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## **‘The Most Developed of the Underdeveloped Nations’. US Foreign Policy and Student Unrest in 1960s Spain”**

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### **Abstract (200)**

Throughout the 1960s, Spanish students staged a strong opposition against the dictatorship of General Franco. Also during this decade, the U.S. Foreign Service in Spain began to pay great attention to these students for two key reasons. On the one hand, student protests posed a threat to U.S. defensive interests in a country with a high strategic value during the Cold War in southern Europe. However, on the other hand, campus agitation could lead to positive effects for the United States if students' expectations of social change were channeled toward national development in a context of order and political stability. So, how could student activism and idealism be directed toward a controlled modernization of Spain? This article attempts to answer this question by studying American programs aimed at disseminating the principles of modernization theory in Spanish universities as an instrument to 1) influence students' political and intellectual socialization and to immunize them against radical ideologies and 2) channel students' aspirations towards constructive and responsible reform of their country's socio-economic structures.

### **Keywords**

US Public Diplomacy, Modernization, Students, Spain, Cold War.

### **1. Introduction.**

A few years ago, noted historian, Nils Gilman pointed out that U.S. efforts to modernize developing countries in the post-World War II period represented ‘one of the most important episodes in twentieth-century, international history’.<sup>1</sup> Reflecting this importance, the study of U.S. aid for the development of the Third World has become a central area of historiographical research on the globalization of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> Within this field, several papers have analyzed the influence of modernization theory in the formulation and application of development programs deployed by the U.S. government in newly independent nations between the 1950s and 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

From these studies two main conclusions emerge. First, that this theory became a fundamental factor of North American foreign policy discourse towards the Global South during that period. Second, the theory of modernization was the American response to the political and intellectual challenge of the 1950s and 1960s, the combination of decolonization, underdevelopment, and communist offensive in the Third World. This theory constituted a scientific-social paradigm intended to understand the profound political and social transformations produced after the fall of the European empires. However, it also had a normative character in that it prescribed a model of develop-

ment for the countries of the Third World as an alternative to communism. Unlike the revolutionary and oppressive character of the Soviet archetype, modernization theory proposed a path to development based on American experience, characterized by reformist liberalism, political moderation and the pre-eminence of the middle classes.<sup>4</sup>

This theory was based on a series of principles and assumptions that formed the ideological basis of the grand internationalist narrative that impregnated North American foreign policy towards the new emerging nations during the 60s. These principles can be summarized in:

1. The distinction and hierarchization between modern and traditional societies or those in the process of development.
2. A vision of these latter as societies lacking political maturity and, therefore, tending to radical political behavior.
3. The conviction that contact with the West would accelerate development towards the modernity of traditional societies.
4. The depiction of the North American political, economic and social system as the ultimate expression of modernization.
5. The belief that economic development was linked to the liberalization of political structures.

Thus, as an analytical and prescriptive framework, modernization theory reproduced a liberal discourse of development. This discourse was used by the American Foreign Service as an ideological tool aimed at containing the diffusion of communism where the fall of the European empires had aroused great expectations of economic and social change. Consequently, the literature on this topic has preferentially directed its attention to the impact of the narrative and practices of modernization on postcolonial societies.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, the role of modernization in U.S. relations with various autocratic governments in the Third World has been of particular scholarly interest as 'one of the central dynamics in international politics during the Cold War'.<sup>6</sup> However, there are hardly any equivalent studies of dictatorships allied to the United States, which, like the case of Francisco Franco's authoritarian regime in Spain, do not fit well into an explanatory framework constructed around a periphery-underdevelopment-postcolonial axis that was based on Asian, African and Latin American experiences.

In September 1953, the government of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the dictatorship of General Franco sealed a military pact that began a long period of collaboration between the United States and Spain. This agreement allowed the superpower to establish, under very favorable conditions, military bases of high strategic value on Spanish soil in exchange for economic, technical and military aid. From then, and until Franco's death in 1975, security issues occupied a priority place in U.S. foreign policy towards the Iberian country. Such pacts contributed to breaking the international isolation suffered by the Franco dictatorship because of its support for the powers of the Axis in World War II. But even so, in the late 1950s U.S. diplomacy still considered Spain to be an underdeveloped country, far from its western European neighbors. As an official report pointed out in 1959, throughout its recent history Spain had 'lagged behind neighboring countries in modernizing itself: Spain's standard of living was the lowest in Western Europe, with the exception of Portugal'.<sup>7</sup>

However, the liberalization and economic stabilization plan launched that year led the country to rapidly achieve a level of economic growth much higher than that of most

underdeveloped nations. In fact, in 1962, Spain ceased to be the recipient of the aid of the U.S. Agency for International Development. At that time, American diplomacy began to describe the Iberian country 'as the most developed of the underdeveloped nations'.<sup>8</sup>

From the early 1960s, American analysts saw Spain as a country halfway between the North and the Global South. A character that not only responded to its geographical position in southern Europe, but also to its intermediate status between the Atlantic Community - composed of the rich powers that shared political institutions similar to those of the United States - and the nations of the Third World. This position of 'bridge' between the center and the periphery of the world economy, together with the important strategic location of Spain, make this case a relevant subject in studies on Cold War modernization, which has usually focused on the countries of the Third World.

