’s efforts to encourage the Indian government to “take a political position in favor of the West and to strengthen it in its opposition against communist infiltration”. Foreign Office, Abteilung 4, Memorandum, December 14, 1957, PA, B 61–411/107.}

Financial problems were not the only source of Rourkela’s trouble. Ethnic and political conflicts broke out among the Indian workers, many of whom were labour migrants and clashed with the Orissa population over caste status and religion.\footnote{See Röh, *Entwicklungsrichtung*, 281–284.} Competition among unions, communist agitation and dissatisfaction with the dangerous working conditions resulted in strikes and violence. Technical problems, workplace accidents, and mismanagement hampered production. To make matters worse, the West German workers in Rourkela were accused of enjoying a colonial lifestyle and treating their Indian colleagues disrespectfully.\footnote{See «Rourkela: Russen auf dem Dach», *Der Spiegel*, March 30, 1960, 22–34.}

According to the West Germans involved, many of Rourkela’s problems were caused by what they understood as the lack of a modern work ethic among the Indians. They complained that the Indian workers were unwilling to take charge and neither understood the value of labour per se nor showed the required professional ambition.\footnote{See, for example, the report by J. Bodo Sperling, the director of the German Social Centre in Rourkela, about the organizational and managerial situation in Rourkela, July 1962, PA, B 61–411/183. Also see Sperling’s book *Human Dimension of Technical Assistance: The German Experience at Rourkela, India* (Ithaca, 1969).} If they did not internalize the value of industrial work, Rourkela’s production would never reach the projected output and India’s industrialization would remain a dream, West German observers believed.\footnote{See, for example, the letter from the West German consulate in Dacca to the Foreign Office, September 29, 1959, PA, B 61–411/240. The British helped to build another steel mill, Durgapur in West Bengal.}

Undoubtedly, there was a dire need to transfer managerial and technical knowledge. Yet the West Germans involved did not restrict their efforts to technical training but also talked about «education» (*Erziehung*), which implied the notion of a civilizational slope. In formulating guidelines for the FRG’s development aid policies in 1957, a high-ranking bureaucrat stated that West German aid should focus on «educational tasks in the widest sense», especially on «education toward sensible economic conduct».\footnote{See, for example, the report by J. Bodo Sperling, the director of the German Social Centre in Rourkela, about the organizational and managerial situation in Rourkela, July 1962, PA, B 61–411/183. Also see Sperling’s book *Human Dimension of Technical Assistance: The German Experience at Rourkela, India* (Ithaca, 1969).} An expert advisory board argued similarly in 1961: «If
one wants economic development aid to succeed, one has to remodel those people’s thinking through patient, tedious training». And Walter Scheel, the Federal Republic’s first minister for development aid, believed that a «change in values» was required. The Third World societies had to internalize «the importance of work and craftwork, the value of the individual, […] and dynamic thinking instead of static-feudalistic ways of living» if foreign capital investment was to bear fruit. It is difficult to determine the degree to which those arguments were influenced by the colonial concept of «training for work» (Erziehung zur Arbeit), but obviously the idea of a «civilizing mission» continued to exist in some Germans’ thinking long after the formal end of colonial rule. In fact, the «colonial mentality» seems to have persisted largely independent of a nation’s status as a colonial power. This holds true both of (West) Germany and of the United States: Representatives of both countries, in their activities in the Third World, exhibited a more or less implicit belief in the West’s civilizational superiority.

Freed from its imperial character, the postcolonial «training for work» appeared to be a philanthropic element of the Western «modernizing mission». Rourkela, like many other industrialization and infrastructure projects in India and elsewhere, mirrored this effort toward comprehensive modernization. Like the large hydro-electric dams that were erected in many Third World countries in the 1950s and 1960s (see Abou Bamba’s contribution in this issue), the steel plant was expected not only to accelerate industrialization but also to modernize the workers involved. Linking the processes of industrialization and individual modernization was popular among social scientists in the 1960s. Among others, the American sociologist Alex Inkeles argued that the experience of factory work had a similar effect on individuals as school had on children, teaching them to think and act rationally. The case of Rourkela made clear, though, that the factory was not as effective a modernizing agency as envisioned. The «success» of modernizing individuals depended on a vast variety of factors that were either ignored (gender being one of the most prominent) or difficult to control – apart from the question of whether, given the choice, those individuals felt a desire to «become modern» at all.
Furthermore, the expectation that Rourkela would provide the basis for the region’s overall economic development proved wrong. Instead, it became a huge, isolated industrial site, and the old town of Rourkela receded into a «slum», reminding Western visitors of British industrial cities of the nineteenth century.32

Rather surprisingly, the steel mill itself turned out to be a success story. After years of interrupted production and financial losses, Rourkela «took off» in the second half of the 1960s. The Indians assumed full control of the technical administration in 1965, and the number of West Germans working in Rourkela was reduced from 232 to 40. India’s steel production increased to more than six million tons in 1975.33 Probably none would deny, however, that the financial and social costs of this hard-won success were very high.

