Cold War Anthropology

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In very large measure the area study programs developed in American universities in the years after the war were manned, directed, or stimulated by graduates of the OSS — a remarkable institution, half cops-and-robbers and half faculty meeting.

McGeorge Bundy | 1964

FOUR AFTER THE SHOOTING WAR

Centers, Committees, Seminars, and Other Cold War Projects

Before the Second World War, there were few centrally important sources of American anthropological funding. Funding was provided predominantly by museums and universities and occasionally by rich patrons sponsoring salvage anthropology or archaeology projects to collect what they envisioned as the dying embers of a once-thriving Native American culture.1 Outside of a few philanthropically funded, museum-financed, or Department of the Interior projects, most prewar fieldwork developed as modest self- or university-funded self-directed projects.

The most significant difference between pre- and postwar funding was not a transformation in scale of funding (which did occur), but a shift from anthropologists working mainly on projects following their own interests to anthropologists, if not following the questions of others, then following geographic or topical funding streams.2 It was not that anthropologists abandoned pursuing theoretical questions of their own choosing; the early Cold War brought a renaissance of anthropological theory. But like colleagues in the physical sciences, postwar anthropologists increasingly engaged in dual use research projects, pursuing questions of interest to themselves on topics of interest to sponsors (see D. H. Price 2003b, 2011e, 2012c).

Hopes of increased postwar funding led anthropologists William Fenton, Charles Wagley, and Julian Steward to advocate for area study programs. Fenton’s Area Studies in American Universities (1947) envisioned centers fostering the type of interdisciplinary environment he experienced during the war at the Smithsonian’s Ethnogeographic Board. Fenton conceived of such centers
as serving the national strategic needs of the postwar world, and training new
generations in the languages and cultures needed to support America’s rising
global dominance (see Mead 1979: 151).

At the 1947 SSRC National Conference on the Study of World Areas, anthropologists were represented in larger numbers than any other discipline (Wagley 1948: iv) (see table 4.1). Area panels were held for Latin America, Europe, the Soviet Union, Southeast Asia and India, the Near East, and the Far East (Wagley 1948: 28) — with no panels on the Pacific Islands or Africa. Most of those in attendance represented universities, but there were also representatives of private foundations, Congress, and military, policy, and intelligence agencies — including Sherman Kent, historian and future director of the CIA Office of National Estimates (Wagley 1948: 53–57).

Charles Wagley described how, at the war’s end, university campuses that had housed wartime Army Specialized Training Programs and the Civil Affairs Training Program shifted their emphasis to area studies graduate programs (Wagley 1948: 1–2). Wagley pitched anthropology as the discipline for area studies to emulate, envisioning centers coordinating interdisciplinary research projects such as Ralph Beals, George Foster, and Robert West’s Tarascan research and Gordon Willey’s Viru Valley projects (Wagley 1948: 11).

Julian Steward combined academic and national security arguments for conducting community studies research, writing that the value of such projects could be seen in the gap in contemporary studies of China (Steward 1950: xii, 52), observing that “few community studies have been made in China: none have been made of communist towns” (53). Steward stressed the importance of anthropologists’ national character studies, noting the work of Linton, Kardiner, Du Bois, Mead, Hallowell, Benedict, Haring, Kluckhohn, Bateson, and Gorer (80). While most anthropologists self-conceived their work outside of Steward’s Cold War political framing, these issues elicited interest from the governmental and private bodies funding this research. These differences were seldom addressed; whereas wartime anthropologists had clearly understood the potential uses of their work, postwar anthropologists worked in environments that more easily ignored these issues.

Anthropology students’ first encounters with area study centers were frequently as language students. Universities received military funds for language programs, and area study centers benefited from these funds. Funding programs like: Fulbright, Foreign Language and Area Studies, Title VI, and International Research and Exchanges Board became significant means for anthropology students to fund their education. Most programs had no requirements that recipi-
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<th>Anthropologists</th>
<th>1947 Institutional Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ralph Beals</td>
<td>UCLA</td>
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<td>Ruth Benedict</td>
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<td>U.S. Board of Economic Warfare, Peru</td>
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<td>A. Irving Hallowell</td>
<td>National Research Council</td>
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<td>Clyde Kluckhohn</td>
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<td>George P. Murdock</td>
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<td>Marian W. Smith</td>
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ents later work for the government or pay back the money they had received. Other than assuring that some segment of the population was familiar with a variety of languages and cultures, there was little connection between the funding sources and those funded. Some area studies centers advanced specific theoretical approaches; in others, specific funding lines helped channel questions and answers. But even without such dynamics, notions of regional culture areas focused inquiries in ways unlike anthropology departments. As area study centers became increasingly important dispensers of funds, they helped shape the questions anthropologists asked and the answers they found.

