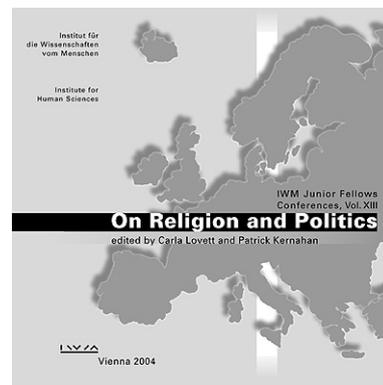


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The Role of Theoretical Concepts in Forming American Foreign Policy: The Case of Rostow, the Modernization Theory, and the Alliance For Progress

Piki Ish-Shalom

Introduction

This paper looks at the complex relations that exist between ideology, international relations theories and the world of practice. It will focus on the role of theoretical concepts in forming American foreign policy. In other words, it asks whether theoreticians and theories act as agents in the political arena, and if so, what are the consequences of this agency. This issue is vast, complex, and even problematic to some extent. It is problematic because, in part, it questions the ability of the social sciences to be objective. This paper attempts to show that theoretical concepts have a political role to play in the field of foreign affairs, and that to some a degree they are actors in the grand theater of international relations. As such, they should not be considered outside observers, which is a necessary precondition to objectivity. The theoretical concepts in international relations and foreign policy transform the sub-

ject matter of their inquiry as the process of inquiry occurs,¹ and blur the dichotomist distinction between object and subject.

I will try to deal with the vastness and complexity of the subject by focusing on United States' foreign policy toward Latin America under the Kennedy administration, and the role of Walt W. Rostow in this. United States' policy toward Latin America has been chosen for two related reasons. The first was that the United States perceived Latin America as part of the same hemisphere and as its own "backyard", and therefore vital to American interests to keep its southern neighbors free of any outside influence and intervention. Second, and due in part to its being the United States' "backyard", Latin America was largely seen as a laboratory for new American policies and projects, e.g., modernization projects, and later the human rights policies of President Jimmy Carter. These two reasons transformed the hemispheric relations into what the United States liked to perceive as "special relations". This "special" character of the relations that differs from a unique character, makes them an appropriate subject for this research.

For several reasons the paper focuses on the Kennedy administration: first, in the 1960s, the discipline of International Relations came into its own in terms of academic maturity. Its antecedents lie in the interwar period, although back then, it was still strongly tied to its "parent" disciplines, International Law, History, and Philosophy. After the Second World War, international relations scholars started thinking more autonomously and theorizing on their own subject matter. By the 1960s, there was already a significant number of theoreticians educated in the field, and the theoretical literature had reached a stage where it was varied, recognized, and respected in its own right. Secondly, John F. Kennedy – like other Democratic Presidents after him – was more prone to appointing academics to his administration as advisors and as executives of different levels; thirdly, by the 1960s, the pattern of the postwar world system and international relations had become crystallized and familiar enough for theoreticians to start framing specific recommendations for United States foreign policy in various fields and regions, including Latin America.

This paper examines the role played by Rostow with his concept and theory of modernization in the Kennedy administration, especially in the formation of the Alliance For Progress. In August 1961, the Alliance was established between the United States and the republics of Latin America, with the purpose of promoting the economic and political development of these republics. Rostow was a key,

¹ The underlying assumption of this claim is that a theorization process is a continuous one that does not end when it is written down, or even published. This assumption will be analyzed in further depth below.

though by no means singular, figure in bridging the theoretical and real worlds. As will be shown, this bridging took an institutional and concrete form, as well as operating on a more abstract level through the diffusion of theoretical ideas into the Kennedy administration discourse and policies.

The paper contains three parts: The first part provides the background to the emergence of development studies, demonstrating the impact that the political system had on this process, i.e., it concentrates on the effect that the world of practice has on the world of theory. The second part concentrates on the reverse, viz., how the world of theory (theoreticians and theoretical concepts) affects the world of practice. Part three shows the problems confronted by theoreticians and theoretical concepts as actors in the real world of practice, problems that led to the disintegration and hence the failure of the policies they helped to form.

Politics and the clustering of theories

Before exploring the kind of influence that theories have on political practice, I want to start with the impact that practice has on the construction of theories. Apart from the obvious fact that theories address what happens in the social and political world and therefore try to follow it as close as possible, sometimes the political agenda also has a more active influence on the theoretical agenda. Certain events and processes can be given higher priority in the academic world because of the agenda of the political world. A case in point is the evolvment of the theories of development during the 1950s and 1960s. Two important factors contributed to this process, the first of which was the wave of decolonization that swept the Third World, resulting in a host of new and independent countries. These countries were usually poor and without any economic, social or political infrastructure. The second factor was the Cold War, which caused the new countries to be courted by the United States and the Soviet Union, each jostling to recruit as many as possible to their own sphere.² These combined factors posed the question of how to develop the new countries, both as an intellectual challenge, and as a vital political question. This question was so important to the United States that the administration was willing to finance those studies.³ Thus, the field of development came to attract

² I.L. Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), pp 22-31.

³ According to testimony given to the House of Representatives by Lt. General W.W. Dick Jr. who was head of the department of research in the army, the army itself allocated 8.2 million dollars to these studies in 1965. It planned to allocate an additional 8.3 million dollars in 1966. One must remember that other branches of the Armed forces also allocated funds to

many researchers, becoming a prominent academic field. Thus, not only did the novelty of the process attract researchers to the subject, but also the opportunities that went with it.

In what can be understood as an almost oligopsonistic logic, political institutions have a say in setting the academic agenda. They may therefore be perceived as customers that are interested in “buying” theories (with its accompanying explanations and recommendations). Due to the relatively small number of clients, and their abundant resources such as financing and even power share – see Henry Kissinger – they have some ability to set the agenda of the sellers, i.e., the theoreticians.

However, if we do not wish to portray ourselves – the scholars - as a Mephistophelean bunch, we should immediately say that this tendency, this oligopsonistic logic, while helping establish our research agenda, does not necessarily effect its interpretations and conclusions. This leads us to the paper’s main theme: the role of theoretical concepts in shaping foreign policy. First, however I wish to briefly describe the evolution of the sub-discipline of development studies.

The field of development had no cohesive theory; rather it represented a world of disparate ideas that lacked consensus even on the definition of the dependent variable (What is development? Is it mainly an economic question? Is it a political one? Or is it combination of the two?). There was even less agreement on how to achieve development, the identity of its agents of change, the time span of change, etc. Every researcher entered the field with his own particular background in sociology, economy, and even his own ideology. As a concept, development became too vast an intellectual structure to be generalized about, but too important to be ignored. Many of the development researchers ventured into the field of development via sociology’s system and functional theories as constructed in the early 1950s by such sociologists as Talcot Parsons and Marion J. Levy, Jr. These theories enabled researchers to analyze different societies on the basis of the society’s basic units and by their functions. These societies were regarded as identical, and hence suitable not just for case study analysis, but for in depth scientific comparison too.⁴ The notable

the study of development, as did various other government branches. The money went to research centers such as the Center for Research in Social Sciences, the University of Chicago’s Center for Social Organization Studies, and others. One of the more famous and controversial research projects that were financed by the Armed Forces was the Camelot Project. Its aim was to find out social actors that lead to instability and revolution, and suggest a counter policy to it. *Ibid*, pp. 56-69.

