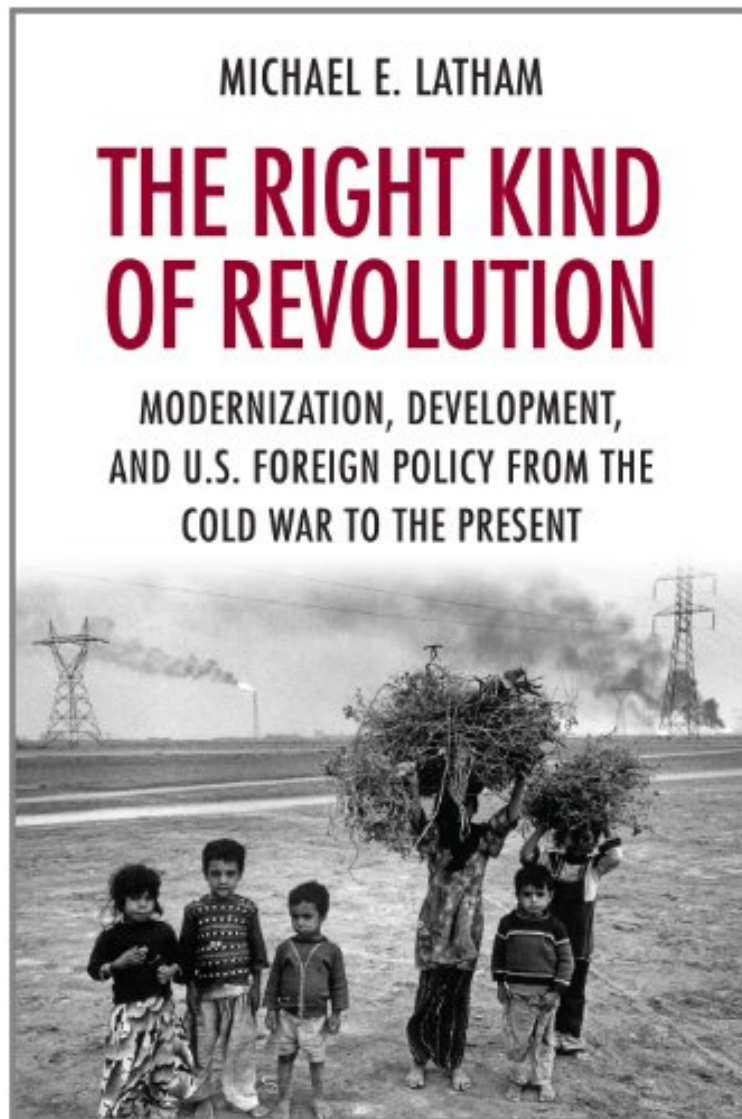


(Ebook pdf) The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present

# The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present

*Michael E. Latham*

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**Michael E. Latham : The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present:

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After World War II, a powerful conviction took hold among American intellectuals and policymakers: that the United States could profoundly accelerate and ultimately direct the development of the decolonizing world, serving as a modernizing force around the globe. By accelerating economic growth, promoting agricultural expansion, and encouraging the rise of enlightened elites, they hoped to link development with security, preventing revolutions and rapidly creating liberal, capitalist states. In *The Right Kind of Revolution*, Michael E. Latham explores the role of modernization and development in U.S. foreign policy from the early Cold War through the present. The modernization project rarely went as its architects anticipated. Nationalist leaders in postcolonial states such as India, Ghana, and Egypt pursued their own independent visions of development. Attempts to promote technological solutions to development problems also created unintended consequences by increasing inequality, damaging the environment, and supporting coercive social policies. In countries such as Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Iran, U.S. officials and policymakers turned to modernization as a means of counterinsurgency and control, ultimately shoring up dictatorial regimes and exacerbating the very revolutionary dangers they wished to resolve. Those failures contributed to a growing challenge to modernization theory in the late 1960s and 1970s. Since the end of the Cold War the faith in modernization as a panacea has reemerged. The idea of a global New Deal, however, has been replaced by a neoliberal emphasis on the power of markets to shape developing nations in benevolent ways. U.S. policymakers have continued to insist that history has a clear, universal direction, but events in Iraq and Afghanistan give the lie to modernization's false hopes and appealing promises.