Cold War modernization studies have generally taken a top-down approach, focusing on official programs and modernization narratives used by American experts, theorists and diplomats. But such contributions have paid little attention to the sectors of civil society in the countries that received U.S. aid. Due to this lack of interest, the interaction between the geopolitics of the Cold War and the debates on developing societies through modernization has gone unnoticed. A historiographical vacuum that has only just begun to be filled in recent years with theoretical proposals combining top-down and bottom-up perspectives. Such works have introduced new local actors in the study of modernization, thus helping to expand the framework of who "counts" in the international history of the Cold War.<sup>9</sup>

Building on this nascent literature, this article focuses on U.S. foreign policy towards students in developing countries. More specifically, it explores how the United States projected the discourse of modernization among Spanish students to attract their support and understanding. The following pages analyze the cultural and educational programs put in place by the U.S. government to defuse student discontent through the dissemination of ideas of modernization in Spanish universities.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1960s, Spanish campuses witnessed an intense succession of student protests against the Franco regime. Such mobilizations were part of a transnational cycle of youth revolts, whose anti-imperialist and anti-Cold War constrictions made it a 'constituting factor' in international relations during this decade.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, from the early 1960s, the State Department has been interested in the global emergence of a new generation with capacity 'in the classroom or in the streets, to cause mischief of a kind which frustrates achievement of U.S. objectives'.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, U.S. diplomacy paid increasing attention to young people who - as an official report in 1965 put it - were not only influencing the 'course of history right now', but also forming the 'successor generation' called to lead the political future of their countries.<sup>13</sup>

In the Spanish case, students represented the 'quarry' from which future elites would be extracted and who could possibly lead the regime change after the disappearance of the septuagenarian dictator. In 1961, the annual plan of the US Information Agency (USIA) for Spain emphasized that universities would produce a lot of 'political leaders of influence when the present regime either turns over power to a new government or is removed'.<sup>14</sup> One of the main goals of this agency during the rest of the decade was to attract the support and sympathy of university students. On the one hand, the American modernizers considered that 'viable democracy in Spain' would only appear 'through gradual evolution, accompanied by improved living standards and considera-

ble growth of the middle class'.<sup>15</sup> As a symbol of the emergence of these intermediate strata in the heat of economic development, students were seen by the U.S. officialdom as a potential ally in their attempt to channel the profound social transformations experienced by Spain in the 1960s.

However, the upward student mobilization, mainly driven by communist and leftist organizations, jeopardized two conditions considered by the State Department as essential to preserve its defensive interests in this country: (1) the short-term maintenance of political stability of the Franco dictatorship and (2) a quiet and secure future succession of Franco, which would facilitate the eventual establishment of a friendly government to the United States. From this perspective, U.S. officials identified students as one of the social groups among which 'significant difficulties could arise to prevent a peaceful transition into the post-Franco era'.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the emergent student activism entailed a series of opportunities and threats to American objectives in Spain. A fact that urged US diplomacy to launch a machinery of persuasion aimed at winning the hearts and minds of Spanish students.

This article studies the deployment of this machinery, whose objective was to circulate the principles of modernization theory among students as an ideological counterweight to the extension of Marxist and anti-imperialist proclamations in Spanish universities. As shown below, such a theory played a central role in U.S. foreign policy towards Spain as a cognitive scheme and instrument of ideological irradiation at the service of U.S. power in Spain. On the one hand, it served as an interpretative framework through which US diplomacy perceived the situation in universities as a product of the socio-economic changes that the country was experiencing. On the other hand, it was used as a political prescriptive device aimed at channeling students' concerns towards the national development mission compatible with the North American security agenda. First, the article analyzes the general vision of the United States on modernization and emergence of a new generation increasingly frustrated and ready to protest in developing countries. Subsequently, it concentrates on the study of the Spanish case. The final part of the article focuses on the deployment and reception of U.S. public diplomacy programs aimed at familiarizing Spanish students with the doctrines of modernization to ensure political stability and access to military bases in this country.

Students have been the protagonists of various publications on the cultural Cold War during the 1950s. In broad brushstrokes, these papers have studied the propaganda battle between the United States and the Soviet Union to control the international student movement that emerged after the Second World War. These contributions have focused their analysis on international student organizations and youth festivals organized during the first part of the Cold War. However, this bibliography hardly includes national case studies, nor does it cover the decade of the 60s, the crucial period in which the first generation that rebelled against the geopolitics of the Cold War reached political age. This shortage of literature contrasts with the ability credited to students to influence U.S. foreign policy during this decade by authors such as Martin Klimke or Giles Scott-Smith.<sup>17</sup>

## **2. The context: Cold War, students and modernization.**

Before analyzing the Spanish case, it is necessary to study the general North American perception about modernization and promotion of new leaders and youth movements in the developing countries. During the Cold War, both superpowers strove to channel young people's idealism and potential for change in favor of their own political agendas. Both Washington and Moscow considered that rising young leaders represented an important prize in the competition for channeling global social change.<sup>18</sup> North Americans increased their interest in young people in the early 1960s because of the important role played by youth and students in the political turmoil in Turkey, Japan and Korea. State Department officials analyzed such events through the lens of modernization. Under such a view, student discontent in such societies was understood as the result of 'underlying economic, social and political problems which rapid social change and the thrust of national development force upon them'.<sup>19</sup> From this perspective, a new generation of young leaders was emerging in the Global South 'amid the rapid social change and political unrest that accompanies the process of modernization'.<sup>20</sup> This unrest occurred, according to American sources, under 'active and painful' social change that meant 'the elements from which the future leadership will come tend to be in more or less open revolt against the established order usually identified with the United States'.<sup>21</sup>