2. Alternative Positions on Development

Citing Rourkela’s multiple problems, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit, BMZ), which had been established in 1961, became an outspoken critic of the industrialization approach: «Financing expensive metallurgical plants helps only a few. Our efforts focus on the individual, especially on education. No Mark without a man.»34 To a certain degree, the BMZ’s critique was motivated by the effort to improve the ministry’s standing vis-à-vis the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economics. Both claimed that development aid was a policy tool to be employed as flexibly as possible, and they countered all efforts to define a development agenda that better matched the (alleged) interests of the new nations. In this situation, the «Rourkela experience» proved useful to the BMZ: its staff could point to the huge amounts of tax money effectively lost, to the negative publicity Rourkela generated and to the general disillusionment that accompanied industrialization projects. Instead of building high-tech steel mills in the «middle of nowhere» and naïvely expecting them to modernize the surrounding areas and populations, greater attention should be paid to local conditions and interests, and the projects should be evaluated more systematically, the BMZ argued.35

The ministry’s critique coincided with the Indian government’s attempts to revise its modernization approach in the early 1960s. A severe drought had caused

34 BMZ, letter from I B/1 to Dr. Ülshöfer, August 4, 1965, BAK, B 213/3568.
35 See BMZ, II B 1, Memorandum: The FRG’s bilateral technical aid (general questions, positions, types of support, procedures), not dated (1962), PA, B 58–8/12.
a food crisis in India in 1957–58, and the government realized that it had to intensify its efforts to solve the country’s food problems. Simultaneously, the United States and the Aid India Consortium (constituted by the World Bank and several Western nations) began to pressure the Indian government to increase its food production. They feared that social unrest could destabilize the region if India’s food situation deteriorated. New agrotechnologies (High Yielding Varieties, artificial fertilizers, pesticides), irrigation and extension technologies and new marketing strategies would have to be put in place to end India’s reliance on external food aid, many Western and Indian experts agreed. When Nehru died in 1964 and Lal Bahadur Shastri was elected prime minister, C. Subramaniam, the new minister of agriculture, awarded food production a prominent position in India’s Third Five-Year Plan. From the perspective of the United States, India’s most influential (though not most popular) donor, establishing competitive market structures and increasing India’s trade capacity was decisive, with wheat and rice taking the place of steel as the motor of modernization.36

This approach stood in marked contrast to Nehru’s efforts (shared, in part, by the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization) to encourage rural reforms on the village and regional levels to make increased agricultural production the basis of overall economic growth and development.37 In the late 1940s, the Indian government had established the Grow More Food Program, which aimed at promoting social change and economic growth on an egalitarian basis. The Ford Foundation, which Nehru invited to help – support from an independent philanthropic institution being much more attractive than US government aid with strings attached – invested large amounts of money into India’s community development over the course of the 1950s. In accordance with the Gandhian idealization of the village as the nucleus of democratic Indian society, emphasis was placed on small model farms and co-operatives in densely populated rural areas.38
Rural «development from below» was also favoured by some of the critics of Western modernization policies. Walter Scheel stated in 1964 that Third World industrialization was necessary to provide the basis for intensive agriculture but that agricultural development needed to be given a more prominent role in development planning – a view shared by several members of India’s Planning Commission.\(^{39}\) Others were much more sceptical of industrialization in general. Most prominently, ordoliberals like Wilhelm Röpke and Bellikoth Ragunath Shenoy disputed modernization theory’s assumption that Third World countries’ most important task was to raise their gross national products through industrialization.\(^{40}\) According to Röpke, one of the masterminds of West Germany’s social market economy, there was a danger of «overindustrializing» the world while neglecting agriculture. He believed that developing nations should continue to do what they knew how to do best, namely low-scale agriculture. This argument went hand-in-hand with the plea to acknowledge that there was no universal model of development. Some ordoliberals believed in a «natural» difference between rich and poor, developed and underdeveloped, which neither could nor should be overcome with «artificial» means.\(^{41}\)

