This research seminar examines the relationship between architecture, resources, and territory in 20th century modernization projects in Latin America, the Middle East, South East Asia, and Africa. We will explore the conditions in which architecture has become a tool of development (a concept which we will address critically), and the functions it assumed in the ordering and managing of labor, natural resources and industry. While modernization projects are usually considered in terms of engineering and large-scale infrastructure, the architectural lens will offer a tool for a nuanced social-cultural analysis of the epistemological assumptions and value systems that undergird these projects. We will examine the role architecture played in the consolidation of “development thinking” in the shift from late colonial projects to the Cold War, specifically in reformulating the colonial relations between resource extraction and production, and the new emphasis placed on the maintaining of the “smallness” of small scale societies in terms of village habitation and vernacular forms of production.

Required Textbooks

Readings will be available on Canvas or on reserve at the main library.

Assessments

Class participation; oral presentation; research paper.