For the North American Foreign Service, the combination of social change, modernization and student mobilization paved the way for the growth of communism in developing countries. Moreover, as Roger Hilsman, Director of Intelligence and Research of the State Department, pointed out in a course on 'Problems of Development and the Internal Defense of Modernizing Societies' in August 1962, students represented one of the main objectives of the Soviet offensive to attract the elites of the new independent nations. In the view of this counterinsurgency specialist, youth impatience and idealism were easily manipulated by communists, especially in societies where the transition to development brought about strong structural pressures in sectors such as universities.<sup>22</sup> Along the same lines, the State Department's Policy Planning Council noted in 1962 that because of the 'structural and social upheavals that generally accompany the modernization process', such societies were highly 'susceptible to communist subversion and insurgency to varying degrees'.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, from the American point of view, the modernization of developing countries had destabilizing effects that could be exploited by communists to expand their subversive ideas among groups such as youths and students.

Not surprisingly, a number of official studies during the first half of the 1960s revealed that young leaders in developing countries were more attracted to Marxist and socialist economic ideas than to the capitalist model. According to these surveys, young people in the (semi) peripheral world did not see the U.S. government as an ally to achieve their dreams of progress, justice and freedom. On the contrary, they perceived the United States as a neo-colonial power, sustenance of dictatorial regimes, the utmost expression of predatory capitalism and guilty of the underdevelopment of their countries.<sup>24</sup> As Secretary of State Dean Rusk acknowledged in 1965, 'politically conscious students' in developing countries had 'a distorted, obsolete, often Marxist-oriented view of the American economic system, our ideals, and our institutions'.<sup>25</sup>

But in spite of all this, United States officialdom considered that the discontent expressed in universities hid a positive potential. Such discomfort could be directed in a favorable direction if students were shown that the United States knew their problems, shared their desires for social transformation, and were willing to collaborate with the progress of their nations. As Secretary of State Rusk said in a letter sent in 1965 to all

embassies, it was of prime importance to convey to the 'politically conscious students' what the 'United States is today, its goals and how they coincide with those of youth everywhere, its deep interest in the legitimate aspirations of youth in other lands for a better future, and its desire to help them to realize these aspirations in freedom'.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, the aim was to make young people and students not only perceive the United States as an anti-communist power, but also as an ally and example for the modernization of their countries.

In order to achieve this goal, the main task of the U.S. Foreign Service in the student field was to direct 'youthful energy and enthusiasm' towards 'constructive purposes' coinciding with the objectives of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>27</sup> President John F. Kennedy himself felt that, given the growing hostility of students against the United States, it was imperative 'to harness the tremendous force that lies in their energy and idealism in a responsible way for some of the myriad problems in a rapidly changing world'.<sup>28</sup> To this end, various cultural and educational programs were launched to transmit to a young public the advantages of the American economic and social system. Through these programs, an attempt was made to articulate a positive and captivating ideological offensive, which included an energetic and exciting narrative about the capacity of the American model to contribute to the progress of developing countries. The theory of modernization was an essential ingredient of this narrative as it was based on a scientific and intellectual basis that endowed the American discourse on the development with greater credibility than mere anti-communist propaganda.

The agency responsible for transmitting the message of American modernity to students was the Inter-Agency Youth Committee (IYC), founded by the Kennedy administration in April 1962. A memorandum from the president commissioned this committee to deploy and coordinate programs abroad with the aim of attracting young people who were politically active and capable of exercising a growing influence in future domestic political developments and world politics. In order to seduce these young people, the IYC had the collaboration of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the official American body responsible for conveying to public opinion abroad an 'accurate image of the United States, particularly of its economic and social characteristics, to dispel ignorance and correct distortions'.<sup>29</sup>

The Kennedy administration asked this agency to orientate its action in two directions. On the one hand, to include student leaders among the target groups of their propaganda work abroad because 'we are concerned that the apparent hostility of the young people of the world to the U.S. results from our failure to convey to them an understanding of our national goals and the nature of our society'.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, it should focus 'its program towards immunizing the vulnerable sectors of developing societies against communist propaganda and subversive activities and helping the modernization process to maturity'. In this respect, the Democrat Government considered that the USIA should make greater efforts to increase the interest in national development among sectors such as youth through the distribution of books and journals, the organization of seminars and conferences and conducting cinema-forums and radio programs. As a result, since the early 1960s, one of the main functions of the USIA was to bring students from developing countries into contact with the 'attitudes, mental habits, knowledge and skills required for national development'.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. Economic development and student protest in Spain.**

The Spanish case falls within the framework of analysis presented in the previous section. According to U.S. sources, the start of the Economic Stabilization Plan in 1959 set in motion a 'rapid economic and social transition' that placed Spain on the final path towards modernization.<sup>32</sup> Between 1960 and 1973, this country went through an unprecedented phase of economic expansion. During this period, the Spanish economy grew at an annual rate of more than 7%, only surpassed within the OECD by Japan. The accelerated industrialization and tertiarization of the economy provoked deep demographic and social changes that led to a rapid urbanization of the country. At the same time, an incipient consumer society emerged and new habits and more open and plural forms of life emerged. Factors such as tourism, television, the decline of the rural population, the increase in per capita income and the emergence of new middle classes helped to foster secularization and modernization of Spanish attitudes and behaviors.<sup>33</sup>