Behind some of those essentialist arguments stood the fear that the existing global order might fall prey to a revolution initiated by the newly independent nations. Once the developing countries established modern industries, many individuals working in labour-intensive agriculture would become unemployed. If they left their villages to become factory workers, they would constitute an urban proletariat that was easily susceptible to communist rhetoric. The First World’s living standards and security would be endangered by the Third World’s growing «overpopulation», which would be accelerated by the break-up of family structures and production communities. Conservative observers believed that instead of modernizing the developing countries one had to focus on strengthening «traditional», «organic» structures.\(^{42}\) Hence, they tried to restrict Third World populations to specific ways of life and areas of living.\(^{43}\)
Consequently improving the rural living conditions was considered essential. Agricultural co-operatives (no conservative monopoly, to be sure), which had a long tradition both in Germany and India and were heavily promoted by India’s Planning Commission, seemed to provide the perfect solution. By pooling material and labour resources, they would make production more efficient and encourage individual achievement without endangering communal solidarity. This would lead to a higher standard of living, which would neutralize the attraction of collectivization. In short, co-operatives would respond to the demand for a more efficient, yet stable agrarian order that guaranteed food sufficiency and kept people on their land.44

Similar discussions had taken place in the 1920s and 1930s concerning Central Europe’s agrarian and demographic situation, and many colonial powers had talked about the dangers of ‘overpopulation’ in their overseas territories. The similarity between pre- and post-war discussions seems especially remarkable with regard to the Nazis’ radicalization of population policies and their brutal implementation during World War II. However, one should not overstate the continuities, I believe. Nazi population policies had their roots in much older discourses that were not uniquely German.45 Furthermore, without equating Nazi experts with French or British colonial officers, one should remember that the transfer of colonial knowledge, practices and personnel to the postcolonial era was a widespread European phenomenon.46 What was new in the post-war discussions was


45 See T. Etzemüller, Ein ewigwährender Untergang: Der apokalyptische Bevölkerungsdiskurs im 20. Jahrhundert (Bielefeld, 2007); M. Frey, ‘Exper-

the global perspective that made population growth appear as a global problem to be tackled across regions and continents. This perspective gained relevance due to decolonization and the more general concern with security, wealth, and stability. In the early 1960s, the looming sense of crisis suggested that immediate political action was necessary in order to prevent global «chaos». In this situation and encouraged by agricultural experts and the West German embassy in India, Bonn's Foreign Office decided to participate in an Indian agricultural project, the Intensive Agricultural District Program (IADP) and to do so by establishing co-operatives.

3. In Favour of the Farmer? The Agrarian Co-operative Project Mandi

IADP, which became the nucleus of India’s Green Revolution, was a package extension programme that aimed at stabilizing India’s agricultural situation. In reaction to the 1957–58 food crisis, Nehru had asked the Ford Foundation for help once again, and the foundation had sent a team of US experts to India in 1959. Their recommendations on how to improve Indian food production became the basis on which the Indian government set up model districts to test new growing, irrigation and marketing techniques in order to increase agricultural production. While India paid for IADP’s logistics, the Ford Foundation and several Western governments sponsored selected districts.

The FRG decided to support a project in Himachal Pradesh, a mountain region bordering Tibet. West German experts had also considered Sambalpur, a region close to Rourkela, which was favoured by Krupp officials, who hoped that an agricultural development programme would improve the steel workers’ food situation and generate favourable publicity. But the area and its inhabitants seemed much too «backward» to make serious headway in a relatively short period of time, and so Mandi, an area of about 990 square miles and 1500 hamlets, was chosen. Having been granted a sum of DM 7.5 million (USD 1,875 million), three agricultural experts and six technicians established their headquarters in the town of Sundernagar and began to set up a co-operative structure in the district. Whereas the

48 See the correspondence in PA, B 61–411/271; Foreign Office, letter from Referat 709 to Otto Schiller, September 1, 1959, ibid.
American experts focused on introducing new, technologically advanced cultivation methods and production techniques, the West German programme was supposed to «enhance agriculture on a broader basis» by including advice on soil fertility, animal husbandry, dairy farming, fruit and produce growing, agricultural technology and economics, statistics and planning and irrigation. An agricultural workshop equipped with tools, machines and vehicles imported from the FRG offered practical training and courses. Originally, there was also a plan to build a community centre in Sundernagar, but after several years of budgeting, Bonn, citing financial reasons, decided against the centre. Nonetheless, the staff worked toward establishing close relations with the villagers. In stated contrast to their American colleagues, who traveled across the district to supervise the application of the new techniques, the West Germans lived in Mandi for a period of five years, a measure that was supposed to give them better insight into the farmers’ daily problems and strengthen communal co-operation.

