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H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable Review of Michael E. Latham. *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present.*

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Introduction by David C. Engerman, Brandeis University

By any qualitative and quantitative measure, Michael Latham ranks as a pioneer in the now-burgeoning historical scholarship on America's efforts to "modernize" or "develop" the rest of the world in the latter half of the twentieth century. Appearing at the turn of the present century, Latham's *Modernization as Ideology* was the first full-fledged historical monograph on modernization theory and its application by American government agencies.¹ Based on Latham's UCLA dissertation, *Modernization as Ideology* elaborated upon the argument of its title – that modernization was an ideology, a special case of American liberalism that shaped how American officials understood and acted towards those countries they perceived as economically backward. It contains three case studies that show, on the one hand, how modernization functioned as an ideology in the Kennedy administration, and on the other how that ideology appeared across very different U.S. government agencies dealing with the different parts of the world; the cases included an individual organization (Peace Corps), a broad development campaign (Alliance for Progress, a western-hemisphere program), and a military/economic tactic (so-called strategic hamlets in the escalating Vietnam conflict). Widely praised for its originality and insights, *Modernization as Ideology* continues to receive attention. According to the "Web of Knowledge" (known, in less marketing-oriented days, as the Social Science Citation Index), Latham's book has been cited well over 100 times in scholarly articles. Indeed, the book is bucking the typical trend of declining interest over time; 80% of the citations to *Modernization as Ideology* appeared six years after the book first appeared.

Now Latham has published a second monograph, broader in scope and aiming to be an "integrated analysis" (4) of the scholarship on modernization and development programs since *Modernization as Ideology*. Expanding his geographical and especially his chronological range, Latham's *The Right Kind of Revolution* nevertheless shares much with his first book: its focus on the intersection of ideas and American policies, its clear writing and organization, and a strong sense of the failings of modernization theory as applied. Indeed, on all of these counts, *The Right Kind of Revolution* covers new ground: while his first book focused on the 1000 days of the Kennedy presidency, his second ranges from America's experience as a colonial power in the Philippines at the start of the twentieth century to America's twenty-first century wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.² The case studies

¹ Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: Social Science and "Nation-Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). By my reckoning, the only historical treatment by a non-practitioner was Nick Cullather, "'Fuel for the Good Dragon': The United States and Industrial Policy in Taiwan, 1950-1965," *Diplomatic History* 20:1 (Winter 1996), 1-25 [DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.1996.tb00250.x; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.1996.tb00250.x>]. Around the time that Latham's book appeared, Cullather published a call for more research – "Development? It's History," *Diplomatic History* 24:4 (Fall 2000): 641-653 [DOI: 10.1111/0145-2096.00242; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0145-2096.00242>].

² In the interests of avoiding too much "inside baseball," I am not counting here a book that Latham co-edited together with me and another participant in this roundtable, Nils Gilman – David C. Engerman, Nils

similarly carry Latham in new directions – to descriptions of influential and charismatic leaders of newly independent nations like Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Indeed, Latham wisely goes beyond geographic case studies to examine different forms of development aid from population control to the Green Revolution. The book also expands chronologically to provide a cogent explanation for one of the great mysteries of modernization theory and practice: how such a dominant and influential approach could meet such a rapid demise in the early 1970s. Yet, Latham argues, even what he calls the “neoliberal turn” did not vanquish some of the most important aspects of modernization theory, including the convictions of American rectitude and the inability to contemplate the variegated nature of its object of study and policy, the “underdeveloped world.”

In assessing *The Right Kind of Revolution*, the four reviewers in this roundtable take their tasks quite differently, likely a sign of the different approaches to the topic visible in their own work.³ Nils Gilman uses his review to frame a discussion about what might be the first generation of scholarship on modernization. Corinna Unger seeks to place the book in a global context, one in which the American ideas and programs appear next to European and multilateral efforts. Sayward and Scott focus more resolutely on the book itself.

Overall, the four roundtable reviews recall Lev Tolstói’s famous (by now hackneyed) opening words in *Anna Karenina*: all happy families are similar to each other, but unhappy families are each unhappy in their own way. The four reviewers agree, by and large, on the many strengths of *The Right Kind of Revolution*; they differ markedly, though, in their discussions of the book’s weaknesses.

The manifest strengths of *The Right Kind of Revolution* are mentioned in all four reviews, often expressed in similar language and quoting text from many of the same pages of Latham’s book. Three of the four praise *The Right Kind of Revolution* for its synthetic qualities – echoing the author’s own description of his work as a “critical synthesis” (4). Similarly, the reviewers generally praise Latham’s clarity and writing – making his book, as more than one reviewer notes, a leading contender for use in undergraduate classrooms and graduate reading lists. Especially in the context of the interdisciplinary scholarship on development, which includes technical work by economists and political scientists as well as lengthy theoretical excursions in the works of many anthropologists, such clarity should not be taken for granted. More than one reviewer cites Latham’s work as a sign that the

Gilman, Mark Haefele and Michael E. Latham, eds., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

³ Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Amy L.S. Staples [now Sayward], *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1998); Catherine V. Scott, *Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernization and Dependency Theory* (Boulder, CO: L. Rienner, 1995); Corinna Unger, “Histories of Development and Modernization: Findings, Reflections, Future Research”, H-Soz-u-Kult, December 9, 2010, <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/2010-12-001>>.

field has come of age – in Sayward’s case, worthy of a chapter in that classic compendium edited by Michael Hogan and Thomas Paterson, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*.⁴

Yet the reviewers vary considerably in the severity and specifics of their criticism. The strongest criticism comes from Nils Gilman, who uses *The Right Kind of Revolution* to express his dissatisfaction with a generation of scholarship. That generation, which perhaps we can call the “Latham generation” since it seems bookended by Michael Latham’s monographs, has been too centered on American policy, too likely to see American ideas and policies as the primary actors, and too distant from on-the-ground impacts and resistance. Along the same lines, Nick Cullather pointed out a few years ago that the assumption – implicit in Latham’s work – that modernization theory shaped development practice is misleading; in Cullather’s view, practice predated theory and was likely to shape theory as vice versa.⁵ Gilman goes further, challenging what he says as Latham’s view that modernization was an American idea that spread overseas. Calling this approach “diffusionist,” Gilman wants more attention to the indigenous origins of ideas of economic modernization in the former colonies – Nasser, Nehru, and Nkrumah, after all, didn’t need to read Walt Rostow or Talcott Parsons to envision their own countries’ industrialization. Latham’s chapters are ambiguous here, offering brief histories of the trajectory of developmentalist thought among colonial (and eventually postcolonial) elites – but placing them in a book organized around the claim that modernization is a specifically American ideology. Finally, Gilman notes the widening discrepancy between modernization theory and development practice that first appeared in the 1970s and grew wider in ensuing decades – an astute point that is harder to account for in Latham’s frame of modernization as an ideology.