As in other developing countries, American observers and analysts interpreted socio-economic change in Spain through the scheme of modernization. Under this framework, U.S. officials felt that the process of economic growth and social change in Spain was positive for the interests of the superpower. First, they considered that the economic boom contributed to consolidating the political stability of the dictatorship and, therefore, they saw it 'as a necessary concomitant to the US joint use of Spanish bases and facilities'.<sup>34</sup> Second, they believed that social modernization would help pave the way for a future succession of Franco that would be secure, orderly, and favorable to the strategic priorities of the United States. On the other hand, American diplomacy also perceived such transformations from a negative angle, as a factor of destabilization, which generated problems and conflicts in groups such as young people and students.

In the late 1960s, the National Security Study Memoranda noted that Spain's swift socio-economic modernization during this decade had fueled the 'revolution of rising expectations', the emergence of 'political pressures' and the intensification of 'demand for reform and social justice' in several sectors, among which the youth and students stood out.<sup>35</sup> In October 1960, the National Security Council had already detected 'pervasive political malaise in Spain, especially among the younger generations'.<sup>36</sup> Three years later, the Department of State's Policy Planning Council highlighted the 'active dissent among intellectuals and youth' at the country's universities.<sup>37</sup> In 1965, another official report pointed out that the country's profound social transformation had given rise to 'growing restiveness among Spanish workers and students'.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it can be said that in the mid-60s the vision of the American leaders on the university situation in Spain broadly coincided with the analysis made by Professor Seymour Lipset during a seminar on 'Youth and Leadership in the Developing Nations' held in Washington in November 1966. This well-known modernization theorist considered that the growth of higher education in developing countries as a result of social change was related to the rise of communist, revolutionary and anti-American tendencies in universities. In the opinion of this academic and advisor to the American government, the combination of accelerated socio-economic modernization and educational expansion posed a threat to American interests in the (semi) peripheral world.<sup>39</sup>

During the 1960s, Spanish universities witnessed spectacular growth in the number of university students. In a few years, the Spanish university system, traditionally dedicated to educating the elites, became a mass university system due to the pronounced increase in the social demand for education. Such an increase imposed strong pressure on the obsolete Spanish educational system, exacerbating the problems of massifica-



tion in classrooms and other structural deficiencies. But it also meant a transformation in the social composition of the students due to the arrival at university of the children of the new middle classes. Both factors facilitated the emergence and growth of anti-Franco student organizations with a high capacity to create a climate of 'permanent revolt' that altered the academic, political and cultural life of Spanish universities.<sup>40</sup> These organizations mainly had a communist, leftist and anti-American orientation. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of European Affairs acknowledged in 1965 that 'large sectors in Spanish universities are attracted to Marxist philosophy'.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, the program of the Spanish Democratic University Federation (FUDE), the main organization of student opposition during the first half of the 1960s, aimed to raise awareness among young people against the 'financial oligarchy and allied landowners of US imperialism'.<sup>42</sup>

Marxist and anti-American tendencies among the students were even more worrisome for American leaders as they occurred in a country, 'whose modern history has been one of political turbulence climaxed in 1936-39 by a savage civil war'.<sup>43</sup> They considered that developing societies, like the Spanish one, suffered from little political maturity that made them more vulnerable to the influence of radical ideologies.<sup>44</sup> From this point of view, American diplomacy considered that the Spaniards had 'long lived a national life somewhat apart from main currents of Europe and the modern world'.<sup>45</sup> In its past - full of failed monarchies, military declarations and violent revolutions - the democratic experiences had constituted a 'rare item'.<sup>46</sup> As a result, Spanish society had no experience 'in the arts of social co-existence and of democratic commitment' nor in 'the responsibilities of freedom'. Thus, Spain still could not be considered 'a typical Western European country'.<sup>47</sup> Despite the modernization experienced since the early 1960s, the Spanish still remained a 'traditional closed society', whose citizens continued to be 'inclined to strong, intolerant views infused with passion - or to apathy'.<sup>48</sup>

This national framework, characterized by a lack of political sophistication and rapid socio-economic modernization, represented, in the opinion of the Americans, the breeding ground for the rise of subversive student organizations, contrary to the Franco regime and the US military bases. However, American leaders also believed that growing student disaffection could be channeled towards constructive purposes and favorable to the interests of the superpower in Spain. They not only saw the mobilization of students as a threat but also as a potential opportunity to exploit. The protests in the universities reflected, according to American diplomats, the vitality of Spanish youth and their desire to achieve greater levels of freedom, development and well-being. There was a yearning for prosperity and modernization that could be exploited by the United States as a lever to assert its own vision of historical change.

From the American perspective, the social, industrial and technological transformations that took place in Spain were eroding traditional values and lifestyles and generating important expectations of social change among broad social sectors, especially among young people and students. This situation provoked instability and tensions, but also opened new opportunities to try to identify the American vision of modernization 'with the constructive aspirations of the important youth sector'.<sup>49</sup>

It was, in short, essential to convince Spanish students that, like them, the United States also stood for 'for dynamism and growth, for positive change and vitality'. But how could the United States' external goals be aligned with the political, social and economic expectations of students? How could students' desire for political participation, justice and progress be channeled toward achieving non-revolutionary social

change? How could student activism and impatience be directed toward building a modern country that followed the American model?