**Harvard’s Russian Research Center and Clyde Kluckhohn,**

*Anthropologist Cold Warrior*

During the earliest days of the Cold War, Harvard University and Columbia University established area study centers focusing scholarship on the Soviet Union, combining public, openly stated research projects with classified research projects. These early Cold War programs mixed private initiatives with governmental desires, and at times, groups like the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies met privately with CIA personnel to discuss the needs of the agency and academic programs (see FOIA CIA- RDP80B01676R003800020121–7, 1/10/58). Harvard’s Russian Research Center (RRC) exemplified some of the ways that area study centers fulfilled politically circumscribed dual use Cold War roles.

Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn was the first director of the Harvard RRC. During the Second World War, Kluckhohn worked for George Taylor and Alexander Leighton at the Office of War Information, and many of the intelligence analyst skills he developed there had later applications at the RRC. Kluckhohn had a top secret security clearance (O’Connell 1990: 139), and along with monies from the Departments of State and Defense, “’baseline funding’ for the Harvard Russian Research Center came from the CIA” (O’Connell 1990: 186).

Kluckhohn secretly shared students’ and staff’s research reports with CIA, air force intelligence, and Department of State personnel (O’Connell 1990; Diamond 1992). One declassified CIA document shows Kluckhohn in July 1948 sending the agency’s R. H. Hillenkoetter a report titled “The Automobile Industry That’s behind the Iron Curtain” (FOIA CIA-RDP80R01731R003100040052–1, 7/6/48). Harvard knew of Kluckhohn’s relationships with the CIA, the State Department, and the FBI, and Kluckhohn reported to Provost Paul Buck his success in establishing connections with State Department and Pentagon per-
sonnel through Harrison Reynolds, who directed CIA activities in the region (Diamond 1992: 109–10). Military and intelligence personnel at times recommended RRC academic projects to Kluckhohn and later accessed results from RRC scholarship. In 1951, the Boston FBI special agent in charge reported:

One of the jobs of Kluckhohn is to obtain pertinent information requested by government departments and within limits shape the research program of the center to the needs of the United States. He cited as an instance of the application [sic] the State Department would communicate with him to suggest they were short of a certain aspect of Soviet activity. Kluckhohn would then suggest to a graduate student at the School that he might do a thesis on this particular problem, making no mention to him of the fact that the State Department was also interested. Subsequently the results of the individual research could be brought to the attention of the State Department. (Diamond 1992: 59)

Alfred Meyer, Kluckhohn’s assistant director, described how the U.S. government secretly used the RRC to fulfill its research needs using a process whereby “once in a while Kluckhohn would suggest to the entire academic staff of the Center some topic for discussion in a seminar, or a topic on which we all might want to write papers” (qtd. in O’Connell 1990: 145). Meyer reported that in 1952, when he was the assistant director of the RRC, Kluckhohn called me into his office for a confidential chat. “Once in a while,” he said, “I send a memo around to all the members of the Center in which I suggest that we discuss a specific problem.” Of course, I had seen such memos and responded to them. “Well,” he continued, “such suggestions of mine usually come from the local field office of the CIA, who phone me, saying, “Our uncle in Washington would like to know what you people think about such a problem.” Kluckhohn told me that during the next semester he was going to be on leave, and the CIA agents wanted someone appointed to be their contact person. (Meyer 2000: 21–22)

Kluckhohn’s study of the “overseas interrogation of current refugees” was described in a secret 1950 CIA report “Psychological Warfare Research Studies within the Air Force,” as “a project primarily designed to obtain sociological, psychological, and political data on defectors from behind the Iron Curtain. This is part of a larger project listed under B-13. The project is under the direction of Dr. Kluckhohn, Harvard University and is now underway in Germany” (FOIA CIA-RDP80R01731R003500150016–5). This CIA report also referenced sociologist Kingsley Davis’s study on “methods of interrogation” using “interviews of
defectors from the Soviet zone, to arrive at [the] most effective method of interrogation for Soviet defectors” (FOIA CIA-RDP80R01731R003500150016–5). In the early 1950s, Kluckhohn directed the Harvard Refugee Interview Project (HRIP). This project, sponsored by the Human Resources Research Institute of the U.S. Air Force, interviewed more than three thousand Russian refugees (NBA AA 19515[4]: 4). In 1949, future anthropologist Paul Friedrich helped Merle Fainsod with “interrogating non-returnees and recent escapees” in Germany as part of an air force–funded project (Engerman 2009: 53; Diamond 1992).