⁴ T. Parsons, *The Social System* (New York: The Free Press, 1951). – T. Parsons, *The System of Modern Societies* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice – Hall, Inc., 1971). – M.J. Levy, Jr., *The Structure of Society* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1952).

political scientists Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba introduced these theories into development studies.⁵ However, many of the followers of the system analysis approach preferred a more conservative and elitist interpretation of the concept of development. These researchers, whose names include David E. Apter, Lucian W. Pye and Robert L. Heilbroner, tended to see development in more economic terms, or in terms of political efficacy.⁶ Hence, democracy was conceived as an unnecessary side effect of the development process, or even as interference in the process. No wonder then that Heilbroner concluded that a centralist regime was needed for development to take place and to deal with social tensions.⁷

At the other end of the spectrum lay the Marxist leaning interpretation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). The commission, which was led by the famous Chilean economist, Raul Prebisch, adopted a different stance regarding the factors that interfere with the process of economic development, and consequently also with political development. While other interpretations saw the obstacles as belonging to the domestic arena, the ECLA ascribed them to the global structure and to the terms and conditions of world trade and production. The ECLA saw these conditions as responsible for the exploitation of underdeveloped countries, and concluded that liberalizing world trade would not solve their problems. The solution lay in the opposite way: in concentration on Inward-Directed Industry, protectionist policies, and on social reform, particularly agrarian ones.⁸

Rostow, the theory of modernization and the Kennedy administration

We can see from this short account that setting the same agenda did not lead to one interpretation. Many researchers were attracted to the field by the opportunities that the political system opened up in it, but they were constructing their theories according to, among other things, their own ideological viewpoint. Thus, some de-

⁵ See for example – G.A. Almond, *Political Development: Essays in Heuristic Theory* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).

⁶ D.E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965). – L.W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1966). – R.L. Heilbroner, *The Great Ascent: The Struggle for Economic Development in our Time* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963).

⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 22-30, 145-164, 167-183.

⁸ ECLA, *Development Problems in Latin America: An Analysis by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America* (Austin & London: Published for the Institute of Latin American Studies by the University of Texas Press, 1971), pp. XL-XLVIII.

velopment theories were more oriented toward Liberalism, others to Conservatism, and still others to Marxism. This allowed different administrations to choose which theory they were willing to “buy”, i.e. which theory they would consult with regard to their foreign policy. At that time, i.e., the beginning of the Kennedy administration, the decision fell to the liberal interpretation of development: Rostow theory of modernization.

Kennedy was inaugurated as president on January 22, 1961, at a time of tense relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. One of the issues on the agenda of his campaign against the Republican candidate, Vice-President Richard M. Nixon, was the so-called “Missile Gap”. This referred to the claim, which later turned out to be far from correct, that the United States had lost its advantage in nuclear missiles to its dangerous adversary, the Soviet Union. This issue, apart from putting the blame on the Republican administration that Nixon was part of, and apart from instilling fear in the American public, also served to increase tensions between the two nuclear super powers. The tension built up during the first two years of the Kennedy administration, and peaked as a result of various severe crises, among them the failed invasion of Cuba, known as the “Bay of Pigs” invasion, the 1961 Berlin crisis, when the wall was built, and the worst of all – the Cuban missile crisis of October-November 1962.⁹ Even more important to our subject were the hemispheric relations that were on the brink of collapse. Following the “Good Neighbor” policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933-1945, when the United States managed to establish a positive sense of cooperation between the United States and the countries of Latin America,¹⁰ the relations deteriorated badly over the subsequent administrations. The unwillingness of the United States to devise an equivalent of the “Marshal Plan” for Latin America, and the narrow-minded and egocentric focus on the Cold War and anti-Communist agenda, caused the Latin American states (governments and citizens) to feel unfairly treated by the United States. Hemispheric relations thus deteriorated, and when Nixon, as Vice-President, visited several Central American States during the spring of 1958, he was met with hostility, and violent, even life-threatening demonstrations in Venezuela. In December 1958, a committee under Milton Eisenhower – the President’s brother – delivered its report and recommendations, centering on the need to help Latin America through financial investment. About a month later, in January 1959, the Cuban

⁹ After which the tensions between the two super powers were somewhat alleviated, and several test-ban agreements were signed.

¹⁰ I.F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 1979).

revolution ousted American backed dictator, Batista, and Fidel Castro took power. That revolution aroused the United States' awareness of the need for change. Following those hectic months, Washington established the Inter-American Development Bank, which it allocated an initial sum of 350 million dollars. Additionally, Congress approved a grant of 500 million dollars for the Social Progress Trust Fund, intended as an investment and development fund for Latin America.¹¹

Due to the poor state of affairs in the Western Hemisphere, however, there was call for a drastic change of spirit in the region and a determined American President to bring this about. Kennedy was indeed resolved in this regard, and turned to the academic world for help.

In the intellectual structure that helped form the development theories of the 1960s, Rostow was one of the leading theoreticians, and more importantly to us, he was a leading agent in translating the intellectual structure into concrete policy. As such, he was the institutional link between academia and politics, theory and practice. First, Kennedy appointed him to be Deputy Special Assistant to the President for the Security Affairs (under McGeorge Bundy), and later, in December 1961, he was appointed Chairman of the Policy Planning Council in the State Department, which deals with planning the longer-term policies of the United States. Under Lyndon B. Johnson, he replaced Bundy, and was appointed Special Assistant to the President for the Security Affairs. In his capacity with the administration, Rostow tried to further develop his conceptions about the preferred United States policy toward Latin America, and also played a prominent role in its execution.

We can learn of his conceptions from his many writings, two of which are important in this context. The first is *The Stages of Economic Growth*, which its subtitle can shed some light on Rostow's political agenda in it – *A Non-Communist Manifesto*.¹² The book is written mainly from the perspective of an economic historian; it

¹¹ M.J. Kryzanek, *U.S. – Latin American Relations*, third edition (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1996), pp. 25-66. – J.D. Martz, "Democracy and the Imposition of Values: Definitions and Diplomacy," in J.D. Martz and L. Schoultz (eds.), *Latin America, the United States, and the Inter - American System* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 147-153. – J. Levinson and J. de Onis, *The Alliance That Lost Its Way: A Critical Report on the Alliance for Progress* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), pp. 5-7, 36-48. – T. Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), pp. 65-95, 113-145. – E.M. Martin, *Kennedy and Latin America* (USA: University Press of America, 1994), pp. 9-26. – R. Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), pp. 186-193. – F.G. Gil, *Latin American – United States Relations* (USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), pp. 75-78.

¹² W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge UP, 1961).

establishes the theoretical base for the liberal interpretation of development, and contributed to Rostow's academic prestige. The second important book was co-written with Max F. Millikan, following the initiative of the executive branch.¹³ The book, *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy*, was intended as an articulation of specific policy recommendations that arose out of the somewhat abstract Rostowian theory.¹⁴ In these recommendations, as in his other writings, Rostow offers his version of the theory of development, in other words the theory of modernization. Rostow's ideational framework is somewhat Materialist, though he tries to introduce other elements to it, including people's awareness, especially the elites, of their ability to change their environment by using their resources. However, one needs to note that the material existence of the resources and their availability is a precondition for awareness.¹⁵

Rostow terms this awareness, and the recognition of the availability of the resources, a Newtonian conception – in a kind of homage to the mechanistic and optimistic materialism from which post-seventeen century liberalism had emerged – a belief in the human capacity, through rationality, to control the environment, and to some extent also his fate.¹⁶ In short, here we have a fine example of liberal belief in progress through action.