"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. . . . It 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." Nils Gilman, *H-Diplo Roundtable s* (Vol. XIII, No. 4, 2011) "Michael Latham's *The Right Kind of Revolution* begins with the bungled aftermath of the 2003 Iraq war, which he presents as the most recent in a long line of failed efforts at nation building reaching as far back as the end of the nineteenth century. The litany of failure is both long and depressing, with few efforts achieving the economic or political objectives of their usually well-intentioned advocates. Latham tells the story in this extremely useful and interesting overview of U.S. development policy and its sometimes complex and contradictory relationship with U.S. security policy. . . . Case after case across the globe and throughout the century reinforce Latham's central argument that policies approaching foreign societies as malleable entities to be steered through some process of modernization and nation building are likely to be both chimerical and disastrous. It is an argument well made." Keith L. Shimko, *Political Science Quarterly* "The *Right Kind of Revolution* opens a window on the variety of new scholarship on the issue in this excellent primer on the place of modernization in U.S. foreign relations. Writing with clarity and verve, Latham makes complicated topics accessible and diverse situations comparable. His preacute;is of the origins of modernization theory and its rapid spread across the American social sciences is fluent and does much to explicate why the concept seemed like an attractive solution to so many problems for policymakers and scholars alike. He makes clear that modernization was not just an activity conducted by the American state. It had considerable support from a collection of nongovernmental advocates that included universities, foundations, and missionary groups. Latham also gives room to the governments and leaders of those countries the United States sought to modernize, reminding readers of their agency. Latham has captured and synthesized the fresh and exciting scholarship on this rich issue while adding to it in a manner accessible to students and stimulating for scholars." David Ekbladh, *American Historical* "Since the end of the Cold War there has been an enormous increase in scholarship by historians of U.S. foreign relations on American efforts to 'modernize' or develop the poorest areas of the world after World War II. Michael E. Latham has been at the forefront of this research. . . . This is an exceptionally well-written synthesis that will become a staple in college and graduate classrooms for years to come. . . . Latham has provided an excellent book on an important topic." *Journal of American History* "Michael E. Latham has provided a very interesting and useful synthesis of the rise and decline (and eventual reappearance) of modernization theory in the United States, exploring both its intellectual roots and its deep connections to the country's foreign policy." Michele Alacevich, *Technology and Culture* (July 2012) "Michael E. Latham's readable and insightful book casts recent nation-building undertakings within a century-long history of the faiths and delusions of America's recurrent efforts to 'modernize' others. The broad scope of this book recommends it to scholars, policymakers, and citizens alike." Emily S. Rosenberg, University of California, Irvine, author of *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion 1890–1945* "Combining theory,

diplomacy, domestic politics, and development, the concept of 'modernization' is a powerful tool for critically analyzing America's past and present encounters with the world. *The Right Kind of Revolution* is the best illustration yet of how 'modernization' can serve as a synthetic theme useful in studying America's encounter with developing societies during and after the Cold War. Topics such as land reform, agricultural technology, and development consortiums appear in this book within a single frame. The disastrous results of modernization in some countries offer a powerful indictment of an authoritarian orientation completely at odds with Americans' stated ideals."?Nathan J. Citino, Colorado State University, author of *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations*"Well-written, broad-gauged, and just plain smart, *The Right Kind of Revolution* ably synthesizes, indeed moves beyond, the scholarship on American efforts to 'improve' the Third World. The new standard work on American modernization and development policies, it is has much to teach scholars and graduate students while still being suitable for use in undergraduate courses."?David Engerman, Brandeis University, author of *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts*About the AuthorMichael E. Latham is Professor of History at Fordham University and Dean of Fordham College at Rose Hill. He is the author of *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* and coeditor of *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* and *Knowledge and Postmodernism in Historical Perspective*.