Under Harvard RRC’s contract with the Human Resources Research Institute at Maxwell Field Air Force Base’s Air University, in 1950–51 Fainsod and Friedrich interviewed over one hundred Soviet refugees for the HRIP. Using standardized interview questionnaires, they collected refugees’ biographies, eliciting information on their political background (see HPSSS).

Sociologist Sigmund Diamond documented that the University of Michigan’s Survey Research Center interviewed individuals coming to the United States from the USSR in the 1940s without informing them that their survey data would be “turned over to Clyde Kluckhohn, director of the Harvard Russian Research Center, which had its own connections with the FBI and CIA” (Diamond 1993: 409; see Diamond 1988). Despite such secret machinations, Harvard social scientists made audacious public claims about their intellectual independence. Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons claimed that he and Kluckhohn successfully sidestepped the damages of McCarthyism by handling “with great delicacy the politically sensitive problems of a university organization engaged in the study of Communist society,” yet this statement ignored the extent to which his and Kluckhohn’s work secretly aligned with government policies and needs (Parsons 1973: 36). Parsons did not make these remarks while unaware of Kluckhohn’s entanglements with government security and intelligence agencies.

Even as Harvard professors secretly worked with the CIA and the Pentagon on projects large and small, “Parsons denied the existence of a political directorate composed of corporate, military, and governmental elites as claimed by [C. Wright] Mills” (O’Connell 1990: 484). Given the extent of elite influence on the work of Parsons and his colleagues, O’Connell concluded that “Parsons’ criticism of Mills was in bad faith. Parsons knew better than to argue that Mills was wrong because he himself had witnessed Policy Planning Staff covert operations. He himself had seen a Morgan Guaranty Trust director successfully demand the dismissal of Stuart Hughes and threaten to withhold funding of the Russian Research Center if the demand was not met. And he himself knew that Harvard scholars as advisors and consultants were indeed part of an informal political directorate.”
As C. Wright Mills complained (following sociologist David Lockwood), Parsons’s work “delivers the sociologist from any concern with ‘power,’ with economic and political institutions,” yet Parsons posed as if he were “removed” from politics because his work supported the politics of the status quo (1959: 35).

The University of Michigan’s Near East Study Center

The University of Michigan’s Near East Study Center emerged after the war, creating an academic environment that brought together historians, language specialists, literary scholars, and anthropologists. In this era in which area study centers comfortably engaged with governmental agencies, summer sessions brought prominent scholars from other universities and State Department personnel (Daily Michigan, 3/28/52, 2).

In 1951, Assistant Secretary of State Edward W. Barrett wrote the study center’s first director, George G. Cameron, after reading Cameron’s remark in a newspaper story that “the Russians still had the edge on us in the propaganda battle in parts of the Middle East.” Barrett conceded that the United States faced difficulties, and that American operations would benefit from Cameron’s “observations and constructive suggestions.” Barrett asked Cameron to share his remarks or meet with him and Shepard Jones (“who is concerned primarily with information operations in that area”) the next time he was in Washington (gwu-nsa, EB to GC 10/4/51). 8

Cameron responded at length, evaluating U.S. propaganda efforts in Iraq and suggesting improvements. Much of his analysis drew on his recent fieldwork in the region. He wrote:

For about six months we lived among Iraqi and Iranian Kurds, returning periodically to our base in Baghdad or to a secondary base in Iran. We were busy at our own tasks involving teamwork examination of the area from many points of view — history, language, geography, anthropology, archaeology and government. We had little opportunity and inclination to observe the operation of the Department of State in the propaganda battle. Inevitably, however, we saw some of the results, as well as the reaction of the people, especially in the Kurdistan to them. They were not particularly wholesome.

For example, we spent several days in the area of a Baradost chieftain. In his tent we found a little tract with pictures representing a pig with hammer and sickle tail, the pig intent upon gobbling up various quarters of the world. The language of the tract was Kurdish. This chieftain, who presides over some 5,000 Kurds, was highly
indignant. His people, he said, knew of communism, but they knew better their own ill [health] and poverty. “I know,” he said, “the Baghdad man who is producing this sheet for your Government. I know how much he is being paid yearly to produce it. If one fourth of that amount was to be made available in medicines or in some other more tangible product of your country which could be used to lessen the poverty or to better the health of my people, would it not be a far more successful propaganda approach?”