What Gilman sees in structural terms – the divergence of modernization ideology and development practice – Catherine Scott sees in terms of power. Specifically, she quotes geographer David Harvey’s claim that (in her words) “the rise of neoliberalism was part of a drive to restore class power” in the United States, one that had profound (and often deleterious) impacts overseas. But Scott’s point is that neoliberal policies towards the Third World must be understood in the context of American domestic struggles rather than ongoing assessments of successes and failures in its policies towards the Third World.

Unger’s approach is different, and focused more on the origins of modernization theory in the mid-century decades rather than its transformations after the 1970s. Citing the works of other recent scholarship, she asks “what was specifically American about modernization”? This represents, perhaps, another take on Gilman’s dissatisfaction with a

⁴ Sayward is right to identify this edited collection as an ideal place to introduce diplomatic historians to the study of modernization and development, as Nick Cullather does briefly in the book’s second edition: Nick Cullather, “Modernization Theory,” in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 212-220.

⁵ Cullather, “The Third Race,” *Diplomatic History* 33:3 (June 2009): 507-512 [DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00783.x; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00783.x>].

“diffusionist” model in which local discussions over economic policy are prompted or even defined around American concepts. Sayward, too, notes how Latham explores the spread of modernization theory in a dynamic that begins with American ideas that were “embraced, modified, and reformulated” by postcolonial elites “to serve their own ends.” She also calls for more attention to the varieties of visions of modernity, not all of which perhaps revolved around American conceptions. Such conceptions (and scholarly interpretations of them), Unger further notes, leave aside the question of gender. There is a longstanding tradition of scholarship – already four decades old – on women in development that has yet to find an anchor in the emerging historiography on development.⁶

All in all, though, the reviewers cheer the arrival of Latham’s book as a sign that the field is growing and changing – dare I say developing? And even Latham, though his book offers substantial and serious criticism of American policy, seems to hold out a happier ending. He closes with a call to recognize the possibilities that American policies could fulfill at least some people’s dreams for better lives. Such policies, undertaken with due humility and attention to local conditions (neither of which were hallmarks of modernization theory), might improve the “human capability to live more worthwhile and more free lives” (216).⁷

Participants:

Michael E. Latham is Professor of History at Fordham University and Dean of Fordham College at Rose Hill. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles. In addition to the book under review, he is the author of *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era* (2000) and a co-editor of *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (2003).

David C. Engerman is professor of history at Brandeis University, where he has taught since receiving his Ph.D. from the University of California-Berkeley in 1998. He is the author of two books on American ideas about Russia: *Modernization from the Other Shore* (Harvard University Press, 2003) and *Know Your Enemy* (Oxford University Press, 2009). He also wrote and edited two collections on modernization and development. His current project explores American and Soviet aid to India in the 1950s and 1960s.

Nils Gilman is the author of *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (2003), and coeditor of *Deviant Globalization: Black Market Economy in the 21st*

⁶ See, especially Ether Boserup, *Women’s Role in Economic Development* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970). Unger cites a handful of scholars, few historians among them, who address gender and development.

⁷ Latham here quotes from Amartya Sen’s compelling vision expressed in *Development and Freedom* (New York: Random House, 1999).

Century (2011) as well as *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*.

Amy Sayward received her Ph.D. in U.S. Diplomatic History from Ohio State University in 1998. She is currently Professor and Chair in the Department of History at Middle Tennessee State University. She is also the author of the 2006 Kent State University Press book *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965*.

Catherine Scott received her Ph.D. from Emory University and is a Professor of Political Science at Agnes Scott. She is the author of *Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernization and Dependency Theory* (Lynne Rienner, 1995). Since the mid-1990s she has been writing about U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War, and has published about the topic in *International Studies Quarterly*, *The Journal of American Culture*, and *Perspectives on Politics*.

Corinna R. Unger is Associate Professor of Modern European History at Jacobs University Bremen, Germany. She is currently completing a study on Indian and Western modernization policies and practices in post-1947 India. She has co-edited an issue on *Modernization as a Global Project* with David C. Engerman (*Diplomatic History* 33.3, 2009) and a volume on *Modernizing Missions: Approaches to "Developing" the Non-Western World after 1945* with Stephan Malinowski and Andreas Eckert (*Journal of Modern European History* 8.1, 2010). Recent publications include "Histories of Development and Modernization: Findings, Reflections, Future Research", *H-Soz-u-Kult*, December 9, 2010, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/2010-12-001>, and "Toward Global Equilibrium: American Foundations and Indian Modernization, 1950s to 1970s", *Journal of Global History* 6.1 (2011): 121-142.

Review by Nils Gilman, Independent scholar

Michael Latham's *The Right Kind of Revolution* will for the foreseeable future be the textbook synthesis on the impact of ideas of modernization on American foreign affairs during the twentieth century. Like his first monograph, *Modernization as Ideology* (1998),¹ Latham's new work toggles artfully between discussions of U.S. foreign policy in the Global South, how ideas of modernization were used both to understand and to guide those policies, and how these policies and ideas were received by political elites in target countries. What it leaves out, however, is either an account of the experience of the "revolution of modernization" for locals on the ground, or a serious attempt to understand why U.S.-sponsored development and modernization policies succeeded in some places while failing in others. These omissions, in a work that successfully strives to synthesize the current historiography, reveal the limits of the current disciplinary research agenda concerning the history of American development policy and practice, and point toward important new historiographic and methodological opportunities.

A Textbook Synthesis

Latham starts his story with American foreign policy of the Progressive era, discussing the policy of colonial 'tutelage' in the Philippines after 1898, and in the liberal internationalism of Woodrow Wilson. In this he reflects both the broad periodization first proposed by Emily Rosenberg's work,² and the common perception that the Philippines (and to a lesser extent the Caribbean) was a laboratory in which the U.S. first experimented with a transformative agenda for poor regions, honing ideas and practices that would become a centerpiece of the U.S. liberals' positive vision for the Global South in the post-WWII era.