Contrary to the Marxist interpretation that emphasizes the conflictual relations in society, Rostow emphasized the possibility of cooperation between different groups and elites, and even suggested the possibility of social harmony. This possibility, according to Rostow, would lead to economic growth, and consequently to political development, that is to say, to modernization.¹⁷ Along similar lines, Rostow argued that at the heart of the problem of underdevelopment lies not the gaps between the developed and the developing countries, but the gaps inside the developing states themselves. These gaps, he suggests, must be dealt with by introducing parameters of social justice, and better balanced development policies.¹⁸ Co-

¹³ W.W. Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), p. XI.

¹⁴ M.F. Millikan and W.W. Rostow, *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957).

¹⁵ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pp. 17-35.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 4-12.

¹⁷ W.W. Rostow, "The Planning of Foreign Policy (1963)," in W.W. Rostow, *Essays on a Half Century: Ideas, Policies, and action* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), p. 77. – Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pp. 17-35.

¹⁸ W.W. Rostow, "The Sharing of the Good Life (1966), in *Essays on a Half Century*, p. 110 – Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor*, pp. 134-135.

operation between groups and elites will allow the distribution of resources to different communities, thereby enabling resources to be used in such a way that contributes to the development of society as a whole, not just to the prosperity of a few. This in turn will present opportunities for the rising young, new leadership – opportunities for social mobility, for erasing the gaps between the city and the village, and for empowering the local communities.¹⁹ We can see that at the foundation of Rostow's modernization theory rests the liberal expectation of gain spillover from the economic elites to the whole society, due to the expansion of the market economy.

The above process of modernization leads to the erosion of the traditional political institutions, though not to chaos, as was suggested by the more conservative variants of the development theories. To the contrary, according to Rostow, this process leads to, and culminates in the most modern and positive political institution of them all: democracy. Modernization with the growth and prosperity that go with it creates the foundation for a modern, democratic society by enabling education, which in turn promotes social and political skills. Thus, the rational potential that exists in the human race can achieve fruition, a potential that when realized, will engender the control of the environment and human destiny that we spoke of above. In addition to the universalization of education, there is also a spread of communication between communities and institutions. One result of this is the establishment of a common language that is a prerequisite for the formation of a democracy, as the common political institution. A common language will also facilitate an exchange of ideas and information, and thence the optimal utilization of human rationality. But apart from contributing to the foundation of democracy,²⁰ modernization helps democratization in a more direct, though abstract way. For Rostow, modernization is itself democracy: his argument was that modernization is the product of the people's sense of community, and their feeling of being active agents in forming the common life.²¹ This is the feeling and condition that he calls Newtonian, maintaining that this feeling is what democracy is all about – active

¹⁹ Millikan and Rostow, *A Proposal*, pp. 28-34.

²⁰ There are other ways of utilizing technology and accumulated wealth in order to benefit society, and thereby facilitate democracy, for example, the ability to invest in health, nutrition, housing, and transportation. *Ibid*, pp. 37-38. – Rostow, "The Sharing of the Good Life," p. 115.

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 111-119.

participation in politics as the framework for common life.²² Embedded here is the assumption that if managed correctly, the economic development of a state will lead to political development, that is, to democracy. This is so because the two spheres – the economy and political development – autonomous and distinct as they intrinsically are, are interlinked and nurture one another.

From this ideational and abstract structure, Rostow constructed a historical model with five stages of growth:

1. Traditional, pre-Newtonian society a society that lacks awareness of the human capacity to manipulate the environment and control fate. Therefore limited production capacity.
2. The “preconditions for take-off” where there is a gradual awakening of the Newtonian awareness, but just in small and limited groups in society.
3. The “take-off” – in which Newtonian awareness takes a hold of society, with consequent rapid economic growth.
4. Maturity, when production is almost limitless, and society can achieve the optimal utilization of technology and development of entrepreneurship capabilities.
5. The Age of High Mass-Consumption is the last stage of growth.²³ This stage is one and the same as the culture targeted for criticism by the Frankfurt school, and hailed almost to the degree of utopia by the liberal school of thought.²⁴

Rostow uses this theoretical (and normative) framework and historical model to develop his recommendations for foreign policy – especially in his book *A Proposal*. His first argument is that facilitating the process of modernization will contribute significantly to American national interests and also secure and enhance the American way of life. Rostow maintained that his assumptions needed to be understood in a context of the theoretical debate on the essence of national interest. For him, national interests were not limited to the physical or military strength, but were very closely linked to the ideational and normative ground, especially in this period of cold war, with the superpowers vying with each other for influence over the de-

²² We can see here, and in other writings, that the democratic theory that Rostow holds is closely related to the participatory or deliberative theory of democracy. This is a variant of the democratic theory that is better suited to Liberalism than to Conservatism.

²³ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pp. 4-12.

²⁴ In the more policy-oriented book, *A Proposal*, Rostow and Millikan merged the final three stages into one, which they termed “self-sustained growth”. The purpose of this seems to be to make the theory more accessible to policy makers. Millikan and Rostow, *A Proposal*, pp. 43-48.

veloping countries.²⁵ In order to win, the United States needed to be willing to supply capital, to help the developing countries surmount the obstacles in the way of education and information, and create an international atmosphere of growth and trade, while encouraging policies designed to protect infant industries. Time and again Rostow emphasizes the importance of social justice, which is the only means by which a state can prevent excessive gaps from occurring between the different sectors of a society, gaps that limit the possibility of social cooperation, which is a necessary condition for national growth, development and modernization. Another point that Rostow stresses is that the United States – like any external force – has an important role to play in the process. He pointed out that while the superpower can help to facilitate growth etc., the decisive role, efforts and responsibility lie with the developing states themselves. Modernization, as he had already claimed, is synonymous with democracy and with active political participation, and neither of these can be forced from the outside, or by paternalistic pressure.²⁶

We can see that Rostow's theory was a liberal variant of the development theory. Liberalism was especially attractive to Kennedy, the Democrat president who came into the White house in full swing on a liberal ticket²⁷, with the intention of improving the worsening relations with the developing world, especially Latin America. Given these intensions, it was sensible of Kennedy to turn to the vast scholarship in the academic world for guidance on development. With his liberal agenda and beliefs, it was also reasonable of Kennedy to prefer the more liberal version of development and its most prominent writer, Rostow, and his theory of modernization. By giving Rostow a place in his administration, Kennedy paved the way for Rostow to exert a direct and decisive impact on forming and executing American foreign policies, including those relating to Latin America. But here we can see also the first limitation of the role that theoreticians and their theoretical concepts might play as agents in shaping foreign policies. In fact, their role, impact and agency, are conditioned upon the decisions of the administration and its agenda and on the administration's ideological beliefs. It was not Rostow who decided Kennedy's

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 5, 130-133. – Rostow, *View From the Seventh Floor*, pp. 20-21, 161-163. – Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pp. 103-105.

²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 48-49. – Millikan and Rostow, *A Proposal*, pp. 55-78. – Rostow, *View From the Seventh Floor*, pp. 142-143.