American leaders believed that the master narrative of modernization provided the ideological cement necessary to unite American interests and student desires. American diplomacy used the discourse of modernization as an instrument to drive student aspirations towards pragmatic, constructive and responsible reform of the economic, political and social structures of Spain. The Americans hoped that the reproduction and circulation of the ideas of modernization in universities would encourage students' commitment to the progress of Spain in a liberal and capitalist direction. It was, in short, necessary to familiarize students with the American vision of modernization so as to immunize them against radical ideologies.

The body responsible for transmitting American conceptions of modernization to Spanish students was the Youth Committee (YC-Spain). This body was created by the American Embassy in Spain in 1963 at the request of the Inter-Agency Youth Committee. The YC-Spain dedicated its efforts to identify young leaders who could influence the present and future of Spain, cultivate their contacts and coordinate activities aimed at attracting the sympathy and recognition of the university public. In this task, the YC-Spain had the close collaboration of the USIA field delegation, the U.S. Information Service (USIS). The two main functions of this organism among the youth were: 1) to put students in touch with the new ideas, new concepts, and new techniques from the West, especially from the U.S., and 2) to correct 'frequent misunderstanding and criticism of U.S. judgment and maturity in international affairs and the shallow knowledge of U.S. policies and its governmental, economic and social institutions, especially in Spanish universities'.<sup>50</sup> The USIS devoted a considerable part of its programs in Spain to 'reach those progressive professors and students, particularly in political science, law and economics, some of whom have influence now and from whom many of tomorrow's leaders will'.<sup>51</sup> In order to achieve this objective, it deployed various cultural and educational programs aimed at creating among these groups a psychological climate favorable to modernization in the image and likeness of the North American case.

#### **4. North American public diplomacy and modernization**

American diplomacy had various channels to circulate ideas about modernization *made in America* among Spanish students. One of the vehicles most widely used to disseminate such ideas was written media. Since the late 1950s, the number of American books increased and through the Informational Media Guarantee Program and the book translation program for Latin America reached Spanish university libraries as 'an attempt to reach young people, especially students'.<sup>52</sup> Both programs made available to Spanish students, professors and academics the works of various authors interested in modernization, such as Walt W. Rostow, Seymour Lipset, Lucian Pye, David Apter, Myron Weiner, Eugene Staley, Wilbur Schramm, Daniel Lerner and Edward Shils. For example, in 1961 the USIS distributed copies of 14 books on modernization in Spain, including works such as *Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth*, written by Professor Bert Hoselitz, founder of the influential *Economic Development and Cultural Change* journal.<sup>53</sup> At other times, the ideas of these social scientists were passed on to students and teachers through lectures, such as the one organized by the USIS on

'North American Influence on Economic Theory in the Development of Spain' or those given on American economic development and foreign policy by Walt W. Rostow during his official visit - as Director of Policy Planning of the State Department - to Spain in October 1964.

The publications by the USIS itself represented another instrument used by American public diplomacy to reproduce and disseminate the semantics of modernization in university, academic and intellectual circles. In 1963, a report from the USIA's Information Center Service noted that 'by placing well-selected American magazines' in university residences 'we hope to expose students to the best available American writing material vital to students and to our program'.<sup>54</sup> Thus, journals such as *Atlántico*, *Facetas*, *Noticias de Actualidad y Problemas del Comunismo* were distributed in intellectual and student circles, as well as being loaned and donated to youth centers and colleges where intense cultural life took place. These journals sought to promote debate among students and intellectuals on topics such as the Alliance for Progress in Latin America, the UN 'Development Decade', economic growth models, the role of intellectuals and women in development and the historical experience of modernization in the United States. This included interviews and articles by authors related to modernization theory, such as Walt W. Rostow, Edward S. Mason, Edward Shils, John Kenneth Galbraith, Margaret Mead, and David McClelland. Sometimes such materials used to be part of dossiers or monographs on the subjects of modernization and development. For example, *Facetas* published several monographs with such significant titles as 'The Paths of Modernization', 'The Limits of Growth' or 'Population and Development'.

The pages of the abovementioned journals also incorporated contributions signed by authors like Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Arthur Lewis, Clinton Rossiter, Gary Becker, Raymond Aaron and Theodore Schultz. These works included the principles of some intellectual currents, such as the debate on the 'end of ideologies', the 'democratic theory', 'human capital theory' and 'consensus history,' closely connected with the paradigm of modernization and with its application in developing countries. For example, USIS publications aimed at the student and academic public placed special emphasis on the dissemination of the relationship between education and modernization defended since the late 1950s by several American economists such as Theodore Schultz, Arthur Lewis and Gary Becker, among others