According to information which came to me, this area is in truth honeycombed with propagandists for the other side. It was, of course, not wise for us to inquire concerning the techniques of infiltration and we made no effort to do so. I fear, however, that we have taken inadequate accounting of the tremendous power of the radio. In Iran, every teahouse possesses one, and the anti-British and sometimes anti-American propaganda has seriously damaged our position. The Iranians feel that the British tail is all too successfully wagging the American dog. They have not been touched by the animosity of the more western Moslems or Arabs toward America as a result of our backing of the Government of Israel. The Iraqis, on the other hand, are not only vocal — their antipathy to us stems directly from the Palestine war. For them, there is only one side of the matter and they combat any attempt to present the other side. One does become very tired of trying to explain America’s position, trying to make them see that American streets are not paved with gold to be had for the asking, or to make them see that there are other countries also which badly need some assistance. It seemed to me constantly that America desperately needs to pass on a little of the information about widespread commitments in all parts of the world which have been made, to explain in terms of the local monetary units just how much in time as in money has been poured into each particular area. (GWU-NSA, GGC to EWB 10/24/51)

Barrett thanked Cameron for his letter. He expressed hopes that upcoming Point IV programs (one of the Cold War’s first international aid programs) would provide “the technical know-how” to improve health conditions, and he inquired about whether Cameron had seen “any of the excellent USIE Disney health films — simple, direct explanations in an attractive form on a number of local diseases and how to avoid them,” adding that these were “often shown with a Kurdish language sound track” (GWU-NSA, EWB to GGC 11/19/51).

At Michigan, Cameron developed problem-oriented seminars that shared some characteristics with Kluckhohn’s RRC seminars. These seminars drew heavily on faculty, as an “interdisciplinary seminar devoted to the analysis of major problems in the Near East, both professors and students present papers”
One of these interdisciplinary seminars received Ford Foundation funding to send anthropology professor William Schorger and five graduate students to Syria for fieldwork at the Aleppo Field Session (Liss 1953; University of Michigan 2000: 189; Shiloh 1959: 99). Louise Sweet, an anthropologist on this Syrian team, reportedly later learned the CIA had sent its own people as members of the field research project. This information upset Sweet, who over the years told several colleagues about the distress these discoveries caused her. When she ran for a position on the AAA’s newly created Committee on Ethics, her campaign statement directly addressed these issues, indicating that she “would not knowingly, much less willingly, accept support of any kind from or give information to any agency, public or private, of the United States or any other country, which engages in or promotes in any way espionage, manipulation of individuals or groups, interventionism, counterinsurgency, or technological, economic, social, political or ideological domination and coercion over any internal part of its own system or over any other country in whole or in part” (NAEA 1971 12[6]: 10–11). Years later she told archaeologist McGuire Gibson how her unwitting involvement in this CIA-linked project had damaged her career.

In later writings, Sweet cited this interdisciplinary fieldwork project (Sweet 1960: iii–iv), but like other scholars who discovered unwanted interactions with the CIA, she refrained from exposing or critiquing these connections in print. Independent substantiation and details of Sweet’s claim that the CIA infiltrated Michigan’s Aleppo Field Session are lacking, though colleagues recall the impact of these events on her career.

**CENIS as Dual Use Model**

In 1952, MIT established the Center for International Studies (CENIS) as a new type of program linking the dual use needs of scholars conducting international
research and of American military and intelligence seeking informed input for their own projects. At CENIS, Project Troy brought together diverse scholars who studied intercultural communications to investigate means of countering Soviet jamming of American broadcasts into the Soviet Union and explored the possibility of engineering a collapse of the Soviet Union through remote propaganda broadcasts. James Killian, president of MIT, and Harvard provost Paul Buck recruited faculty for Project Troy, pitching the venture as an interdisciplinary opportunity to “bring together a group of first-rate minds to let them attack the problem in a free-wheeling, uninhibited manner” (Blackmer 2002: 7).

Troy collected interdisciplinary teams of social scientists, physicists, chemists, engineers, economists, and political scientists. Clyde Kluckhohn was among the first four Harvard professors to join the project. Max Millikan came to Troy from his position as assistant director of the CIA, envisioning a program that would “exploit MIT’s facilities and connections in science and engineering” and “pioneer . . . inter-disciplinary treatment of the social studies questions” by developing and testing social science theory (Blackmer 2002: 10).