²⁷ At the time of the election campaign and at the beginning of his term there was skepticism among liberals concerning Kennedy's true concerns, aims and agenda. He was accused of being a political opportunist. Much of this skepticism – though by no means all – was overturned during his administration due to his activities in the domestic arena, and albeit to a lesser extent, to his foreign policy.

agenda or its priorities. The agenda was of course already set, and what remained was to find the right people to help execute it – people with similar attitudes and opinions. The theories of theoreticians like Rostow, for example, were only partially influential. Furthermore, the theoreticians are not autonomous agents. Their role in shaping the policies is one way that ideologies can influence policies.

So what is the role of theories? Once their agency has been subjected to the ideological scrutiny of the administration and their autonomy limited, can they really influence foreign policies? My answer would be “Yes”. The general framework that a president has in mind, and the general ideas he has about his agenda and about its priorities are far from adequate when he assumes power and tries to maneuver about in the complex world of international relations. He will need help from different sources in order to iron out the ambiguities in his ideas and translate them into concrete policies. This is the route by which the theoreticians and their concepts can enter the policy shaping process and take up their role as agents. The present case study offers three examples of this: the first, which is the most simple and obvious, concerns Rostow’s efforts in his various posts to form policies that complied with his recommendations in his theoretical writings. Rostow did this under Kennedy and again for the Johnson administration, when the Alliance For Progress faltered, disintegrated, and almost came to a standstill. Even then, Rostow maintained his efforts to raise finance for the countries of Latin America according to the priorities he had set out in his theoretical writings. One should add that he did so with considerable success.²⁸

The second way we can identify Rostow’s influence on the administration is with reference to the diffusion of his concepts into the discourse of other member of the administration, most importantly Kennedy himself and his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk. In his presidential campaign, Kennedy ascribed great importance to the sub-

²⁸ Evidence of his wide-ranging and continuous efforts can be seen in the National Security files for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. These reflect his efforts to convince Kennedy to dedicate more time in his addresses to those issues, to enlist support from Secretary of State Dean Rusk and other cabinet members for more aid to Latin America, to convince Johnson to authorize more loans to Brazil and Chile, to broaden the mandate given to the Assistant Secretary of State and United States Coordinator of the Alliance For Progress, and even to convince Johnson to meet the foreign ministers of Latin American states in Washington D.C. – *The John F. Kennedy National Security Files, Latin America: National Security Files, 1961-1963*, Project Coordinator: R.E. Lester (USA: University Publications of America, 1987), reel 4, frame 109.
The Lyndon B. Johnson National Security Files, Latin America: National Security Files, 1963-1969, Project Coordinator: R.E. Lester (USA: University Publications of America, 1992), reel 2, frames 905-908, 947-950, 956, 993-1000; reel 3, frames 156-164, 713, 737, 804.

ject of Latin American development, and from the word go, in his inaugural address of January 20, 1961, he committed American foreign policy to democratization and development in general, and to Latin America in particular: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty...To our sister republic south of our border, we offer a special pledge: to convert our good words into good deeds, in a new alliance for progress, to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty".²⁹ Kennedy determinedly maintained this positive stance throughout his administration in continuous pledges to plans and projects, and when reporting the success of the Alliance For Progress.³⁰ However, apart from the general interest Kennedy had in issues south of the border, an interest that can be related to a prior commitment, or to the impact of developmental studies in general, we can also trace clear signs of Rostowian interpretations and concepts in Kennedy words. One example would be the special message that he delivered to Congress on March 22, 1961 on the subject of foreign aid. Here Kennedy sets out his interpretation of the processes taking place in Latin America, the priority he assigns to the subject of development, and even the causality involved in those processes. Kennedy claimed that poverty and social chaos lead to the ruin of existing social and political structures, inviting totalitarianism and endangering the security and the safety of the North American nation. Kennedy's conclusion, and the one he tried to convince Congress to accept, was that it was in American interests to try and help the Latin America republics' efforts to modernize, and thus attain a stage of self-sustained growth.³¹ This idiom of a stage of self-sustained growth was used by Rostow and Millikan to describe the last stage of modernization. The way in which Kennedy offered to facilitate this process also echoes Rostow's recommendations. Kennedy argued that development can be encouraged by aid and assistance, but mostly it is a question of self-help. Outside financing will not suffice, he claimed, and the states themselves are respon-

²⁹ J.F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961," in J.F. Kennedy, *To Turn the Tide*, edited by J.W. Gardner (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), pp. 7-8.

³⁰ J.F. Kennedy, "State of the Union Message to Congress, January 29, 1961, in *Ibid*, pp. 15-33. – J.F. Kennedy, "The Second State of the Union Message, January 11, 1962," in J.F. Kennedy, *The Burden and the Glory*, edited by A. Nevins (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), pp. 3-20. – J.F. Kennedy, "A Task for a Decade: Special Message to Congress, March 12, 1962," in *Ibid*, pp. 154-155. – J.F. Kennedy, "Harsh Facts of Poverty and Social Injustice: Inter – American Press Association, November 18, 1963," in *Ibid*, pp. 159-163.

³¹ J.F. Kennedy, "Special Message to the Congress on the Foreign Aid, March 22, 1961," in *To Turn the Tide*, pp. 146-147.

sible to mobilize resources, to introduce land and tax reforms, and invest in education and social justice.³² In other speeches, Kennedy emphasized the need for changes in social structures and patterns in order to achieve democratic progress.³³ This is an important point: Kennedy did not advocate just any progress, but a type of progress that leads to democracy, and that is based on a stable and just social structure.

We can trace Rostow's concepts even more clearly through the addresses and writings of Secretary of State Rusk. Rusk recognized the importance of the values of equality, freedom, justice, and rule by consent, and declared that these had been the values and norms of the American nation since its birth. The United States, he stated, was committed to these values and to their dissemination in the world. He also argued that the power of the United States was dependant on promoting democracy.³⁴ But again, besides the general importance that Rusk grants these values, we can identify in his discourse identical ideas to those of Rostow, who is the most likely originator of these ideas. Take for example, the importance ascribed by Rusk to the role of awareness in the process of progress. Rusk argues, in an almost identical repetition of Rostow, that the technological revolution helped to raise the awareness that the future and the environment can be changed, thus contributing to the possibility of struggling against and exiting the cycle of poverty.³⁵ And if the importance that Rusk assigns to education in the context of development may seem predictable and obvious,³⁶ other subjects are less so, and seem to have evolved directly from Rostow, e.g., the importance of the community, and the need to de-

³² *Ibid*, p. 155.

³³ J.F. Kennedy, "Address at a Reception for Latin American Diplomats, March 13, 1961," in *Ibid*, pp. 163-168. – J.F. Kennedy, "Message to the Congress on Appropriation for the Act of Bogotá, March 14, 1961," *Ibid*, pp. 169-174.

³⁴ D. Rusk, "The Winds of Freedom, from the Evening Post, June 30 – July 7 Issue, 1962," in D. Rusk, *The Winds of Freedom: Selections from the Speeches and Statements of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, January 1961 – August 1962*, edited by E.K. Lindlay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 1-10.

³⁵ D. Rusk, "The Alliance for Progress in the Context of World Affairs, Address to the School of Advanced International Studies of John Hopkins University, Washington D.C., April 25, 1962," in *Ibid*, p. 150.

