

## Alexey Golubev

**Mark Solovey and Christian Dayé, eds. *Cold War Social Science: Transnational Entanglements*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. 400 pp. ISBN 9783030702465.**

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Immanuel Kant's famous 1784 essay "What Is Enlightenment?" suggested a bold vision of governance in which political obedience could be achieved through neither religious indoctrination nor the violence of bureaucratic apparatuses, but rather through the cultivation of "freedom in the arts and sciences," and where a new class of free-thinking scholars could teach the rest of the population to act rationally for the public good. "Enlightenment" was not just about "the courage to use your own understanding" per se (Kant n.d.), but rather about epistemic citizenship, that is, a human condition based upon a European intellectual tradition aiming to merge scientific reason and rational political organizations, something that Michel Foucault (1988a) noted in his lifelong project to explore new forms of social governance associated with European modernity. With twentieth-century globalization and especially the Cold War, these forms—known collectively as scientific governance—became increasingly prominent across the world, in particular, through their rootedness in social science disciplines, which is the central focus of the volume under review.

Bringing together an impressive interdisciplinary team, *Cold War Social Science* explores the global fascination of the ruling and academic elites with science-based understanding of social, political, and economic changes both at home and abroad. Fueled by fears of being outcompeted by their respective ideological rivals, this fascination led to an increased emphasis on social science on both sides of the Iron Curtain as well as in the Global South. As the editors, Mark Solovey and Christian Dayé, argue in the introduction to the volume, it was during the Cold War that national elites became invested in massive efforts to make societies accept and embrace scientific epistemes as frameworks regulating the daily lives of their citizens, and social science became almost universally seen as crucial for understanding the international political landscape and developing strategies for economic, political, and ideological competition. Social scientists, consequently, had to become that new class which Kant envisioned as the harbingers of enlightened modernity.

The editors and contributors of *Cold War Social Science* are particularly interested in transnational movements and exchanges in the social sciences during the Cold War, and they did an excellent job demonstrating how easily knowledge circulated in all directions across both the East-West and North-South divides and how social scientists had to come to terms with the fact that their conceptual apparatuses and interpretative frameworks, these products of Western modernity, had to be adjusted to make sense of local conditions. The volume opens with a section on intel-

lectual exchanges across the Iron Curtain, where the contributions by Ekaterina Babintseva and Elena Aronova show persistent Soviet efforts to adapt certain Western innovations in pedagogy and citation analysis (scientometrics), respectively. Both chapters are particularly curious in that they reveal a growing interest in technocratic (as opposed to ideological) solutions for social progress in the Eastern bloc, which brings them in dialogue with contributions from the third and fourth sections of the volume, namely, Vítězslav Sommer's chapter on leisure studies in Czechoslovakia and Markus Arnold's discussion of Cold War debates over the knowledge society as a historically new form of social organization. Sommer and Arnold mention that the idea of convergence of East and West gained popularity in international academic circles as the Cold War progressed, and *Cold War Social Science* shows that there was, indeed, convergence between the blocs, yet not so much on social and economic ground, as the original proponents of convergence such as Pitirim Sorokin (1960) suggested, but rather epistemically, through the emergence of a transnational community of social scientists who claimed social and political power through expert knowledge and used transnational networks to confirm each other's claims for power. Over the course of the Cold War, this transnational community of social scientists produced a persistent political fantasy suggesting that the answer to the question that prompted Kant to write his essay—what is Enlightenment?—is social science-based technocratic policymaking.