Political observers regarded the West German project as a success. Within three months, the use of fertilizer tripled, 5000 farmers joined the co-operatives and the general level of income increased. The Indian government recommended the model to be copied, and – to Bonn’s great dismay – the GDR was suspected of doing just that. In 1967, the FRG extended its activities to two more districts, Kangra and Nilgiris, and the Indian government repeatedly expressed its satisfaction with the West Germans’ work. To some, Mandi proved that «the fight over India’s future will be decided on the field and cannot be won by means of forced industrialization».

Mandi’s apparent success also satisfied those who regarded the project as a chance to show the world that the FRG was a leading, innovative force in development aid. The United States had been pressing Bonn for years to contribute larger

52 Von Hülst, Report on the state of the work by the German Agricultural Assistance Team in the district Mandi/H.P., India, not dated (May/June 1963), PA, B 61 III B 7/93. Also see letter from the West German embassy in New Delhi to the Foreign Office, May 25, 1959, PA, B 61–411/142.

53 See letter from the West German embassy in New Delhi to the Foreign Office, July 20, 1962, attachment: Dr. G. Schütz, Memorandum, PA, B 61–411/142. Also see BMELF, letter from VII A 5 to the Minister, April 26, 1968, BAK, B 116/21637. The funds the FRG invested into the three Indian agricultural projects in 1967 amounted to DM 19 million (nearly five million dollars). See letter from the Minister for Economic Development (Wischnewski) and the Secretary of State (Brandt) to the Chancellery, February 3, 1967, BAK, B 136/2985.


55 See the letter from the West German embassy in New Delhi to the Foreign Office, September 18, 1964, PA, B 61 III B 7/134: BMELF, letter from VII A 5 to the Minister, April 26, 1968, BAK, B 116/21637.

56 The United States had been pressing Bonn for years to contribute larger...
amounts of money to Western development aid. Although the FRG fulfilled its ally’s demands on the institutional level, many West German experts were critical of US development policies and practices. They believed that American agencies were wasting money by investing in large, highly visible, multilateral projects instead of trying to bring about long-lasting, structural changes on a bilateral basis.58

The West German tendency to see development aid as an arena for transatlantic competition gained momentum because the Federal Republic, although a prosperous nation, had smaller financial resources than the United States, which meant that it could not rely exclusively on expensive new technologies and artificial fertilizer in stimulating production. In addition, the American experts picked their model districts first, choosing those that promised the fastest results and most visible success. Consequently, West German diplomats feared that the FRG’s activities would not receive adequate attention.59 The only way out of this dilemma was to consciously reject technocratic modernization approaches, or at least to complement them with ‘old-fashioned’ structural measures. The ‘low-modern’60 co-operative model stood in clear contrast to the ‘high-modern’ approach embodied by IADP.

So did Mandi fulfil its supporters’ hopes? In the late 1960s, a sociological study of the project concluded that «[t]hough, in terms of membership and volume of business transaction, the cooperative movement has made some headway, its actual working has been found to suffer from some anomalies and malpractices, of which the poor and illiterate farmers appear to be the worst victims.»61 Those farmers who joined the co-operatives belonged to the middle and upper classes, whereas the economic situation of the landless workers worsened over the years – a symptom that plagued IADP in general. Some, including the authors of the study, blamed this disappointing development on the ‘ignorant’ farmers who, buried under «the dead weight of age-old customs and traditions», resisted all kinds of supposedly useful innovations. At the same time, the authors acknowledged that the project itself contained several flaws. For example, German cows that were introduced to Himachal Pradesh gave much more milk than local cows but due to