After giving the appropriate head-nods to the background role of Enlightenment visions of human progress and, more specifically, Victorian ideas of imperial uplift, Latham's ideological history of modernization theory rightly emphasizes the phase shift that occurred in the early Cold War years. During the 1950s, American academics formalized ideas of modernization that earlier had been largely inchoate or implicit. This formalization also led to a crucial reversal of the causal relationship between ideas and policy. Whereas before the Cold War, most ideas about development and modernization were lagging reflections of the actions of policymakers in Washington, by the 1960s, ideas about modernization were pulling the cart of development policy, rather than the other way around. In telling this story, Latham largely reprises the own historiographic arguments and periodization from his first book, without acknowledging the recent contestation of

¹ Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation-Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

² Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic & Cultural Expansion 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

this periodization.³

Latham's other major synthetic effort is to use case studies as a vehicle for telling the story of, first, the reception and reformulation of modernizing ideas among elites of the Global South, and then the eventual perceived failure (again, among elites) of both the policy and the idea of modernization. In Latham's telling, the central lens that determined the reception of American modernizing ideas were postcolonial nationalist ideologies of Jawaharlal Nehru in India, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt (in each case, Latham's text relies on the two or three most widely cited texts in the contemporary historiography for each country and period). Likewise, Latham follows a well-worn historiographical path in choosing to tell the story of the policy failures of modernization through brief synthetic accounts of U.S. policies in Guatemala, Vietnam, and Iran – the generally recognized poster-children for the tragedy of ill-conceived Cold War development policies. The undergraduate reader experiencing these well-told tales for the first time will no doubt be left shaking her head, wondering how such ideas could ever have been convincing, or could ever have been applied to such malign effect.

Finally, Latham concludes with a vivisection of the contemporary return of ideas about modernization in American foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. Deftly showing how the George W. Bush regime's effort to "transform" the Middle East at gunpoint drew directly on the older rhetoric of modernization, Latham skewers the bathetic rhetoric of Bush's paeans to universal values and democracies as a justification for brutalizing counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Combined with its century-long sweep and its readable style, *The Right Kind of Revolution* should be widely assigned in upper division courses in international history, and may become a standard on reading lists for graduate comprehensive exams.

The Limits of the Synthesis

One of the ironic values of a well-written and comprehensive historical synthesis – which *The Right Kind of Revolution* certainly is – is the way it reveals (often unintentionally) the limits of current historiographical consensus and practice. What follows here is a modest effort to spell out the limits of the current historiography of modernization and development, which Latham's book reveals not through any errors, but more by its omissions – omissions that reflect telling gaps in the current research program.

Latham's first important choice was to remain content in telling the history of modernization and U.S. foreign policy as a story about elites. The first monographs in the current flowering of a historiography of development and modernization, including

³ Joel Isaac, "The Human Sciences in Cold War America," *Historical Journal* 50 (2007) locates the rise of modernization theory in the 1930s, as does David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) and more circumspetly, Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Latham's own *Modernization as Ideology*, focused almost exclusively on American elites, whether those were the intellectuals engaged in formalizing theories of modernization, or policymakers in Washington enacting policies inspired by or aligned with these theories. The frame of who "counts" in the international history of modernization began to broaden with the publication of *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*⁴ (a volume Latham co-edited), which included a section on the reception of the idea of modernization in a variety of countries, including Mozambique, Korea, and Japan. In interpreting the variety of ways that modernizing ideas unfolded on the periphery, *Staging Growth* adopted a largely diffusionist account of the impact of modernist ideas in the Global South, a perspective that received a much broader hearing the following year with the publication Odd Arne Westad's Bancroft Award-winning *The Global Cold War*,⁵ which argued that the Cold War in the Global South was essentially a battle between two competing visions of modernity being developed and promoted by Washington and Moscow, respectively.

Like these works, as well as other excellent recent monographs such as Brad Simpson's *Economists with Guns*,⁶ *The Right Kind of Revolution* focuses almost exclusively on the reception and contestation of American modernizing ideas by postcolonial political leaders, represented by Ghana's Nkrumah, Egypt's Nasser, and India's Nehru. Latham makes clear that the ideas of development-as-modernization that the U.S. was promoting were taken up selectively by authoritarian regimes, who were uninterested in (or often actively hostile to) the idea that modernization necessarily involved social mobilization and political democratization. In sum, Latham follows the current historiographic fashion of telling the history of development as a story of intellectual and governmental elites, with the primary dynamic of that story being driven by contestation between different groups of such elites.

What *The Right Kind of Revolution* quite deliberately does *not* do is to widen its aperture to include the perspectives of other key players in this history of development. For example, there is almost nothing addressing the activities of field level development practitioners, of the sort that various recent histories of the Rockefeller Foundation, the World Bank, and the "Green Revolution" have shown us⁷ – histories that as often as not reveal the myriad

⁴ David Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark Haeefe, Michael E. Latham, eds., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).

⁵ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶ Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

⁷ For a brilliant recent effort to examine the tensions between the high development theory of the Cold War and the practical actions of development practitioners, see Nick Cullather, *op cit*. Likewise, David Mosse argues in *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice* (London, Pluto Press, 2005) that the key driver of the actions of development workers is less policy than the exigencies of their organizations and the need of development workers to maintain relationships with locals. Much of the most interesting work on peasants' experience of development projects has been done not by historians but by anthropologists, but alas much of this work is not particularly sensitive to the history of development ideas.

ways in which development as it actually unfolded on the ground departed (often dramatically) from the theoretical visions being articulated either in academic conference rooms and presidential palaces. Likewise, Latham devotes little time to anti-modernist, antinomian intellectuals in the South, where a tradition of resistance to modernizing ideals was invariably present. Nor do we hear anything about the lived experiences of the actual 'objects' of development, namely the peasants themselves. In Latham's discussion of Egypt, for example, we hear about Nasser and Sadat, but not about the experience of the more than 100,000 Nubians displaced by the Aswan High Dam, nor about the anti-modernist developmental ideas of Sayyid Qutb.

Limiting the story in this way is of course a legitimate choice in a narrative meant to provide a broad overview of the impact of ideas of modernization on development policy, but readers should be aware that if they are seeking a social history of the on-the-ground dynamics of modernization programs, or a comprehensive history of the reaction to U.S.-led modernization efforts, this is not the right book. Forthcoming scholarly accounts of how development and modernization played out in the villages and hinterlands where these ideas were "applied" should eventually cause us to reflect even more critically about what was going on in the heads of intellectuals and policymakers, both in the metropole and in the high offices of postcolonial governments. While Latham's book is the most synthetic account to date of American mid-century developmental efforts, the definitive comprehensive account remains to be written.