Troy proposed devoting technological research to problems of overcoming Soviet radio jamming technologies that were dominating Eastern Europe and also sought new forms of psychological or political warfare. It envisioned university centers hosting “government research programs in the field of political warfare utilizing university personnel either on a part-time basis or by the use of a rotation plan which would permit university specialists to remain in their ‘home atmospheres’ during leaves of absence from university duties” (Blackmer 2002: 14). The MIT program aspired to become a prestigious center with the appearance of academic independence, hosting scholars under “a rotation plan” in which they spent time in residence at the center contributing to CENIS Cold War projects such as Troy.

Kluckhohn told MIT’s President Killian that Troy was “one of the most fruitful experiences of his professional career and that the world of scholarship would lose something important if MIT did not turn the classified program into a continuing, interdisciplinary, unclassified research center” (Blackmer 2002: 18). But Kluckhohn’s hopes for a declassified center were ignored as CENIS’s funding source shifted from the State Department to secret CIA funds (2002: 20).

The Center for International Studies collected great minds, but rather than setting them to work on questions of their own choosing, it directed projects that pursued a narrow range of questions linked to American Cold War ideologies. Walt Rostow studied vulnerabilities of the Soviet Union (resulting in
his book *Dynamics of Soviet Society*), Clyde Kluckhohn oversaw a study in which researchers interviewed Soviet defectors, and psychologist Alex Bavelas worked on a project apparently designed to subject the Soviets to disinformation (Blackmer 2002: 21). Using Ford Foundation funds, several CENIS social scientists advanced economic development theories, with expectations that western development could divert underdeveloped countries from the attractions of socialism.

The Ford Foundation liked CENIS’s hybrid approach to the classified and declassified harnessing of scholarship for the needs of state (see Ross 1998a: 492–95). With Millikan’s return to the academy from the CIA, Ford provided CENIS with a million dollars of initial funds to plan and develop research projects on political and economic security and on international communication. Over the next nine years, Ford provided another million dollars for research on political and economic development issues (Blackmer 2002: 35, 67). Psychological warfare experts Jerome Brunner, Harold Lasswell, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Edward Shils sat on the CENIS International Communication Planning Committee, administering Ford’s international communication grant (51).

Ithiel de Sola Pool and the CENIS planning committee established four research criteria for CENIS-funded projects. These were (1) research designs exploring how elite leaders of various cultures “learn about and respond to information from abroad that leads them to try and influence foreign policy”; (2) research contrasting how individuals from rural and urban settings reacted to news of international developments; (3) research studying how “reference groups” influence decision-making processes; and (4) projects examining how communication “lead[s] to political action” (Blackmer 2002: 61).

In 1954, the CIA relied on CENIS social scientists to supply academic cover supporting justifications for the CIA’s military coup in Guatemala. One declassified CIA report describes how the CIA’s Operational Intelligence Support unit (OIS)

worked intensively on the preparation of support materials for the American Delegation at the Xth Inter-American Conference, Caracas, 1 March 1954. As the Conference became largely concerned with the question of communism in Guatemala, the task was considered as a phase of PBSUCCESS [the CIA’s code name for its 1953–54 Guatemala coup] support. OIS staff members produced a considerable volume of research and presentation, including text and charts, and carried out the coordination of State ARA and OIR contributions with CIA production, as well as most of the editing, typing and all of the work of reproduction and assembling.
of the main American documentary exhibit and reference paper, under the title of “Communism in Guatemala (150 pages). Contributions to this study were obtained from CENIS (external research), OCI, ORR, Staff C, and WH Division.” (CIA 1954: 8–9)

Through such arrangements, CENIS offered first-rate copying and clerical services as scholars produced intellectual propaganda supporting the CIA’s Guatemalan coup, turning academics into outsourced operational support personnel. Yet the first public criticism of CENIS’s linkage of academics and the CIA would not come from American progressives; it came from the reactionary right.