These authors saw in education a valuable productive investment to train a skilled workforce capable of responding to the needs of global capitalism.<sup>55</sup> Such a modernizing and technocratic conception of education as the driving force of growth was the central nucleus of the lecture given by Professor Lewis in Madrid in 1965 under the title 'Education and Economic Development'. A similar view was expressed by the American ambassador Angier Biddle-Duke during a lecture before a young public at the Institute of American Studies (IAS) in Barcelona in November of that year. According to Biddle-Duke, 'in advancing industrial societies, where productive requirements relate directly to education, a growing faction of unskilled citizens has little to offer to community'. Similarly, the Ambassador considered that - as Professor Gabriel Almond had said in a lecture given at Harvard University under the title 'Changing Roles of Youth in the Developing Nations'- education marked the difference between 'a passive object whose fate is wholly controlled by forces beyond his reach' and an 'active person capable' of contributing constructively to the modernization of his country.<sup>56</sup>

Through this type of activity, American public diplomacy tried to familiarize Spanish students with a vision of education as a factor of national development, a channel of

transmission of modern values and, therefore, an element to contain politicization and student radicalization. Throughout the 1960s, this vision formed the basis of a 'developmental educational ideology' that acquired a strong academic and institutional prestige at an international level.<sup>57</sup> In fact, the ideas of modernization and human capital were seen by the US government and international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and OECD as the best recipe for countries like Spain to join the developed world.<sup>58</sup>

From the beginning of the 1960s, the USIS in Spain put into operation a program of lectures aimed at students. These conferences, usually held in colleges and universities, tried to explain to Spanish students the progress of modernization in American society. The purpose of the USIS was to share with student leaders those North American concepts and methods that could be beneficial to solve the problems of development in their country. American officials felt that the American experience in coping with these problems could provide a 'historical guide' for nations that, like Spain, faced the challenge of modernization. Along these lines, in 1960, US official sources pointed out that as 'Spain moves out of its isolation, it is essential that its youth and leaders of the next five to ten years look to the United States as the source of guidance'.<sup>59</sup> The program of conferences at universities was one of the tools used by American public diplomacy to present the North American experience as an example of inspiration for Spanish students.

Thus, to encourage the confidence of these young people in the American model of modernization, American public diplomacy promoted talks such as that given in February 1964 by Ambassador Robert F. Woodward at the University of Madrid on 'Development to maturity in U.S.' In February 1966, the Economic Counselor of the embassy gave a talk to 120 students in the Faculty of Political and Economic Sciences of the University of Bilbao on 'The Development of Capitalism in the U.S.'.<sup>60</sup> In July, the following year, the USIS financed the organization of a seminar at the Menéndez Pelayo International University in Santander entitled "The problems of a society in change: the United States, a case study", which was given by Professor Paul Lazarsfeld, recognized sociologist linked to modernization.<sup>61</sup> Documentaries were also projected for young people on modernization projects in the United States, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, the flagship of the New Deal reforms that inspired American modernizers of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>62</sup>

These talks and conferences were sometimes part of American Cultural Weeks, which included the screening of films, radio programs and exhibitions aimed at presenting the positive aspects of the American economic, political and social system as the ultimate expression of modernization. Through these activities, the American diplomats tried to show Spanish students that the United States represented a force in favor of change and progress. But this change should not be inspired by the violent and totalitarian communist model, but rather follow the American path characterized by low class conflict, political consensus around moderate values, and the pre-eminence of gradual reforms rather than radical ruptures. It was a question of convincing students to commit themselves to the 'right kind of revolution': the revolution of the middle classes and American internationalist reformism.

The message conveyed in lectures, seminars and conferences linked the successful American modernizing trajectory with the values of efficiency, productivity, rationality, consensus, reformism and political moderation. An example of this was the aforementioned talk of Ambassador Biddle-Duke at the IAS in Barcelona in November 1965. Throughout this intervention, entitled 'Youth Today in a Revolutionary World',

the ambassador asked the youth audience to put their nonconformity and idealism at the service of responsible solutions to the challenges of modernization. The ambassador encouraged the students present to become pragmatic 'men of action' who would contribute to creating 'those conditions in which progress through change may be achieved ... with the minimum of social stress and human dislocation'.<sup>63</sup>

Another instrument used by U.S. diplomacy to disseminate a non-revolutionary approach to social change among students was the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program of educational and cultural exchanges. In April 1962, the American Embassy in Spain pointed out that as 'Spain emerges from its centuries-old isolation, educational exchange is the main means by which fresh ideas from the United States suggest moderate solutions to Spain's complicated socio-political problems'. For American diplomacy, visits and stays in the United States of youth and student leaders could serve to persuade those more brilliant and active of the 'advantages of evolutionary changes rather than changes brought about through violence'.<sup>64</sup> For this reason, as the first half of the 1960s progressed, the presence of student leaders in the U.S. government's exchange activities grew. Between 1959 and 1975, there were more than a thousand Spanish students who stayed in the United States under the auspices of the Fulbright Program, the Foreign Student Program, the Educational Travel Program and the International Visitors Program.<sup>65</sup>

One of the main objectives of these programs was to influence the political and intellectual socialization of student leaders seen by American diplomacy as inexperienced, unrealistic and confused youths who looked to America with a mixture of admiration, envy or resentment.<sup>66</sup> The first-hand contact of these young people with the American reality was through visits to universities, industrial plants and community centers, and interviews with government officials and civil society organizations. They could 'look at Western European democracies and at the United States as examples of the direction which Spain must take in the future'.<sup>67</sup> Thus, it can be said that exchange programs had a strategic function: to encourage direct exposure of students to modern values and lifestyles, in order to exert a 'significant stabilizing influence' in the political situation of Spain in the short and long term.<sup>68</sup>