A second, more theoretical critique of *The Right Kind of Revolution* has to do with the thorny question of the relationship between the idea of 'modernization' and the idea of 'development.' Latham correctly argues that during the early Cold War years (1950-1970), which are the central focus of the book, the two concepts were largely conflated, at least in the minds of most U.S. policy and intellectual elites. Latham also provides the best synthesis to date of the collapse of the modernization paradigm in the 1970s, correctly placing the rise of the neoliberal alternative (which would eventually insist that it was the *only* alternative) at the center of the story. Along the way he has a few brief but excellent pages about Robert McNamara's effort to reorient the World Bank's focus away from GDP growth and toward poverty eradication. While neoliberals stayed committed to promoting top-line global and national economic growth, defined in terms of total economic output, the global development community largely moved away from a focus on growth as an end in itself, and instead attempted to make much more direct interventions into improving the material lives of poor people in the Global South. Various ideas such as the International Labour Office's concept of "Basic Needs" or the World Bank's concept of "Human Development Index" (introduced in the inaugural 1990 "Human Development Report," and rooted in Amartya Sen's theories of development as a process of enhancing individuals'

(See David Lewis, "International development and the 'perpetual present': Anthropological approaches to the re-historicization of policy," *European Journal of Development Research* 21 [2009]). In short, there is work to be done in bringing into alignment the research from these two disciplines.

“capabilities” and “functioning”⁸) moved the concept of development away from economic growth, and turn sharply away from the ‘nation-building’ concept that had been the central political objective of early postcolonial modernizing elites, whether metropolitan or postcolonial. In sum, what happened in the post-1970 period was that the idea of modernization – ‘making them like us’ – essentially diverged from the practice of development, which became much more focused on improving the daily lives of the global poor, and finding an ‘appropriate’ niche for them within a globalized world economy.

Despite the excellence of its account of the rise of the neoliberal alternative to welfarist notions of development, *The Right Kind of Revolution* never quite brings into sharp focus the way in which the rise of neoliberalism led to an essential divergence between the idea of modernization and the practice of development. The result is a curious gap in its otherwise excellent closing account of the return of modernization ideas in the post-Cold War period. Spearheaded by the neo-Hegelian ideological forecasts of Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History and the Last Man*,⁹ and taken up with enthusiasm by the neocon rhetoricians, the post-Cold War period witnessed the triumphant (indeed triumphalist) return of the old modernization theory idea of ‘making them like us.’ But whereas the original 1950s version of modernization theory had insisted that this triumph could take place only with the help of massive infusions of U.S. economic aid to the Global South – a vision of New Deal-style welfare economics, at a global scale – the post-Cold War neoliberal revision suggested that the achievement could take place simply by dismantling the state in the South, without any need to make direct interventions in order to help improve the lives of the global poor. In short, the post-Cold War version of modernization theory, unlike its 1950s-60s antecedent, was all but completely cut off from any connection to coeval development practice.

Without understanding just how divorced neo-modernization theory is from contemporary development practice, it is hard to grasp just how farcically disconnected from reality (or, if one wishes to be more generous, just how cynical) the Bush regime’s paeans to a universal political modernity really were. Without improvements in human welfare – in other words, ‘development’ as it is currently understood – what exactly was the material basis for the ‘transformation’ that Bush’s speechwriters and ideologists were claiming lay just around the corner for the Middle East and indeed the world? Fukuyama himself came to realize the contradiction, not only publicly disavowing neo-conservatism, but going so far as to write a book that explicitly attempted to reconnect his notion of modernization to the idea of development as state-led nation-building.¹⁰ In short, Latham’s dark story about the foolish

⁸ David A. Crocker, “Functioning and Capability: The Foundations of Sen’s and Nussbaum’s Development Ethic,” *Political Theory* 20:4 (1992), 584-612; Des Gaspar, *The Ethics of Development* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2005).

⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

¹⁰ Francis Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment,” *The National Interest* (Summer 2004) and Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

or cynical use of modernist ideas in the Bush regime would have been even stronger had it more fully grounded itself in the post-1970 divergence between ideas of “modernization” and ideas of “development.”

A Different Lens

The basic story told in Michael Latham's *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* is not new to historians of U.S. foreign relations. The first chapter takes the reader through an overview of American ideas about its place in the world through World War II and is followed by a chapter on how modernization and development ideas developed and took root during the Cold War. The rest of the book is taken up with national case studies (India, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Iran) as well as analyses of a variety of development strategies (including birth control, the Green Revolution, basic needs, and sustainability). What is different about Latham's book is the lens through which he views these events--modernization. Latham defines modernization as an overarching intellectual paradigm that imagined a single, universal path that all nations would trod from traditional to modern societies. This transformation required social, economic, and political changes, and Cold War social scientists in the United States believed that they could help countries speed along this path with the help of expert advice and technocratic aids. It was these social scientists who attempted to transform the ideology of modernization into the concrete process and projects of development.

The first chapter of Latham's book provides an intellectual history of the origins of modernization, which is essential to his goal of establishing a "long history" of modernization. Beginning with the Enlightenment, he examines Western notions of social progress and the imperial experiences of the United States. He also begins to show how ideas of modernization came to supplant notions of the inherent inferiority of certain races that supposedly made them incapable of attaining higher levels of civilization. War-time American Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt then linked U.S. security to a transformed global environment, seeking to "make the world safe for democracy" and promoting the Four Freedoms globally. Latham also points out the ways in which modernization resonated with Americans' cultural understandings of themselves and their country's destiny. In this way, U.S. actions in the Cold War were securely rooted in longer-standing convictions that the United States held a special place in world history and had a responsibility to help guide other countries along a similar historical trajectory.

Contributing to Latham's "long history" of modernization, he identifies the fruits of modernization in the present day. The book begins with U.S. President George H. W. Bush addressing the United Nations General Assembly on 23 September 2003. In contrast to Bush's rendering of America's mission in a post-occupation Iraq as a break with the past in a radically different post-9/11 world, Latham clearly positions current U.S. foreign policy within the broad continuity of the modernization paradigm. His book ends with a chapter entitled "The Ghosts of Modernization" that brings the paradigm into Afghanistan and Iraq. He clearly argues that despite the attacks on the modernization paradigm and the challengers that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, the cultural resonances of modernization keep bringing American policymakers back to its core ideas. Clearly, in his timeline, Latham

is trying to move diplomatic historians beyond the Cold War paradigm to stress longer-term trends in American foreign policy that preceded and followed that global conflict.