³⁶ D. Rusk, "America's Destiny in the Building of a World Community, Address at Third Annual Symposium on Government and World Crisis, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, May 17, 1962," in *Ibid*, p. 52.

D. Rusk, "Education and Development, Remarks at the Meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Washington, D.C., October 16, 1961," in *Ibid*, pp. 318-319.

velop a sense of community and a civil consciousness of responsibility in order to push the process forward.³⁷ The same might be said of Rusk's emphasis on social reform, institutional and structural change, and the role of both society and state in achieving social justice and avoiding excessively gaps. According to Rusk, these factors are all necessary for achieving a truly functional democracy and political stability.³⁸ Echoes of Rostow's ideas can also be found in his emphasis on the principle of self-help.³⁹ These last points show how Rostow's ideas penetrated the thinking of the Secretary of State on the subject of modernization, and therefore Rostow's great contribution to Rusk's outlook and cognitive map with regard to his country's foreign policy.

The third indication of Rostow's influence, and the one that is necessary (though not sufficient in itself) to determine whether he had an impact on shaping foreign policy, is found in the analysis of the Kennedy administration's actual foreign policy on Latin America. Such an examination will establish whether in fact Rostow's recommendations were actually followed in practice. However, one of our problems in examining this policy is that its nature and especially its results are quite ambiguous. Even if we accept that Kennedy was committed to the aims of the Alliance For Progress, which I think was the case, there are three factors that clashed with that commitment. First, apart from this particular commitment, Kennedy was also dedicated to the American commitment to fighting Communist insurrection.⁴⁰ Secondly, even though vast efforts and investment were made in order to further the aims of the Alliance For Progress, there were several American projects and orientations that ran contrary to democratization (as will be shown below). Thirdly, as we have already mentioned, the results of American efforts in Latin America were only partially successful, and there were some who argue that the Alliance For Progress was a total failure.⁴¹

³⁷ D. Rusk, "The Shaping of History, Address before the American Historical Association at Washington, D.C., December 30, 1961," in *Ibid*, pp. 32-33. – Rusk, "The Alliance for Progress in the Context of World Affairs," pp. 153-154.

³⁸ *Ibid*. – D. Rusk, "The Foreign Aid Program for Fiscal Year 1963, Statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 5, 1962," in *Ibid*, pp. 115-116. – D. Rusk, "Charting a New Course in Foreign Aid, Address at United States Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C., May 3, 1961," in *Ibid*, p. 111.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 113. – Rusk, "The Shaping of History," pp. 32-33.

⁴⁰ R.J. Walton, *Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972).

⁴¹ Gil, *Latin American – United States Relations*, p. 244. – Levinson and de Onis, *The Alliance That Lost its Way*, pp. 7-16. – A positive assessment is offered by Schlesinger, Jr., who served

As we have seen, the change in American foreign policy toward Latin America started at the end of Eisenhower administration, following the turmoil that swept the region. The Eisenhower administration reacted by allocating resources to Latin America, and with the Act of Bogotá in 1960. However, a new spirit was needed, and Kennedy brought this about, with his high-profile commitment and pledge. After his election and a period of transition, Kennedy appointed a task force to study and recommend new policies for Latin America. The veteran of the Roosevelt administration, Adolph Berle Jr., headed this task force, and several of its members were academicians. The group submitted its report in January 1961, which called for a renewal of the commitment to the principals of freedom, the rights of men (in the terms used by the writers of the report) and legitimate, elected government.⁴² The task force also argued, echoing the development studies, that the necessary condition for the actualization of those principles was economic and social well being for all. About two months after Kennedy was inaugurated, he invited the diplomatic corps of Latin America to the White House, where he reaffirmed the pledge he had made in his inaugural address, committing the United States to the principals of democracy, freedom, honor, economic development, and social justice.⁴³ However, less than a month after this address, Kennedy reputation and credibility suffered a serious blow, following the Bay of Pigs fiasco. The skepticism of the Latin America republics regained its usual high levels, and Kennedy had to work hard to recoup their trust. Hence, in March 1961 he established the Peace Corps that had a

as another Special Assistant to President Kennedy – A.M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston and Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin and the Riverside Press, 1965), pp. 788-793, 1001-1002, 1030. – But most of the assessments are of a more mixed and realistic nature, and even when they are critical of some of the aspects, they usually conclude that the results of the Alliance For Progress were of mixed results – Smith, *America's Mission*, pp. 214-236. – J.W. Reidy, *Strategy for the Americas* (USA: McGraw – Hill Book Company, 1966), pp. 137-145. – M.C. Needler, *The United States and the Latin American Revolution*, revised edition (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, University of California, 1977), pp. 47-54. – A.F. Lowenthal, *Partners in Conflict: The United States and Latin America in the 1990's*, revised dition (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins UP, 1990), pp. 185-214. – Martin, *Kennedy and Latin America*, esp. p. 459.

⁴² “Report From the Task Force on Immediate Latin American Problems to President-Elect Kennedy, Washington, January 4, 1961,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963. Vol. XII. American Republics*, editors: E. Keefer, H. Dashiell Schwar and W. Taylor Fain III, general editor G.W. LaFantasie (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996), pp. 2-4.

⁴³ J.F. Kennedy, “Address at a White House Reception for Members of Congress and for the Diplomatic Corps of the Latin American Republics, March 13, 1961, “ in Levinson and de Onis, *The Alliance That Lost its Way*, pp. 333-339.

very good impact and influence through the “grass roots” efforts of American volunteers working in remote communities – communities, let it be remembered that Rostow’s theory of modernization argued should be a major target for national projects.⁴⁴ With the Peace Corps in full steam, and with the help of aid, loans, meetings and conferences, the Alliance For Progress started to gain shape.

The Alliance For Progress was officially formed in August 1961 at the Punta del Este Conference. During the conference there were several problems relating to differences in the participants’ expectations, as well as a verbal altercation between Che Guevara and the American delegate, Secretary of Commerce, C. Douglas Dillon. Aside from the problems, and some ambiguities in the final documents of the conference (The Declaration of the Peoples of America and the Charter of Punta del Este), agreement was reached on the Alliance goals of economic growth and greater equity in the distribution of education, health, etc.⁴⁵ The Alliance For Progress started out as the main vehicle for United States policy on Latin America, and the expectations of both sides were high.

When we examine Rostow’s efforts and Rostow’s concepts as reflected in the discourse of the President and the Secretary of State, and when we analyze American efforts to develop a new foreign policy committed to democracy, we can recognize the role played by theoretical concepts in forming foreign policy, and the different ways they contribute to its development. The first way in which the theoreticians and theoretical concepts contribute to the formation of foreign policy and thus affect it, is by giving it coherence. As already discussed, the president enters office with a general agenda, and general ideas that are most likely quite vague, unclear and undefined. They are shaped by his understanding of the world and by his ideological perspective among other things. The theoretical concepts and the theoreticians as the agents carrying them translate these vague ideas into far more concrete ideas and policies. When theoreticians are appointed to executive offices – as in Rostow’s case – they can transform the generalized presidential directives into more precise instructions.

Second, and in a more subtle and deeper manner, the theories have an impact on the longer term planning of the administration.⁴⁶ To carry out long term planning,

⁴⁴ T.C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Smithmark, 1965), p. 531.

⁴⁵ “Declaration to the Peoples of America,” in Levinson and de Onis, *The Alliance That Lost its Way*, pp. 350-355.