U.S. diplomats were aware of the importance of English as a key to middle-class students in a country that needed this language to modernize and forge international links. Thus, during the 1960s, USIS also devoted its efforts to spreading the English language among Spanish students as 'the password to modernization'. This organization intended to contribute to the economic, political and social development of Spain through English language programs aimed at preparing students for the task of modernization. American leaders believed that this language, as a vehicle for acquainting students accurately with U.S. ideas and institutions, represented a suitable instrument to modernize their attitudes and behaviors. English was seen by U.S. officials as a means for Spanish students to become familiar with Western thinking which would consolidate growth and stability in Spain. From the North American perspective, this language was considered more than a mere communicative tool: it was the carrier of the modern ways, values and ideas needed by Spanish students to promote national development. The USIS organized language courses, film screenings and discussion groups in colleges and bi-national institutes. It also made radio and television programs, produced teaching materials and conducted teacher training workshops. The aim of this was to spread a greater knowledge of English that would allow students to discover the value of American civilization.<sup>69</sup>

The presentation of the superiority of the American modernization model also led to the diffusion of messages about liberal democracy as the best form of political organization. According to official documentation, the activities (lectures, exhibitions, video-forums) aimed at young people and students in the Barcelona Binational Center during the academic year of 1963-64 were intended to convey that the United States as a 'tried and tested democratic, multifaceted and dynamic society may have relevance to the situation, present and future, of Spain'.<sup>70</sup> During that same year, the IEN called elections for its younger members to elect a Student Committee as a means to 'provide training in democratic action'.<sup>71</sup> In short, through these and other activities American diplomacy sought to convince future Spanish elites that 'foreign policy objectives of the United States are in no way incompatible with the genuinely democratic aspirations of the people of Spain'.<sup>72</sup>

The programs analyzed above formed a coordinated structure aimed at disseminating in Spanish universities a series of 'organizing ideas' about modernization, and its application to the Spanish case. In this way, U.S. diplomacy sought to channel the aspirations of Spanish students towards a mission of national development in tune with America's vision of global liberalism. However, such efforts had a very modest effect in the face of a wave of student agitation that shook Spanish universities between 1967 and 1969. The Spanish authorities pointed out that during this period, Spanish campuses were submerged in a situation of disorder, subversion and crisis.<sup>73</sup> Also, the American Embassy in Madrid reported in April 1968 that most universities were in a state of extreme turmoil that could affect the stability of Franco's regime.<sup>74</sup>

These protests were part of the 1968 global revolt, which - as Secretary of State Dean Rusk acknowledged - projected 'very serious overtones' for U.S. foreign policy interests.<sup>75</sup> For U.S. diplomacy, student riots in Spain could affect its defensive objectives, while reflecting a growing rejection of the U.S. presence in this country. In the summer of 1967, Ambassador Biddle-Duke noted that 'the growth of political activity in universities has been accompanied by an apparent increase in criticism of the United States, with alleged U.S. support for Franco's regime, civil rights issues, and the U.S. position in Vietnam, among the main specific targets'.<sup>76</sup> Between 1967 and 1969, there was a marked increase in the number of student demonstrations and activities against the United States. As an example, in March 1968 the Embassy emphasized the emergence in Spanish universities of a 'rising chorus of opposition to the United States' foreign policy, especially to the conduct of the war in Vietnam, and more critical comments on racial problems and on what some regarded as a breakdown of order and morals in the domestic political body'.<sup>77</sup>

In September 1968, the American Embassy again prepared another report that recognized the widespread anti-American feeling in Spanish universities. According to this document, in previous months 'students manifested their dissatisfaction with the presence of U.S. military bases in Spain and our role in the war in Vietnam'. These two issues, in the words of the Embassy, had fueled 'widespread opposition on the part of the students' against the maintenance of American bases in Spain. In addition, despite the efforts of YC-Spain and USIS to convey an attractive image of the American modernization model, U.S. diplomats admitted that 'most student activists in Spain and a large share of their followers have some form of socialist leanings and therefore reject the American experience as a monopolistic capitalistic economic system not wanted here'. Basically, this report concluded that the military alliance with Franco, the Vietnam War and internal problems in the United States had led many Spanish students to question the American value system.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, in a general context of the crisis of U.S. hegemony and the U.S. Cold War narratives, the 1968 protests highlighted the wear and tear of the discourse of modernization. It was unable to attract the support of the Spanish students, who perceived it as a mere cosmetic coating used by the US government to cover up their imperialist ambitions and their military alliance with Franco. The liberal internationalist narrative deployed by the YC-Spain and the USIS failed to counteract the adverse effects North American collaboration with the Spanish dictatorship had on student public opinion.<sup>79</sup> As IYC Director Martin McLaughlin had warned in 1965, the identification of the United States with the official establishment of countries with authoritarian governments could seriously prejudice American programs aimed at influencing a young public.<sup>80</sup>

This warning was confirmed by the wave of anti-Americanism that agitated the universities of more than 30 countries in 1968. This fact led American officials to conclude that, while the geostrategic needs of the Cold War required the United States alliance with the reactionary forces of the world's (sub) periphery, any attempt to win the minds and hearts of the students would practically be doomed to failure.