In Latham's history, modernization clearly emerges as a hegemonic intellectual paradigm. Not only does it capture the imagination of social scientists and everyday Americans, but it also manifests itself in the work of international civil servants (such as those pursuing development projects in the World Bank and Food and Agriculture Organization) and even the nationalist leaders seeking to free themselves from Western bonds and paradigms. For example, even as Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was promoting a new strategy of non-alignment in the Cold War for Third World countries, he was simultaneously seeking to promote his country's development much along the lines suggested by U.N. and U.S. policymakers. Even the Soviet Union in the wake of Josef Stalin's death promoted development as a way to gain allies in its Cold War struggle with the United States. Latham also makes a strong argument that the use of lethal force in the nations of Guatemala, Iran, and South Vietnam was part of Americans' modernization paradigm. But make no mistake; modernization lacked a monolithic quality, despite its theorists' arguments. The case studies in the book clearly indicate the ways in which the people in these countries "embraced, modified, and reformulated" Americans' modernization ideas and development projects "to serve their own ends." (5) And Latham makes a point in the introduction of stressing that American policymakers' disregard for local history and customs was one of the primary reasons that the development agenda failed and resulted in the rise of dictatorial regimes. That modernization was plastic enough to be adapted to local circumstances (even as development bureaucrats disregarded those same circumstances) and could capture the imagination of peoples around the world reinforces its hegemonic quality. But this should also leave us wondering if modernization explains everything or ultimately explains nothing. It might be a helpful intellectual activity to think counterfactually about modernization—what would U.S. foreign policy look like without this element?

Examination of modernization and development has become much more frequent with the passing of the Cold War, which spurred diplomatic historians to look beyond that East-West paradigm to some of the North-South issues that both transcended and were shaped by that bipolar struggle. Indeed, this is Latham's third book dealing with modernization.¹ In the introduction to this volume, he reviews the historiography on modernization/development and posits that his book provides "an integrated analysis" of the recent scholarship on modernization "that explores the way that modernization was deployed across a wide range of geographic regions." (4) But this is not simply envisioned as a synthesis but also a work that establishes a "long history" of modernization, with its roots in early American history and its consequences extending to the current day. Nick Cullather struck a similar theme in his recent monograph, which similarly roots

¹ Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and David Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haefele, and Michael E. Latham, eds., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

development well before the onset of the Cold War and notes the development paradigm (with all its cultural baggage) that U.S. President Barack Obama employed in his inaugural address.² Those interested in further exploring the historiography of this growing field of inquiry will also be delighted to know that Cornell University Press allowed Latham to include a bibliography at the end of the volume in addition to notes at the end of each chapter.

It seems to me that it is time for a second edition of Michael Hogan and Thomas Paterson's edited book, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*. Published in 1991, it was the primer that I used in my first graduate seminar in U.S. diplomatic history. But if I was designing a graduate seminar today, I would want to ensure that "Modernization/Development" was certainly one of the chapters, one of the ways of explaining the field that would be included. As I ponder using Latham's book in my classes, I believe it would be a good and useful survey, but I would want to supplement it with some additional, more in-depth studies of development projects or ideas so that students could see these ideas and their consequences more directly in action.

Diplomatic historians will continue to face a number of challenges as they continue to write about modernization/development. They must see and understand the grand and hegemonic sweep of this paradigm while also resisting getting swept up in its rhetorical pull (as historians of development have noted its consistent failure to attain its goals in all areas). Historians of this topic will also have to decide what part of the history they wish to tell. Given the breadth and depth of the topic, historians will likely have to choose a synthesis such as Latham's, turn to individual case studies, or choose a particular area on which to focus, such as Cullather's history of agricultural development (sometimes referred to as the Green Revolution) in Asia. Additionally, these historians must balance the compelling and real optimism and humanitarianism of those who carried out development work with the historical reality of their failures and the ways in which they disrupted, distrusted, and sometimes destroyed the lives of those they sought to help. Latham does an admirable job of maintaining this balance.

Ultimately, Latham's book gives diplomatic historians a significant amount to think about. In promoting modernization/development as an overarching paradigm in the field, diplomatic historians will have to consider whether this lens clarifies or obscures the history they are researching. It ultimately decreases the uniqueness of the Cold War and emphasizes long-term trends in American thought, policymaking, and foreign policy. But we must be careful that we do not fall into the same intellectual trap as development bureaucrats—thinking that this single paradigm can explain the intersection of American foreign policy with hundreds or thousands of local contexts across decades. As historians, we must always have our "lumpers" and our "splitters." Latham's "lumping" should stimulate a healthy discussion as we continue to investigate this crucial history.

² Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

This is Michael Latham's second book on the powerful role that modernization theory has played in U.S. development and security policies. In the first book on the subject¹ Latham defined modernization theory as a "constellation of mutually reinforcing ideas that often framed policy goals through a definition of the nation's ideals, history, and mission." In *The Right Kind of Revolution* Latham uses this idea to explore how the U.S. scholarly and policy making communities embraced the idea of modernization to frame challenges facing the postcolonial world and explain the role that the U.S. could play in furthering modernizing aims.

Culling politicians' speeches, classic modernization texts of the 1950s and 1960s, and recent scholarly writing on the role of the academy in furthering U.S. foreign policy aims, Latham effectively demonstrates that modernization theory's *leitmotif* preceded and outlived the Cold War era. The first aspect of modernization theory highlighted by Latham concerns the stark binary drawn by the liberal imagination between tradition and modernity, which is basically an exercise in self-definition on the part of the liberal West: we are a society that values individual achievement while they are societies enmeshed in custom, received authority, and religion, all obstacles to the realization of modern, complex societies. While it would be easy to dismiss such simplistic thinking and mock the debased stereotyping that lies at the heart of it, Latham shows in chapter 2 how heavy hitters such as Talcott Parsons, Gabriel Almond, and Lucian Pye developed elaborate schemas for understanding the complex ways in which traditional societies should become modern.

A second component of modernization theory is its theory of convergence, an idea that Latham identifies in Truman's Point Four program (11) as well George W. Bush's facile assumption that Afghanistan and Iraq could be remade easily and rapidly (204). There have been repeated efforts by third world countries (for example, Iran, Vietnam, and Cuba) to deny that Western-style modernization is an inherently universal path that all countries. The optimistic belief in convergence, however, given renewed animus after the fall of communism, recounts a happy story of western modernization that is also described as inevitable everywhere else in the world.