⁴⁶ This is especially the case with Rostow, due to his role as Chairman of the Policy Planning Council for the State Department. However, he did not need an institutional position to have this kind of effect.

the policy makers must have a causal explanation of the process they wish to affect. Without a causal explanation there is no possibility to plan policies that can bring about a specific result. An understanding of the variables and causes underlying a process is vital, and this is, by their very nature and purpose, is what theories have to offer. The theories provide policy makers with reasoned explanations regarding how to effect a desired change, thus making it possible to plan deliberate policies. The various development theories are a perfect example of that. What these theories offered the executive branch was an inherent logic and a set of explanations for the development of the under-developed world. From this cluster of theories, Kennedy picked out the logic and explanations espoused in Rostow's modernization theory, with the aim of helping to advance the democratization process in Latin America. And as I have already argued, Kennedy opted for Rostow due to the ideological similarity between their views.

The third way that theories work in the world of practice is by legitimizing policy goals and means. There are occasions when this kind of an impact assumes more importance than usual. It is especially true at times of change, and when debatable policies are at stake. Should these two conditions combine, the legitimating role becomes twice as important. Such was the constellation when Kennedy took office and determined to focus his policies on the goal of democratization. Even though the turmoil in Latin America was clear enough, what was less clear was that the solution required a "softer" hand toward the "backyard" states of Latin America. At the height of the Cold War, the more commonsense solution might have been to take a tough stance against those states that veered left. This could have been achieved by supporting the conservative elites and military regimes that tried to maintain stability and order,⁴⁷ rather than by adopting the "soft" liberal approach of promoting social justice and democratization. The price of the latter might well be instability that the communist menace could use to gain additional footholds in Latin America. The same could happen if a policy that is being proposed seems to abandon the interests of the United States and its citizens in favor of a more altruistic policy, or should focus shift from domestic to regional or international policy. These factors were all manifested in the change that Kennedy tried to adopt regarding America's Latin American policy; it was thought of as being "softer" and altruistic. To counter these fears, Kennedy could use, and in his public addresses, indeed did use, the explanations and justifications that Rostow's modernization theory sets out. With the appearance of scientific objectivism and reputation, he could try and

⁴⁷ As we will see, Kennedy did not abandon these considerations or policies, even when he acted to facilitate democratization.

convince the American public and the American legislators of the importance and correctness of his policies, and of their convergence with the interests of the United States in general and of the United States in the throes of a Cold War in particular. In other words, what Kennedy tried to present was not the normative and liberal correctness of his policies, but their scientific and objective legitimacy. In this sense, even if the theories did not have an impact on the policies themselves and did not change them, they can be ascribed some political capital, a capital that bestows on them the role of actors in the political world, i.e., in foreign policy and international relations.

However, not all went as was expected, and it is important to address the failures of the Alliance For Progress and its disintegration in order to understand more about the limitations of the agency role of theoreticians and theoretical concepts.

The disintegration and collapse of the Alliance For Progress

Despite the Kennedy administration's deep commitment to the Alliance For Progress, it nevertheless adopted certain measures that went counter to the aims of the Alliance and to the spirit of democracy. The 1960s for Latin America were a golden age of military and conservative coup d'états following disappointment with the governance of the New Left democratic parties. Ten days after the Punta del Este Conference concluded, the Brazilian President Janio Quadros resigned his office, opening the way to a period of instability that ended two years later, in July 1964, in a military coup. The months following the conference saw similar coups in Argentina and Peru, and during the eight years of the Alliance existence there was a total of sixteen military coups in Latin America. Kennedy – and to a greater extent Johnson – based his attitude towards the new regimes, as well as his willingness to recognize them, on their ability to maintain order and stability, not by their adherence to democratic principles or the Alliance aims. The indeterminacy and inconsistency of United States policy was useless to either the political stability,⁴⁸ or to democratization in Latin America. In other words, according to the main criteria of the Alliance, which was to achieve stable democracies in Latin America, the Alliance failed, at least in the short run. Moreover, even beyond this main aim, the Alliance

⁴⁸ In 1962, the United States recognized the new military government of Argentina, but refused to do the same in Peru until a civil government was reestablished. In 1963, the United States recognized the new governments of Guatemala and Ecuador, but refused to recognize the regime in the Dominican Republic. In British Guinea, the Kennedy administration acted to oust Prime minister Jagan who had been elected in a free and fair election, but held Marxist views.

achievements were rather poor, that is, in terms of economic growth, social reform, education and health.⁴⁹

There were many reasons for the Alliance's poor results, among them the unwillingness of many recipient states to invest the right amount of effort needed to ensure the project's success; their unwillingness to promote social reform, especially owing to the elites' fears that reform and Kennedy's ideas would encourage the radical left; the relative weakness of the middle class in the Latin American states; great expectations that gave way to disappointment and bitterness. But by no means did all the blame belong to the Latin American side of the Alliance. The United States had its own share of difficulties, such as lack of experience with plans of this kind, an inflexible bureaucracy, and an irresponsive Congress.⁵⁰ Added to those obstacles was one more very important one, the ambivalence of Kennedy's priorities, his indeterminacy in deciding if to side with the democratic forces, even though they were leftist and destabilizing, or whether to align with the authoritarian forces.⁵¹

These problems can be explained as resulting from the fact that the Kennedy administration – as well as the theory of modernization – both overlooked two very important and interlinked variables and conditions, namely 1. The lack of political will to implement the policy in Latin America and in parts of the American political system. 2. The cultural and social differences between the United States and the Latin American states and their societies. To implement the recommended policies

⁴⁹ Levinson and de Onis, *The Alliance That Lost its Way*, pp. 7-13, 64-73, 77. – F.G. Gil, "The Kennedy – Johnson Years," in J.D. Martz (ed.), *United States Policy in Latin America: A Quarter Century of Crisis and Challenge, 1961-1986* (USA: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 19-21. – Needler, *The United States and the Latin American Revolution*, pp. 72-92. – R.A. Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World: Political Development Ideas in Foreign Aid and Social Science* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1973), pp. 75-81.

⁵⁰ Kennedy asked Congress to approve an aid budget of three billion dollars annually for three years. Congress reduced this sum by six hundred million dollars per year. It also devised an annual approval mechanism that made it difficult for policy makers in the recipient countries to plan long-term projects.

⁵¹ To this can be added that Rostow too suffered from this dualism. On a couple of occasions he held militaristic positions undermining his efforts of democratization. This was particularly so in the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the deteriorating situation in Vietnam. It may be argued that the positions he held in the administration had an "hawkish" impact on his views, though this did not totally undermine his previous commitment – *The John F. Kennedy National Security Files, Latin America: National Security Files, 1961-1963*, Project Coordinator: R.E. Lester (USA: University Publications of America, 1987), reel 4, frames 897, 950, 984, 993; reel 5 frames 43, 224-237, 277-280. – Schlesinger, Jr. *A Thousand Days*, pp. 341, 545-550.

a strong political will was needed by all members of the Alliance, to invest effort, and more so, to change their traditional social and political structure. However, the beneficiaries of the existing structure were those very elites that were responsible for carrying out the needed changes and reforms, which led them to oppose and resist the process of political and social change. In brief, they wanted economic development without paying the necessary political price of social reform. At least some of the reasons for the elites' fears may be understood, and even predicted if we take into consideration the cultural difference between the United States and the more traditional, conservative and elitist Latin America. However, these cultural factors were not part of modernization theory, and were absent from the calculations of the Kennedy administration.