The radicalization and anti-Americanism that spread among students during 1968 greatly reduced American maneuverability and influence on this sector. As an IYC report pointed out in August of that year, 'our missions generally report that there is little to do with the short-term basis to defend itself against the consequences of student unrest.'<sup>81</sup> In fact, any youth activity bearing the official seal of Washington ran the risk of being boycotted or creating counterproductive effects on the image of the superpower. That is why American leaders decided to reduce programs aimed at actively attracting students. As of 1969, university students were no longer the focus of US diplomacy.

The implementation of this new strategy coincided with the change in administration in Washington in January of that year. Following the global disruptive effects of 1968, the foreign policy of the new government of Richard Nixon attached great importance to the preservation of stability in Europe as a necessary condition for safeguarding bipolar order. The new Republican administration responded to the convulsions of the protest of 68 with a defensive foreign policy, based on recomposing the international status quo.<sup>82</sup> Such a defense of the stability of the international system and of a bipolar equilibrium led to the reaffirmation of U.S. commitment to its authoritarian allies in Southern Europe. As a result, the U.S. government strengthened ties with the Franco dictatorship and reduced contacts with students whom it considered practically unrecoverable for the American cause.

A strategic and ideological retreat that also became noticeable in the work of USIS in Spain. From 1969, it adopted a more conservative tone. From then, the information and cultural actions of this agency focused on the ruling classes and groups close to official circles, to the detriment of students.<sup>83</sup> In the convulsive scenario of the late 1960s, U.S. officials believed that, given the difficulties in convincing the disaffected, it would be better to strengthen the community of political support and affinity with the United States. Along these lines, in April 1970 the U.S. Embassy in Madrid drew up a report that would mark USIS's action on the youth sector until the demise of the Spanish dictatorship in 1975. According to this report, the organization would pay more attention to 'young people working within the establishment' and would not 'devote efforts to cultivating university students'. As a result, from the early 1970s the USIS's work left university students to one side, to target young bankers linked to the finan-

cial oligarchy, new generations of technocratic officials, new single-party leaders and young professionals of the urban bourgeoisie.<sup>84</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

From the early 1960s, the U.S. government perceived Spanish students as important agents of change in a society that was undergoing an intense modernization process. During this decade, the administrations of J. F. Kennedy and L. B. Johnson attempted to engage the future elites of Spain with a development model compatible with the U.S. security agenda. To this end, the US Foreign Service promoted - through agencies such as YC-Spain and USIS - the circulation of a modernization discourse in Spanish universities. In this way, U.S. diplomacy tried to familiarize students with a liberal internationalist conception of development with a dual purpose. On the one hand, this was used to contain student radicalization and disaffection and on the other, to turn students into vehicles of national modernization under a North American scheme. In this sense, the North American approach to Spanish students was framed in a more general political project that sought to channel the inevitable social change in the Global South by attracting future leaders of developing societies.

However, U.S. public diplomacy programs did not attract the support of Spanish students. As the decade of the 60s advanced, there was a notable growth of anti-Americanism in Spanish universities. The discourse of modernization failed to neutralize student distrust of the superpower. Collaboration with Franco and the Vietnam War undermined the credibility of the American liberal internationalist message among student opinion. The efforts made by the YC-Spain and USIS could not reconcile the stark contradictions between U.S. modernizing rhetoric and American geostrategic priorities in Spain. Consequently, the case of Spanish students highlights the failure of modernization theory as an instrument for channeling social change processes in developing countries.

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- <sup>72</sup> 'Youth in Country Programming', 27 April 1968. USNA, SD, CFPPF, 1967-1969, Culture and Information, box 367.
- <sup>73</sup> Pere Ysás, *Disidencia y subversión. La lucha del régimen franquista por su supervivencia, 1960-1975*. (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004), 15-16
- <sup>74</sup> 'Barcelona University Student Protest Movement Further Disarmed by Communist Division', 5 Apr. 1968, USNA, SD, CFPPF, 1967-1969, Political and Defence, box 2491.
- <sup>75</sup> 'For Ambassador to Secretary', 24 May 1968, USNA, IYC, General Records, 1959-1973, Box 6
- <sup>76</sup> 'Comments on the Spanish Student Scene', 26 July 1967, USNA, SD, CFPPF, 1967-1969, Political and Defence, box 2491.
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- <sup>78</sup> 'Student Unrest', 28 Nov. 1968, USNA, SD, CFPPF, 1967-1969, Political and Defence, box 2489.
- <sup>79</sup> Óscar Martín García, 'A Complicated Mission. The United States and Spanish Students during the Johnson Administration', *Cold War History*, xiii, (2012), 326-329
- <sup>80</sup> "Emphasis on Youth. Reaching and Influencing Rising Young Leaders", 1965, USNA, IYC, General Records, 1959-1973, box 1
- <sup>81</sup> 'Comments on the Field on Youth and Student Unrest', 16 Oct. 1968, IYC, GR, 1959-1973, box 6
- <sup>82</sup> Del Pero, *Eccentric Realist*, 80; Suri, *Power and Protest*, 2.
- <sup>83</sup> León, *US Public Diplomacy and Democracy Promotion*, 100-101
- <sup>84</sup> 'Impact of Youth and the US National Interest; Mission Youth Program. American Embassy', 1 April 1970, USNA, SD, CFPPF, 1970-1973, Political and Defence, box 2597.