Finally, Latham is on strongest ground when he discusses the nexus between modernization theory and U.S. national security. Latham argues that a "volatile combination of reformist idealism and lethal coercion" (18) was evident during the early twentieth century history of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America, and this lethal mix of reform and force has defined U.S. modernization projects during the Cold War and after. Security concerns lurk in U.S. development programs with respect to family planning and the Green Revolution, for example (addressed in Chapter 4) and they are obvious in counterinsurgency and regime overthrow in Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Iran (Chapter 5). With respect to family planning, Latham shows that population experts "tapped into growing anxieties shared by Western policymakers, foundations, nongovernmental

¹ Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 12.

organizations and corporate leaders” that the developed world would be potentially flooded with nonwhite arrivals and a “more punishing struggle [than the Cold War] between North and South” (99). Modernization theory’s inherent liberal contradictions were also displayed in Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Iran, as the U.S. pursued a policy of liberal development through the Alliance for Progress, modernizing the Diem regime, and backing the Shah of Iran’s White Revolution. These efforts created inevitable class conflict and unrest. Latham notes that when conflict arose, “the United States abandoned [reforms] in favor of immediate security goals” (131). Modernization theory, like liberalism, is haunted by the prospect of violent change, indeed so much so that modernization theory can be thought of as a strategy to contain conflict and ensure security for the global north. Michael Hunt made a similar claim in his brilliant book *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*.² He argues that the peril of revolution led the U.S. to develop a set of rules for a proper revolution: it must be a solemn affair, with minimum disorder, led by respectable citizens with moderate goals.³ Hunt argues that development theory was a response to the fourth wave of revolutions confronted in the post-World War II era. As a “younger sibling of containment,” development theory recast older notions of racial hierarchies with the concept of cultures and rated the amenability of certain cultures to modernization.⁴

The book is well argued and eloquently written. I have two challenges for Latham’s approach, one theoretical and the other concerning the way he traces modernization theory’s workings through the war on terror. As he writes in the introduction, he is interested in “the way that the concept of modernization embodied a longstanding conviction that the U.S. could fundamentally direct and accelerate the historical course of the postcolonial world” (2) I completely agree that ideational factors should be taken into account in any understanding of U.S. development policy, and enduring ideas about modernization can be found everywhere from social engineering in the Philippines in the early twentieth century to the occupation of Iraq in 2003. But modernization also has an organizational component; historically, it has represented the interests of various (sometimes competing) elements of the executive branch, including and often especially the U.S. military. Furthermore, corporate interests such as oil, land ownership, agribusiness, as well as the Catholic Church, have played central roles in shaping U.S. ideas and policies about optimal development. Development policy outcomes, in other words, are the result of both identities and interests. Recognizing the significance of interests helps explain the neoliberal turn in development theory in the early 1980s. While Latham is certainly correct that neoliberalism recapitulated many facets of early modernization theory (175), his depiction of Keynesian modernization theory ideas in a level playing field battle of ideas with conservative neoliberalism underestimates the extent to which the rise

² Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

³ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

of neoliberalism was part of a drive to restore class power.⁵ In the U.S., neoliberalism produced favorable tax policy and lax regulation for capital, while abroad it brought backlash against revolutions in Iran, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan. In other words, neoliberal ideas and organizations have always been entangled and shaped each other, while Latham gives too much priority to the ideational component of modernization theory.

My second criticism lies with the final chapter's "Ghosts of Modernization" in Afghanistan and Iraq. Here, Latham traces how Francis Fukuyama's "End of History" essay in *The National Interest* recapitulated the optimism about modernity and convergence at the end of the Cold War. Scholarly optimism was matched by George H.W. Bush's sketch for a 'new world order' at the end of the first Gulf War, the invasion of Panama, and in President Clinton's intervention in Somalia and Haiti. Although Latham is correct that these 1980 and 1990 interventions were motivated by fears of "failed states" that would be vulnerable to terrorists, drug trafficking, and international crime (199), they were undertaken not to prevent a communist takeover but also to reformulate, however messily and incompletely, the very conditions that allow for post-Cold War violations of state sovereignty to take place. Even in the case of the first Gulf War, where the immediate goal was to eject Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, the U.S., acting through the United Nations, established no-fly zones in northern Iraq for the Kurds and southern Iraq for the Shi'ites, thereby contributing to the creation of a norm for implementing humanitarian aid programs with military force, in many ways a more open-ended commitment to external intervention than ever existed during the Cold War.⁶ In Somalia, the dangers were framed in even broader terms, with Somali refugees constituting a threat to international peace and security, and the international community called upon to help Somalia restore itself as a viable member of the international community (197). In Haiti, the U.S. was attempting to restore a duly elected leader to power after his overthrow by the military. Instead of covert operations designed to carry out regime change (what occurred in Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Iran), there was an effort to usher in a new world order and democratic enlargement through engagement with global organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and media. Both the contexts as well as the ideologies that justified the interventions seem quite different in some respects from earlier avatars of modernization theory. It would have added to Latham's argument to trace this link between liberal modernization theory and "humanitarian" assistance.

Finally, I think Latham missed an opportunity to discuss the academic-policy nexus in the War on Terror, which was surely as strong as the connections that existed during the early Cold War, and which he so ably discusses in chapter 2. Just as the Social Science Research Council was vital in supporting the Comparative Politics Committee's multi-volume series on the crises and sequences of development, the current Pentagon's efforts to build strong

⁵ For this line of argument see David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 16.

⁶ See Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 154.

ties to academia can be seen in everything from the Minerva Research Initiative, a DOD plan to fund academic research through the National Science Foundation, the Human Terrain System that pairs teams of social scientists with brigades or regimental staffs in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the role of the director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University in helping to write the much ballyhooed *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual*.⁷ Just as the specter of military power haunted modernization theory's development efforts in the 1950s and 1960s, it does so today, in ways that both blur the lines between counterinsurgency, modernization, and force and accord enormous power to the military to shape modernization strategies and policy.

In sum, this is a strong book. In my view, the thematic chapters, with the exception of chapter 2 (where Latham shows a real flair for describing modernization theory's early "take off"), are weaker than the chronological case studies that can be found in chapters 4 and 5. It is in Latham's analysis of the Green Revolution, family planning, and counterinsurgency where one can see the paradoxes of liberalism and modernization theory most clearly. The well-written thematic chapters could explore even further modernization's late twentieth and early twenty-first century permutations fighting all the insecurities facing the United States.