Resistance also flourished in the American Congress for the reason discussed above, namely that Kennedy's policies were seen as too "soft" and altruistic.⁵² If the question of the presence or lack of political will in Latin America is about cultural and social issues, its lack in the American political system, relates to American domestic considerations,⁵³ which are also missing from the conceptualization found in modernization theory. The theory deals with the conditions needed to bring about development, not with those needed to gain the necessary political support for those changes. Furthermore, as a theory of international politics and international economics it is not even expected to deal with the conditions of this political support. Thus, and I will question this point of view below, one can say that it is not the failure of the theory of modernization, but the failure of its execution. The political system is supposedly responsible for ensuring that domestic conditions are right for executing what the theory suggests, based on the theory's analysis of existing conditions, and for determining which changes are needed to achieve the desired results. Regardless of whether or not the theory is to blame, ultimately, all of these deficient variables played a role in the breakdown of Kennedy's policies on Latin America.

Another major reason for the disintegration of the Alliance was the replacement of Kennedy by Johnson. Despite the ambiguity in Kennedy's Latin American policies, he had maintained his commitment to the Alliance and to its causes. It was he who had initiated it, and he who invested in it a vast part of his credibility. When

⁵² One can recognize the shared reasons for the lack of political will in Latin America and the United States to implement the measures needed by the Alliance For Progress: fear of Communism and its spread in the continent.

⁵³ I am not going to treat here the interesting and important question of the political skills needed to mobilize support for one own policy or the failings of the Kennedy administration in mobilizing this support. It is not in the scope of this paper (apart from the use Kennedy made of the modernization theory in trying to convince Congress).

he was assassinated on November 22, 1963, and succeeded by Johnson, the American commitment to the Alliance For Progress lapsed, was dropped, and finally died away. Neither Rostow's appointment as Special Assistant to the President for the Security Affairs, nor the administration's repeated announcements concerning the Alliance,⁵⁴ helped it to retain its high priority on the administration agenda. The main considerations of American foreign policy were stemming communist expansion and the commercial interests of the private sector. The replacement of Edwin Martin with Thomas Mann as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs saw the launch of the Mann Doctrine that prioritized anti-communist and commercial interests as a substitute to development, modernization and democratization goals.⁵⁵ Under this doctrine, the United States stopped its aid to Peru in 1963 in order to pressure it to award favorable contracts to American oil companies. In addition, the United States recognized the military governments of the Dominican Republic and Honduras in 1964. In Brazil, the United States probably encouraged the military coup in July 1964. In 1965 Johnson ordered the Marines to invade the Dominican Republic for the third time in the twentieth century, following a civil war that threatened America's interest in stability.⁵⁶ Thus Latin America fell victim to a change in the priorities of a new American president. Johnson's priorities not only involved anti-communist measures, but also the promotion of American domestic concerns. Most of Johnson's attention was focused on American society, which was slipping toward internal conflict, and he attempted to reproduce Roosevelt's New Deal with his Great Society. Apart of these considera-

⁵⁴ See for examples the declarations of Rusk and Gordon – "Support for a New Phase of the Alliance for Progress," Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninetieth Congress, First Session on H.J. Res. 428 to Support the Other American Republics in a Historic New Phase of the Alliance for Progress," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967, pp. 3-20. – "Nomination of Lincoln Gordon to be Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs," Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States, Eighty-Ninth Congress, Second Session," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966, pp. 1-2, 25-26.

⁵⁵ For the principles of the doctrine see his address of June 7, 1964 – T.C. Mann, "The Democratic Ideal in Our Policy Toward Latin America," in Needler, *The United States and the Latin American Revolution*, pp. 145-153.

⁵⁶ M.J. Kryzanek, "The Dominican Intervention Revisited: An Attitudinal and Operational Analysis," in *United States Policy in Latin America*, pp. 135-138. – Kryzanek, *U.S. – Latin American Relations*, pp. 67-90. – Needler, *The United States and the Latin American Revolution*, pp. 72-92. – Levinson and de Onis, *The Alliance That Lost its Way*, p. 8. – Gil, *Latin American – United States Relations*, p. 252. – Gil, "The Kennedy – Johnson Years," pp. 22-24. – Martin, *Kennedy and Latin America*, pp. 465-467. – Lowenthal, *Partners in Conflict*, pp. 40-41.

tions, America's involvement in Vietnam escalated during the five years of Johnson's presidency into a full-scale war, with many victims and a growing need for finance and the administration's attention. In the end, the Vietnam War wrecked Johnson's goals and plans, causing him to forgo his chance for re-election, ushering the election of Nixon, and putting an end to the faltering Alliance For Progress.

Some of the above reasons for the demise of the Alliance For Progress may be considered contingent. As such they are part and parcel of the complexity of world politics, processes and events. They, and above all Kennedy's murder, his replacement by Johnson and the sinking into Vietnam War, were outside the scope of the modernization theory; as contingent events, they could not be part of theories that by their nature deal with patterned processes. However, not just the contingency was outside the realm of the modernization theory: the same can be said about the issues that were left outside the theory because they were not in its scope, e.g., the cultural and social differences, and America's domestic political arena.⁵⁷ These variables were all exterior to the theory of modernization, but at the same time they undermined the usefulness of its recommendations as guidance in the process of policy making. They were not part of the realm of those theories either as independent variables or dependant variables. They were not part of the evaluation criteria used in validating the theories as theories. Thus, once the theories become involved in the complexities of the world either via the theoreticians or the theoretical concepts, once they become participating agents or at least actors, they lose their immunity to the impact of complexity. Like so many other social processes, they become subject to a countless number of variables, and to unavoidable disintegration.

Now this is an intrinsic quality of theories, and even more so, of the relations between theory and reality. One of the requirements of theories is to be parsimonious.

⁵⁷ This is the source of many of the criticisms toward development theories in general, and the modernization theory in particular. These criticisms center on the claim that development theories are reductionist, economist and ethnocentric; that they tried to explain the causes of development, or the reasons for democratization using two or three factors; that they argued that economic progress would bring with it, almost automatically, political and social relief, and that in modernization theory's case this cure would be in the form of a democracy – K.H. Silvert, "Peace, Freedom, and Stability, in W. Manger (ed.), *The Alliance for Progress: A Critical Appraisal* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1963), pp. 91-106. – A.A. Mazrui, "From Social Darwinism to Current Theories of Modernization: A Tradition of Analysis," *World Politics*, Vol. 21, No 1 (October 1968), pp. 69-83. – A.H. Somjee, *Parallels and actuals of Political Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986). – A. Ruth Willner, "The Underdeveloped Study of Political Development," *World Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (April 1964), pp. 468-482.

