

bars” imply the termination of a woman employment on her marriage and was a current practice from the 19th. This distinction between men and women is also seen through the impact of gender on the boundaries of the discipline itself: “gender schema [...] allowed academic economists [...] to characterize women with doctorates in economics as sociologists and men with doctorates in sociology and history as economists” (p. 28).

Overall, the book fulfills its goal to provide a comprehensive overview of the status of women in the early days of the economics profession in the United States. While the impact of gender on professionalization is at the heart of the book, gender is not used to analyze knowledge production itself. For example, the exploration of women’s topics of research (e.g., in dissertations, books, and articles) could have shed some light on the evolution of subfields as well as objects of study, and their respective prestige in the profession; for example, how consumption theory was shaped by women home economists and became a topic on its own when men economists took over.

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Planning Democracy: Modern India’s Quest for Development. *By Nikhil Menon.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 276 pp., illus, notes, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$34.99. ISBN: 978-1-009-04458-5.

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Reviewed by Douglas E. Haynes

Until the last ten years or so, historians of India generally eschewed examinations of the post-independence period, leaving that chronological terrain to the political scientists, sociologists, and economists. This tendency has changed recently, as young historians have taken up the study of India during the 1950s and 1960s in earnest. Some important works include those by Ornit Shani (*How India Became Democratic: India and the Making of the Universal Franchise*, 2018), Rohit De (*A People’s Constitution: The Everyday Life of Law in the Indian Republic*, 2018), and Benjamin Robert Siegel (*Hungry Nation: Food*,

Famine and the Making of Modern India, 2018). What distinguishes these works from the scholarship in other fields is the way historians have brought to life how democracy and development policy took shape in everyday practice and how historians have moved analytically between the worlds of top policymakers and ordinary people. The field of history, in other words, has made a difference in the way we understand the decades immediately after independence.

Nikhil Menon's *Planning Democracy: Modern India's Quest for Development* is a major addition to this literature. Menon's subject is the history of Indian planning. During the 1950s, India's leadership became committed to planning the economy and launched a series of five-year plans. This project was, in theory, inspired by Soviet policymaking models, but it was implemented in a democratic polity by an elite committed to gaining popular support. The intricacies of the different plans, the shifts in objectives from one plan to another, and the economic impact of the plans—topics that assumed importance in other studies of planning—occupy a minor place in Menon's history. Instead, the author explores the ways in which the Indian state sought to manage the contradictions between a planning process that relied on highly technocratic experts and the most modern technologies, on the one hand, and the drive to gain the enthusiastic involvement of India's citizenry, on the other. In discussing these objectives, *Planning Democracy* relies on evidence that ranges from high-level materials documenting the concerns and practices of top policymakers to sources much closer to the ground that tells us about popularizing efforts in the remote countryside.

Planning Democracy has two main parts. In the first, Menon examines the ways in which planners relied on highly sophisticated forms of statistical knowledge and technical analysis. Here the main focus is on the statistician P. C. Mahalanobis and the organization he created in Calcutta to carry out statistical investigations, the Indian Statistical Institute. In the beginning, Mahalanobis lacked any significant knowledge of economics, but his ascendancy to the top of India's planning program stemmed from his expertise in interpreting numbers and his ability to deploy multivariate analyses and tools that, to Nehru and other leaders, seemed essential to fashioning a new scientific approach to policymaking. Under Mahalanobis, India developed the National Sample Surveys, one of the most elaborate systems of data collection anywhere in the world, to document employment, income, and consumption patterns in both urban and rural India. The institute became a central participant in state efforts to engineer a wealthier and more egalitarian society, and it carried out hundreds of research projects to determine the best means to pursue this objective. Menon devotes

one chapter just to Mahalanobis's efforts to bring to India the most advanced computers to crunch numbers for the planning effort. Unfortunately for the planners, the technocratic ideal of statistical planning was unable to anticipate issues such as war, foreign currency crises, and—I would add—the human responses of the Indian population. Planning always fell well short of its objectives.

The second part of *Planning Democracy* is the discussion of efforts to invoke public backing for planning. Leaders of India never viewed planning as a program that should be foisted on Indian citizens by authoritarian imposition. Despite planning's technocratic character and its extra-constitutional position in the state structure, part of the ideology of Jawaharlal Nehru and his followers was that it was essential that planning should be enthusiastically embraced by the population. The government of India invested massive amounts of money in diverse projects to induce cooperation and voluntary involvement; planning publicity in effect became infused into everyday life. Newspapers, journals, and posters played major roles; so did exhibitions at religious festivals and the use of religious symbols more generally. Theatrical troupes conveying pro-plan messages through song and dance were used extensively. The Films Division of India designed short documentaries that were shown regularly before major films in Indian cinemas. Menon devotes many pages to fascinating efforts to organize thousands of *sadhus* (holy men) into an all-India organization to carry publicity for the plans into the villages; these efforts, however, created tensions for leaders committed to secular principles. Menon's rich descriptions demonstrate the extent of state measures to build a kind of state-sponsored social movement. As he acknowledges, the descriptions do not serve as evidence of the actual level of popular support for planning. Indeed, some of the films and other efforts clearly seem intended to counter widespread attitudes of skepticism and complacency.

Planning Democracy, for the most part, does not directly address questions of business history. It would be interesting to know more about the ways planners struggled to make plans for a society in which hundreds of thousands of small firms took critical everyday decisions that made the economy work (the tension between planning programs and large firms is explored.) But this struggle is not Menon's main objective. The book is a superb accounting of how planning—what might have previously seemed a dull practice carried out by a remote technocratic elite and one that would offer limited scope for such an enlivened narrative—became a subject of preoccupation for millions of ordinary people. This is a major book that would be interesting to anyone concerned with world history after 1950, including undergraduates, casual readers, and, of course, business historians.

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A History of Business Cartels: International Politics, National Policies and Anti-Competitive Behaviour. *Edited by Martin Shanahan and Susanna Fellman.* New York: Routledge 2022. 344 pp., 11 b-w illus. Hardcover, \$152.00. ISBN: 978-0-367-64918-0.

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Reviewed by Knut Sogner

For this observer, who has been looking in from the outside of cartel research for almost three decades, this book comes as a bit of a surprise. Here we get *A History of Business Cartels* rather than *The History of Business Cartels*, a book that opens up and broadens the field of cartels rather than makes conclusions based on previous research. Cartels, or those I thought I needed to care about, had their heyday in the interwar period, and they flourished because of economic challenges and nationalist policies. A particularly interesting subset for those of us who studied capital-intensive companies were the international cartels studied by Harm Schröter and others. This book widens the scope in time and space, going into an array of national and international cartels that sometimes were born and functioning well after World War II and that perceived march onward toward free trade and the strict rule of competition.

The book brings cartels into the discussion of what capitalism is all about. National and international cartels have been much more frequent and normal than we have been led to believe (we have had impressive numbers previously, but not so much the numerous diverse illustrative cases we get here). The typical cartel has been started by the companies themselves, but we find governments and the League of Nations as constructors, acceptors, and users of cartels. It is food for thought that pre-1940 actors and scholars argued that the rise of administrative science and economic planning—usually associated with big companies and state planning—also facilitated cartels. Indeed, and a point the editors could have made in their attempt to look at cartels as actors, cartels have purpose and are an additional layer of economic