⁷ *The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, U.S. Army Field Manual No.3-24. Marine Corps War fighting Publication No. 3-33.5* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

In his *The Right Kind of Revolution*, Michael E. Latham aims to provide an “integrated analysis” of the scholarship on American modernization efforts in the twentieth century, “one that explores the way that modernization was deployed across a wide range of geographic regions, and puts forward an argument about its deeper roots and enduring legacies.” (4). Latham demonstrates that the American concept of modernization was not an invention of the post-1945 era – an assumption that dominated scholarship on modernization until recently – but that its core concepts were based on much older ideas about American exceptionalism and historical progress. Those ideas found their expression in the ‘civilizing mission’ vis-à-vis the indigenous populations of North America; in imperialist behavior vis-à-vis Cuba and the Philippines; and in interventionist politics in Latin America, Asia, and Africa in the context of decolonization and the Cold War. The end of the Cold War did not mean the end of modernization, Latham makes clear. In what might be considered the most original chapter of the book, he analyzes how the “ghosts of modernization” (186) lived on in neoliberal disguise: as part of George H. W. Bush’s “new world order” and in the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Latham is openly critical of modernization and of the foreign policy makers who used the concept as an “ideology” (8). It is the combination of historical contextualization and political interpretation which makes the skillfully crafted book – the most complete account of the history of modernization available – so valuable. Latham also deserves praise for including the practical level of modernization. Earlier studies tended to focus on the formulation of modernization theory and/or on the foreign policy recommendations drawn from it; they rarely looked at what happened when the concept was transferred to other societies. Latham, however, is particularly interested in the transfer and implementation of American modernization ideas abroad. He presents a range of different cases that show the global reach of American modernization efforts in the twentieth century: Guatemala, India, Egypt, Ghana, South Vietnam, and Iran, among others. What these cases had in common was that none of them lived up to the very ambitious, very optimistic expectations of their American promoters. Latham argues that this ‘failure’ was due to Americans’ ignorance of regional, local and individual conditions and interests, and that this ignorance had its roots in modernization theory’s universalism, a systemic defect that made ‘success’ (measured in terms of the establishment of democratic, capitalist nation-states modeled on the United States) unlikely. Worse, the modernizers’ eagerness to bring about change made the use of force appear reasonable, as Latham describes in a detailed chapter on counterinsurgency and repression.

Although a remarkably broad synthesis, *The Right Kind of Revolution* does not cover everything, of course. One question that is not discussed in the book is how and what American modernizers thought about gender relations, and how modernization mirrored, strengthened or undermined specific gender norms in the United States and abroad at different points in time. Although the historical literature on gender and modernization is not as extensive as it is on many other subjects, some studies exist which challenge the gender neutral image of modernization and/or the gender blindness that is replicated in

many studies on modernization.¹ Future research into this and other issue will benefit from the excellent foundation provided by *The Right Kind of Revolution*.

On a more general level, Latham's analysis of modernization as an ideology and foreign policy promoted by the United States leads to the question as to what was specifically American about modernization. David Ekbladh, in his *The Great American Mission*, has suggested that modernization served to construct an American world order.² Similarly, Latham shows that American modernizers supported and promoted those kinds of socioeconomic revolutions that promised to help establish a system of Western-oriented, capitalist nation states which would mirror and ideally also benefit American foreign policy interests – a strategy one could interpret as empire-building. Yet there was no lack of imperial ambitions around the globe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; what then made the American approach special, and what did modernization have to do with it? Development often served as an ideology, too, and ideas about development, especially about colonial development were often based on scientific discourses, theories, and concepts.³ There seems to be agreement that modernization was a scientized version of older development ideas, but Latham's study does not fully explain which difference which kind of science made. Also, it would be worthwhile to inquire into whether we can identify a specifically American type of science behind modernization or if and how transnational and global experiences and encounters transformed its character.⁴

Linked to this problem is the question of definitions, which, for an opaque term like modernization, is of course very difficult. Although Latham does not offer a precise definition, he does identify elements he considers characteristic of modernization: In his view, “the promise of acceleration” and the “perceived potential to link the promotion of development with the achievement of security” were what made American policymakers so enthusiastic about modernization. (3) This is in line with his thesis about the United States' support of the “right kind of revolution”, a science-based revolution geared toward securing American global interests. Latham excels at contextualizing modernization and its many facets, thereby providing much more than a narrow history of modernization. His

¹ See, for example, Suzanne Bergeron, *Fragments of Development: Nation, Gender, and the Space of Modernity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Christina Klein, “Musicals and Modernization: Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I*”, in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, ed. David C. Engerman et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 129-162.

² David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

³ See, for example, Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007).

⁴ For recent findings on the scientization of politics after 1945, see the contributions in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 50 (2010). Also see Sheila Jasanoff, ed., *States of Knowledge: The co-production of science and social order* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004). On the United States' transnational ties and its “looping effects”, see Ian Tyrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

engaging account is of interest to anyone concerned with American intellectual, political, and international history.

Author's Response by Michael E. Latham, Fordham University

I want to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to all four of the scholars who contributed reviews to this H-Diplo roundtable. I greatly appreciate their careful readings and insightful questions, and I welcome the chance to respond here. All authors should be so fortunate to have such a group of serious, thoughtful commentators. Space will not permit me to reprise all of the core arguments of the book, and I don't think that is necessary in a response of this kind. Instead, I would like to address the issues raised by the reviewers and include a few thoughts about where scholars on this subject might wish to turn in the future.

Nils Gilman raises a number of important questions about the book's framing of modernization and development. In addition to stressing the work's long interpretive sweep, he also argues that it "focuses almost exclusively on the reception and contestation of American modernizing ideas by postcolonial political leaders." This, in my view, is simply not the case. One major chapter does indeed explore the way that crucial figures like Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Jawaharlal Nehru engaged with American modernization efforts, accepting some elements while interposing their own visions. But substantial portions of the text, especially in the chapters dealing with technological approaches to modernization in the form of birth control and genetically modified agriculture, repression and counterinsurgency in Guatemala, Vietnam, and Iran, and the post-Cold War deployment of a neoliberal variant of modernization in Iraq and Afghanistan, strongly emphasize modernization's human costs on the ground. Indeed, as the book makes quite clear, modernization's liberal aspirations blended easily with a turn toward coercive force, and programs deployed without a serious consideration of cultural and historical context often produced horrific results, transforming human lives with devastating consequences in some of the poorest regions of the world. Ideologies, as I attempt to demonstrate, can be all the more brutal when they are deeply held.