The demand from theories in the social sciences is to be able to explain as much as possible with as little as possible. In other words, theories must contain a small number of independent variables that explain a large number of dependent ones. This epistemological requirement means that theories will be at odds intrinsically with the ontological complexity of the social world. It is an inbuilt contradiction caused by the disparity in nature between the realms of theory and reality. It means that a clash is inevitable and that problems will inevitably arise when attempts are made to put theoretical recommendations into practice. In some spheres, the contrast is sharper, more apparent, and consequently, the disintegration of the suggested policies usually occurs more rapidly (e.g., in the case of international relations and foreign policies). With other spheres, for example, the economy, the breakdown is less so. Because theories in the social sciences tend to be parsimonious in all disciplines, we can infer that the cause of the difference in the endurance of the policies is due to the essence of the different social spheres; the economy has few dominant variables, mainly the profit interest and the expectation of rationality; while the political sphere, and international politics in particular has hardly any dominant variables.⁵⁸ Thus the difference between the parsimonious epistemology and the complex ontology is starker, and the disintegration usually faster.

But even this qualification is limited; first, even in the economy, the gap between the parsimonious theories and the complex reality exists although it is less wide than in politics. One only needs to remember, for example, the behavior of the stock market in times of crises in order to acknowledge the existence of the irrational in the economic sphere. Secondly, the different spheres in the social sciences are closely linked, and one cannot limit theories to one sphere or another; politics affects the economy, and the economy influences politics. Thus, even if the gap between theory and reality in the economic sphere is not as wide as in politics, and hence the theoretical recommendations are supposedly more in accordance with the world of practice, we can expect the effect of other variables to interfere with the economy and lead, at some point, to the failure of recommendations to suit reality, and thus to the failure of the recommended policy.

Before we reach the final thoughts of this section and the conclusion of the paper, I must add one more remark; I need to explicate one of my implicit assump-

⁵⁸ Though one needs to add that realist theories of international relations have tried to stress the dominance of the will to power and the ability of rationality, and thus to construct theories that deal with the complexity in the same way as the theories of economics do. See for example – H. J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 4-15.

tions: I see theories as a continuum of work and effort. The construction of a theory does not end at the table of the theoretician when she finishes writing it, nor in her published paper. At the risk of reifying an abstract entity, I attribute to a theory something akin to a cycle of life. It is born out of a complex process of imagination and cognition, but then (in a more sociological reading of science), the theory is laid out in front of us to be read, taught, interpreted, criticized, and even implemented. That is to say, the process of theorization never ends with the publication of the theory, instead, it represents an endless effort to establish a community around it, a community that will adhere to it, work with it, and endeavor to broaden its scope – both within the theoretical realm, and taking outside into the world of practice.⁵⁹ Hence, in the case of Rostow's modernization theory, as with other similar cases, one cannot claim that the theory was accurate, and that the policy it recommended failed due to wrong interpretation, or bad execution of its recommendations. Even if a theory is considered accurate – and I would argue against this possibility – it cannot be separated from its implementation in the world of practice. In this kind of sociological reading of the world of theory and academy, there is no clear cut separation between theory and implementation; the theory invites its implementation and also has a role in it; and once this is the case, one cannot “place the blame” for policy failure on the world of practice alone. The two, sociology speaking, are too close and the process of constructing a theory consists of writing it, publishing it, broadening its cycle of readers, and trying to ensure it has some influence. Thus the construction of a theory⁶⁰ is too close to the experiment in its implementation, and the failure of recommended policies is the failing of both of these activities.

With these last claims put into the open, we can see another crucial limitation of the role that theoretical concepts can play in forming foreign policies. It is not just that they are not autonomous and that they serve as vehicles for the influence of ideology; once they become involve in the world of practice, no matter how accurate they may be in academic terms, no matter how objective we conceive them, they are bound to be ephemeral; they are bound to fail due to the immanent contrast between their parsimonious epistemology and the complex ontology of reality.

⁵⁹ By this I do not mean that each and every theoretician is indeed hoping to change the world. However, once a theory is published, the theoretician that constructed it has no control over its destiny. It is there to be read by others, and some of those readers may themselves hope to change the world.

⁶⁰ At least a successful theory: we can say, that an unknown theory, just like an unpublished one, is a failed one.

But having said that, we must acknowledge that the theories do sometimes leave their mark on history, they try to explain reality, and at the same time participate in it and have some impact upon it.

Conclusions

This examination of Rostow's modernization theory and its role in the Kennedy administration shows a complex relation between ideology, theory, and practice. The first type of relation is the impact from political practice upon the academic task of constructing theories. Sometimes, academic theorizing can be dependant upon political needs. Once the political system is seen as a potential customer for the theories, and once there is a possibility of being granted resources from the political system, the prospect exists of finding a clustering of new theories concerning the interest of the political system. An oligopsonistic logic operates in the academic process of locating new field of interests, and, in the area of development studies at least, one of the main factors contributing to the forming of this sub-field was the context of the Cold War, the interest it aroused in the political system concerning the developing world, and its willingness to allocate vast financial resources to that aim. This availability of resources, plus, in some cases, the possibility of gaining a foothold in the corridors of power, brought about the clustering of many theoreticians around the subject of development and with it the formation of this sub field.

The second type of relation between ideology, theory, and practice is the one that links ideology and theories. We have seen evidence of this relation in the paper in the variety of development theories that were developed in their heyday. It has been argued that although the political attractiveness of the subject of development is what causes it to prosper, the ideological commitments of the theoreticians are, in fact, mainly responsible for the content of their theories. The essence of the relation between ideology and theory evolves from the complexity of the social and political environment. The ideological commitment is one of the "techniques" to deal with this complexity, and to be able to explain it in theoretical terms, i.e. with as few variables as possible. We look at this world through our ideological assumptions. This helps us decide what is more and less important, and what is of no importance at all. In terms of the field of development, we have seen here how ideological assumptions and views have helped theoreticians in constructing their theories. Thus we find conservative development theories, liberal development theories, and Marxists development theories, all of which have struggled for prominence in the academic world, and no less so, in world of practice.

That this is so brings us to the way to the third type of relation between ideology, theory, and practice, namely the influence that theories have on the world of practice. On the one hand it opens up to theoreticians, and more subtly to theoretical concepts, the possibility of being able to influence the community of policy makers, by the criteria of ideological resemblance. On the other hand, it forms the first limitation on the agency of theoreticians; they are not autonomous agents, but a sophisticated and indirect phase in the influence that ideologies have on shaping foreign policy. Their influence is in three main ways: 1. By articulating general ideas into more concrete and operative ones. 2. By supplying causal explanations that are vital to formulating long-term plans. 3. By offering arguments that are supposedly scientific and objectives in order to legitimize debatable new policies.

However, once the theories enter the complex world of politics they are subordinated to this complexity. They fall prey to the complexity of the world of practice, and are destined to be ephemeral. But even with their short lives, we need to consider the likelihood that the theories will have some impact on the world of practice. Thus, their validity cannot be judged solely on academic criteria or on the basis of the few factors that they deal with parsimoniously. We should also appreciate their normative and ideological content, and no less so, their efficacy as foreign policy guidelines. These three criteria are of critical importance: The first two criteria allow us to judge the morality of the consequent policy, the third criteria helps us to judge how practical the policy will be, and its chances of endurance. For example, the theory and its ensuing policy should be sufficiently flexible to address the complexity of the social and political world as much as possible.

Linked to the above is another important conclusion concerning the capacity that a theory has for objectivity in international relations; in the case described we found that when a theory is incorporated into the world of political practice – i.e. its subject of its research – a blurring can take place of the dichotomous distinction between object and subject, between researcher and research. And because this is a vital distinction for objectivity this case teaches us that we must be very cautious when attributing objectivity to international relations theories.

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