58 See, for example, Foreign Office, Dg 41, Memorandum, November 27, 1958, PA, B 61–411/111; letter from the West German representative at the OECE to the Foreign Office, March 17, 1961, PA, B 61/411/115.
59 Foreign Office, Referat 414, Abridged minutes of the departmental meeting at the directors’ level on December 9, 1960, concerning the German-American financial talks, December 9, 1960, PA, B 58 III B 1/324. Also see the letters from the West German embassy in New Delhi to the Foreign Office, April 1, 1960, PA, B 61/411/267; January 1, 1961, PA, B 61 III B 7/93; and February 14, 1962, PA, B 61–411/272. Also see BMELF, letter from VII B 2 to the Foreign Office, August 6, 1960, PA, B 61–411/143.
their large size were neither able to climb the region’s steep hills nor to drag the ploughs used for farming, and their maintenance costs substantially exceeded the returns from higher milk sales.\textsuperscript{62} Similarly, the fertilizers and hybrid varieties were so expensive that many small farmers could not afford to take up the new techniques. To actively participate in modernization was, clearly, an economic privilege.\textsuperscript{63} In addition, professional and cultural differences created unforeseen problems. According to villagers’ accounts in Mandi, the West German agricultural experts entered the villages wearing suits and driving cars, calling to mind the presence of British colonial officers, which spawned fear that their land would be taken away. Disagreements between Indian and German agricultural specialists about the correct modernization approach complicated matters further.\textsuperscript{64}

In 1967, a senior BMZ bureaucrat concluded that Mandi had succeeded in increasing agricultural production but had failed to reach its community development goals. The West German advisors had neither managed to train a sufficient number of Indians nor to establish the necessary structures to allow for Mandi’s independence from foreign support.\textsuperscript{65} Such a structural dependence on the First World was exactly what the promoters of the co-operative approach had wanted to avoid. Moreover, it was not the co-operative structures but the extensive use of fertilizer that proved to be the most effective way of increasing production levels and that secured India’s independence from external food aid (though not from Western credits and fertilizer imports) in 1972.\textsuperscript{66}

4. Conclusion
Rourkela and Mandi both mirror the large gap that existed between modernization theory and modernization practice that James Ferguson has diagnosed so convincingly. Industrialization and large-scale infrastructure projects often suffered from short-sighted planning, mismanagement, and unexpected problems on the ground. The Green Revolution succeeded in increasing agricultural production, but in the long run its ‘side effects’ took a heavy toll: the use of pesticides and new irrigation techniques caused ecological damage, while the commercialization of agriculture led to social unrest in many rural areas.

\textsuperscript{62} See ibid., 98 (quote 101).
\textsuperscript{63} For an account of similar experiences in Alipur, see A. Gupta, \textit{Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India} (Durham-London 1998), 166–183.
\textsuperscript{64} Radhika Johari (York University, Toronto), who is working on an anthropological study of the Indo-German Changar Eco-Development Project, kindly shared this information with me. Email from Radhika Johari to the author, January 14, 2009. On the conflicts between Indian and German experts also see the letter from the West German embassy in New Delhi to the Foreign Office, August 31, 1961, PA, B 61 III B 7/93, and von Hülist, Report on the state of the work by the German Agricultural Assistance Team in the district Mandi/H.P., India, not dated (May/June 1963), ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Letter from Ministerialrat Schneider (BMZ) to Ministerialrat Dr. Eiche (BMEFL), July 12, 1967, BAK, B 116/21637.
\textsuperscript{66} See the letter from the West German embassy in New Delhi to the Foreign Office, November 19, 1968, BAK, B 116/21637; Bearth, \textit{Weizen}, 193.
In trying to explain the problems encountered in implementing modernization projects, accusing the locals of lacking a Western work ethic and being unwilling to give up their ‘traditional’ ways of life is obviously not the answer. A different, similarly one-sided approach would be to argue «in defense of the irrational peasant». This carries the danger of portraying Indian labourers and farmers solely as victims of developmentalism. Two things are important here: For one, many individuals in the Third World wanted to participate in development programmes, and many of them did achieve significant rates of ‘improvement’, whether measured in terms of access to education, increase in rates of production, or economic output. Secondly, the majority of the individuals in question took an active part in development whether or not they considered the changes they experienced a result of modernization. One needs to look more closely at the ways in which they appropriated the imported techniques and plans, combining ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ practices that developed a dynamic of their own in a manner largely unanticipated by the planners. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that politics on the local level often played a much greater role than government programmes (many of them instrumental to nation-building), international organizations, or Western donor countries.