It is only natural, therefore, that many contributors to the volume focused on academic trajectories of social scientists as well as strategies and practices of their professionalization, including Sebastián Gil-Riaño's chapter on American anthropologist Charles Wagley, Christa Wirth's chapter on Filipino anthropologist Felipe Landa Jocano, Margarita Fajardo's examination of a group of Latin American and US scholars associated with the dependency theory, Per Wisselgren's chapter on Swedish sociologist Alva Myrdal, and Begüm Adalet's discussion of professional self-fashioning among American political scientists, in addition to biographic sketches in the contributions by Babintseva, Aronova, and Sommer. That science is a transnational endeavor par excellence is hardly a secret since at least the Antiquity; what *Cold War Social Science* adds to our understanding of "transnational entanglements" is how individual actors navigated the complex, hierarchically organized landscapes of their disciplines. "Situatedness" is, perhaps, the key concept here: it was through one's immersion in the field combined with a simultaneous access to global networks of knowledge that social scientists claimed an expert status and power to instigate social change as, for example, Wirth shows in her chapter on Jocano's cooptation into the Marcos regime in the Philippines, which was only possible due to his reputation in the global anthropological community. Meanwhile, Eugene Garfield's Science Citation Index owed its success, to a significant degree, to its adoption in the Eastern bloc, as Aronova reveals in her chapter. This situation reminds of the famous Kula ring described by Bronisław Malinowski where shells acquired additional value as they circulated from one Pacific island to another: the most common story in *Cold War Social Science* is how actors and ideas acquired a higher status as they crossed various Cold War boundaries, found themselves in different sociocultural settings,

and—by virtue of their circulation—were recognized as influential and valuable by other social scientists. This is one of the definite strengths of *Cold War Social Science*: the attentiveness of its contributors to the situations when new knowledge originated outside of the West or through its “transnational entanglements” with the socialist bloc and the so-called Third World.

The volume under review demonstrates another extremely important aspect of global academia that defined it during the Cold War and remains equally relevant these days: its unequal power dynamic. The editors conclude their introductory chapter by mentioning the growing ambiguity about “the universalizing project of modern social science” during the last decades of the Cold War and especially after its end, the ambiguity that translated into “a boatload of proposals for ‘indigenizing,’ ‘dewesternizing,’ and ‘decolonizing’ the social sciences” (p. 26). Yet the volume does not have a single contributor with a university affiliation east of Umeå in Sweden or south of Santa Barbara in California (in other words, from outside the Global North), while the book is published in Switzerland by a British company (yours truly works at an American university too). In this sense, *Cold War Social Science* serves—quite ironically—as evidence that Cold War transnational entanglements failed to disrupt the global domination of Western academia, which has historically served and continues to serve as the ultimate judge of social science theories, institutions, networks, and reputations, no matter where they were and are produced. Simon Ottersbach’s chapter on the accumulation and communication of knowledge about Eastern Europe by Radio Free Europe (RFE) is exemplary in this respect: Ottersbach shows how RFE used CIA funding to produce a hegemonic archive of knowledge about the Eastern bloc from its own intelligence and “crowd-sourced” reports of visitors to Eastern European nations. The story narrated in Margarita Fajardo’s chapter is more subtle yet equally telling as she shows how the Latin America–born dependency theory was eventually incorporated into Latin American studies in the United States through professional associations and journals. While the dependency theory originated from intellectual centers in Chile and Brazil, in order to become an internationally recognized expert in this theory, one needed to publish in *Latin American Perspectives* (a journal where, in 2023, there are more than twice as many US-based scholars on the editorial board as from all of Latin American countries combined) or to find employment in an American institution, a situation that remains typical for many, if not most, social science disciplines these days. It was only through a violent interference of the political leadership in academic affairs that a relative independence (yet not complete isolation) from the Western or Soviet domination in the social sciences could be upheld, as Zhipeng Gao shows in his chapter on pedagogy in Cold War China.

The almost revisionist paradigm that serves as the overarching framework in *Cold War Social Science* allowed its contributors to tell important and powerful stories of how the social sciences occupied their current position in the global landscape of knowledge through their transnational entanglements and encounters. The book also demonstrates that transnational trajectories of ideas and actors of Cold War social science could not shelter it from the hegemonic power structures that

emerged in the West as a reaction to the decolonization movements in the Global South and to the global confrontation with the socialist bloc. In his discussion of the question “what is Enlightenment?” and the related themes of knowledge production during that period, Foucault argued that “the birth of the human sciences goes hand in hand with the installation of new mechanisms of power” (1988b:106). The volume under review suggests that the same connection applies to social science in the latter half of the twentieth century, where transnational entanglements became incorporated into the making and perpetuation of global inequality in the knowledge economy that we have inherited from the Cold War.

## REFERENCES

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