On a deeper level, however, Gilman is clearly on to something very important. As he observes, the book does not focus closely on "the activities of field-level development workers," and this is a crucial insight. While I have addressed such questions in the past, particularly in the context of the U.S. Peace Corps and its community development programs, this book does not turn in that direction. In some ways this is a result of the challenge that all broad-gauge syntheses face in determining what to include and how best to handle the constraints created by the need to deliver a compelling, widely accessible narrative in a tightly constrained space. In broader terms, however, Gilman is right that this omission also reflects the historiography of the field as a whole. During a discussion at a 2006 conference sponsored by Cambridge University Press, I listened in full agreement as Odd Arne Westad suggested that the historiography of the Cold War would strongly benefit from a serious turn in two directions—toward intellectual history and toward social history. Books like Nils Gilman's own recent *Mandarins of the Future* have provided powerful insights into the former field, showing the way that intellectual formulations had a decisive impact on the American engagement with the world, and several other scholars have made vital contributions there as well. Yet serious inquiry into the social history of

the Cold War remains far less advanced, and much more can and should be done here to enrich our understanding of the history of development and modernization.¹

The reviewers in this forum also raise some fascinating questions about the fate of modernization from the 1980s into the post-Cold War world. Gilman's terrific insight about the contemporary divergence between professional development theory and practice and the broader ambitions of neoliberal variants of modernization raises a host of crucial issues to consider. A deeper exploration of this question would indeed expose the irony of Bush administration policies that promised to transform the Middle East in ways that many experienced development workers would find unrecognizable and appalling. Where neoliberals eagerly sought to pare back the state and unleash the supposed magic of markets, many development practitioners have remained far more concerned with the endemic, structural sources of poverty, pervasive inequality, and diminished life chances. Catherine Scott's point about the close, symbiotic relationship between neoliberalism and powerful corporate, government, and other institutional interests also makes great sense. In my view, neoliberalism succeeded at least in part because it recast and reiterated a number of the most appealing cultural and political claims about history and identity that modernization did. But to put forward that interpretation certainly need not diminish an appreciation for the material forces at work. Rather than framing the matter as one of "ideational forces" versus "interests," which can lead toward a false dichotomy, I believe that it makes much more sense to consider the way in which they are inherently related. As a number of prominent scholars have argued, "interests," whether grounded in material, market objectives or security imperatives, don't simply announce themselves to policymakers or act as independent forces. They are instead interpreted and understood through systems of ideas, and I believe that modernization, in both its original and neoliberal variants, was a most powerful framework in that respect.²

Catherine Scott makes an excellent point as well in observing the ways in which the interventions of the 1980s and 1990s helped to establish "the very conditions that allow

¹ Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). For one example of a work that does go much more fully into the question of development and its organizational implementation on the ground, see James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On the Peace Corps and Community Development, see Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), chapter four.

² For excellent interpretations of the problem of analyzing interests and ideas in U.S. foreign relations, see Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Frank Ninkovich, "Interests and Discourse in Diplomatic History," *Diplomatic History* 13 (April 1989): 135-61 [DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.1989.tb00049.x; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.1989.tb00049.x>]; Frank Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Anders Stephanson, "Commentary: Ideology and Neorealist Mirrors," *Diplomatic History* 17 (Spring 1993): 285-95 [DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.1993.tb00552.x; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.1993.tb00552.x>].

for post-Cold War interventions to take place.” Here, I couldn’t agree more. This period did indeed put in place a template for the implementation of humanitarian assistance with military force. As I noted in the book, the continuing ambition for wholesale transformation of foreign societies was at work in these cases too. Madeleine Albright’s 1993 promise that the United States and its UN partners in Somalia would “embark on an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country as a proud, functioning, and viable member of the community of nations” provides one compelling illustration the ideology—and the amnesia—at work” (197).

The reviewers also raise a number of excellent questions that future researchers might profitably explore. Scott’s great point about the persistence of an academic—policy nexus linking professional social scientists and U.S. national security agencies lands squarely on the mark, and surely there is much to be done there. Thirty-six years after the end of the Vietnam War, how would the insights of a classic work like Noam Chomsky’s landmark *American Power and the New Mandarins* stand up today? How have the relationships between scholarly research and security imperatives changed, and how might they in fact remain hauntingly familiar in this age of renewed counterinsurgency drives? Corinna Unger’s points about modernization and gender are also very well taken. *The Right Kind of Revolution* does mention the work of Ester Boserup and other critics who demonstrated the extent to which modernization policies often deepened women’s inequality (174), and I strongly agree that a thorough analysis of the way that gendered conceptions shaped American understandings of modernization and its targets would enrich the existing literature. Finally, Unger’s question about what was distinctly American about modernization is a crucial matter that defies an easy answer. Americans, no doubt, were among the strongest proponents of global modernization throughout the twentieth century. Yet, like many other scholars, I believe that the American framing of the project resonated strongly with that of other nations, including those deeply engaged in formal, imperial practices.³

Finally, I’d like to conclude by reflecting on Amy Sayward’s well-crafted comments on the implications of thinking about modernization as a hegemonic construct. Modernization was indeed a powerful conception, and the aspirations for rapid development across the Global South were certainly shared by U.S. policymakers, postcolonial elites, and a broad range of development proponents and experts through much of the twentieth century. Yet I don’t believe that modernization was as hegemonic as Sayward seems to think I might. Indeed, as the book’s third chapter illustrates, dissent against the U.S. framing of development imperatives ultimately fractured relations between the United States and the

³ Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon, 1969). For gendered criticisms of development and modernization, see Ester Boserup, *Woman’s Role in Economic Development* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970); Catherine V. Scott, *Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernization and Dependency Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Jane S. Jaquette, “Review: Women and Modernization Theory: A Decade of Feminist Criticism,” *World Politics* 34, no. 2 (1982): 267-84 [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010265>]. On the resonance between modernization and imperial practices, see, for example, Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), chapters 4 and 5.

nations of India, Egypt, and Ghana. Persistent intellectual challenges and sharp political disappointment over modernization's impact also led to a near collapse of the paradigm in the later 1960s and 1970s. Modernization certainly did reemerge in a neoliberal variant in the post-Cold War era, but one need only glance at the tremendous domestic and international divisions over U.S. policies in Iraq and Afghanistan to see that modernization's appeal, while powerful, is certainly not totalizing. Sayward is absolutely correct that writing a synthesis of this kind demands a great deal of "lumping," but I hope I have avoided the problem that she raises in her last paragraph. Modernization alone certainly cannot "explain the intersection of American foreign policy with hundreds or thousands of local contexts across decades." Borrowing Sayward's terms, however, it can serve as a very useful lens through which to understand some of the broader contours of U.S. foreign policy in approaching the questions of decolonization and development in the Global South.

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