What, then, do the two case studies tell us about West German modernization approaches? I would argue that one can identify specific West German ideas about Third World development but that there was no paradigmatic modernization concept «made in FRG». What was distinct about West German thinking regarding development and modernization was the somewhat stereotypical focus on ‘hard and honest’ work, on achievement and efficiency, and on high quality. All of those ‘values’ rendered aid seemingly ‘technical’ and allowed the possibility of presenting aid as a non-political, non-ideological activity of a peaceful, altruistic nation. Thus, development aid contributed to the invention of a West German national identity that offered a clear break with the past. Promoting a Third Way also helped to emphasize that the Federal Republic was an independent nation despite its strategic dependence on the United States. In that sense, West German development aid was at least as much about coming to terms with American hegemony as it was about claiming a spot among the former colonial powers in the postcolonial scramble for markets and influence.

«In the field», however, different ideas about the right way to modernize seem to have mattered only to a limited extent. National cultures of development...
and modernization, if they existed, would have been largely defined by language: The use of specific terminology could suggest the existence of specific national approaches which, however, were not all that different from each other. The ideological background of modernization policies differed from country to country (and also within countries), but the practices of, and experiences with, Third World modernization were strikingly similar.

Those similarities were not at all restricted to Western development agents. I would argue that the line of division did not run between South and North but between elites and «masses», since modernization was an elite project. Elites in the First and Third Worlds shared the belief that one had to prevent the growth of specific «segments» of the population on the national and on the global level. As stark as the contrast between India and Germany might have been, the differences between Delhi’s and Bonn’s bureaucrats and experts in thinking about the future seem to have been rather marginal. Indian elites feared that they would lose their economic and social privileges if the number of individuals belonging to the lower «castes» was allowed to increase without restriction. Western elites feared that their material and political security might be at risk if the Third World populations increased at an even faster pace than in industrialized societies. In the Federal Republic, pre-1945 discourses about «order», «organic growth» and «planning» heavily influenced such thinking,70 and the Cold War created a space in which older ideas and approaches were recycled and re-applied to a new, global setting.

Industrialization or Agrarian Reform?  
West German Modernization Policies in India  
in the 1950s and 1960s

This article takes into view different West German positions on Third World modernization and studies how they translated into development programmes in India in the 1950s and 1960s. Two projects serve as case studies: The steel mill Rourkela embodies the industrialization approach favoured by representatives of West German business and economic interests, most of whom were convinced of the need for and the advantages of, industrialization as the most effective path toward overall modernization. The other case study is the agricultural co-operative project Mandi, which, in part, mirrored the anti-modern (and, in some instances, anti-American) critique of the Western modernization model and focused on gradual improvement instead of radical change. This approach rested on the belief in the need for a stable Third World order able to withstand communism and, linked to that, the fear of ‘overpopulation’. India's development and modernization policies and programmes are integrated into the discussion of the two case studies. In conclusion, the article considers the role of the Cold War and decolonization in modernization policies as well as the contrast between modernization theory and practice.

Industrialisierung oder Agrarreform?  
Die westdeutschen Modernisierungspolitiken in Indien  
in den 1950er und 1960er Jahren

Cet article prend en ligne de compte les différentes positions ouest-allemandes dans la modernisation du Tiers-Monde et étudie comment elle s’est traduite dans des programmes de développement en Inde dans les années 1950 et 1960. Deux projets servent de cas d’études: l’aciérie Rourkela incarne l’approche par l’industrialisation favorisée par les représentants des intérêts d’affaires et économiques, dont la majorité était convaincue de la nécessité, et des avantages de l’industrialisation comme chemin le plus efficace vers une modernisation générale. L’autre cas d’étude est le projet de coopérative agricole Mandi, qui, en partie, reflète la critique antimoderne (et, par certains côtés, anti-américaine) du modèle de modernisation occidental et se concentre sur l’amélioration graduelle plutôt que sur le changement radical. Cette approche reposait sur la conviction de la nécessité d’un ordre du Tiers-Monde stable, capable de résister au communisme, et, liée à cela, à la peur de la «surpopulation». Les politiques et les programmes de développement et de modernisation de l’Inde sont intégrés dans la discussion de ces deux cas d’études. En conclusion, cet article prend en considération le rôle de la guerre froide et de la décolonisation pour les politiques de modernisation autant que le contraste entre la théorie et la pratique de la modernisation.