**William F. Buckley Exposes CENIS’s CIA Connection**

In February 1957, a column published in National Review criticized CENIS’s violations of the CIA’s charter by advocating a foreign policy approach based on what it called “a permanent foreign aid program to give underdeveloped nations a ‘sense of progress’— without regard of course, to U.S. political or strategic interests.” The article questioned why the U.S. Senate had provided CENIS $200,000 for producing *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (Millikan and Rostow 1957):

The Center for International Studies, according to persistent rumor, was set up and financed for the most part by the Central Intelligence Agency (through what is called a “cut-out”). Unless this rumor is false, we have the following circle on our hands:

1) The Senate votes fund to CIA. 2) CIA defying a law (that prohibits CIA’s operating within the United States), uses some of the funds to create a domestic research institution, the MIT Center, and the Center regularly publishes slanted books and articles, advocating partisan policies for the US Market. 3) The Center, putting itself forward as a bona fide scientific outfit, asks a Senate committee to give it further funds with which to conduct a study of foreign aid problems. 4) The Center obliges with a propaganda brochure.

Gentlemen of the Foreign Relations Committee, it looks to us as if you have been conned. Why not a few pertinent questions to Professors Max Millikan and W. W. Rostow, who authored the brochure, and to their backers? (National Review 1957)

William F. Buckley’s magazine’s attack on CIA collusion highlights conservatives’ distrust of the agency during the early Cold War. Yet such distrust
was far from universal, and five years earlier Buckley himself had worked as a CIA operative in Mexico, under E. Howard Hunt (Buckley 2007). Buckley’s indignation sharply contrasts with how comfortable Americans would later become with what he identified as the polluting effects of secrecy and CIA influence on the production of academic knowledge. Yet Buckley misunderstood that Rostow and Millikan’s formulation of international development policies based on U.S. aid expressed not some sort of generous gift of American charity, but a calculated arm of American anticommmunist foreign policy and a key element of U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns. The National Review’s concerns were generally ignored, and this critique did not gain traction for another decade, though the next attack on CIA infiltration of academia would come from the left, not the right.

In 1962, CENIS’s oversight Visiting Committee raised concerns that receipt of CIA funds jeopardized perceptions of the center’s legitimacy. Three years later, CENIS was publicly accused of interfering in India’s domestic policy, and the center agreed that “over the next several years either a policy of full disclosure should be worked out or the Center should move in the direction of further reducing its contractual commitments with the Agency” (Blackmer 2002: 194). The center’s public relationships with the CIA ended in June 1966, but in what would be a well-established pattern, the shortfalls in CIA funding were conveniently made up by a “multiyear Ford grant” that came “just in time to replace CIA funding of work on international communism” and other ongoing projects (203). The Ford Foundation continued supporting what had been CIA-funded projects.

Most critiques of CENIS’s receipt of CIA funds failed to understand that this money was but a small part of the military-intelligence complex’s funding of CENIS. As Blackmer observed, “In the six years before 1963, the Center had received an average of $69,000 per year from government agencies other than the CIA. In six years from 1963 to 1968, the average rose to over $600,000 per year, primarily from agencies of the Department of Defense” (2002: 203). Further, the seamless substitution of Ford Foundation funds to continue the CIA-initiated project received no critical public scrutiny concerning what this revealed about the ways that Ford’s political orientation overlapped with the CIA’s.

Public awareness of CENIS’s military and intelligence connections increased with time. In October 1969, 150 student demonstrators amassed outside of CENIS, protesting its military research; Millikan, Pool, Pye, and others “were tried by a mock revolutionary tribunal and found guilty of ‘crimes against humanity’” (Nelkin 1972: 110–11). While indignation over academic’s complicity
with the CIA at CENIS raged in the late 1960s, there was only minor concern with the political implications of the social science that CENIS-linked projects like Modjokuto produced. The Modjokuto Project’s affiliation with CENIS exemplifies how mainstream anthropology at times operated around the edges of CIA-funded projects and how Cold War agendas that were often beyond the focus of particular anthropologists’ interests.

Geertz, Modjokuto, and CENIS

The Modjokuto Project (1952–59) became known as the classic postwar multisite ethnography project, sending teams of bright young fieldworkers to Indonesian villages to study traditional cultures coping with modernization, postcolonial independence, and emerging topics that captured the fancy of these ethnographers. The idea for the Modjokuto Project originated with Douglas Oliver, with later input coming from Clyde Kluckhohn and Max Millikan. But Oliver’s contacts with governmental officials during Modjokuto’s planning stage remain unclear, and his 1948–49 service as a State Department special assistant for Far Eastern affairs provided him with significant governmental contacts (Brownman and Williams 2013: 453). When Clifford Geertz and other Modjokuto participants went to the field in 1952, the project was funded by the Ford Foundation and administered through Harvard. By the time the fieldwork was completed, its administration had been relocated to CENIS, where the agency’s former assistant director of the Office of Research and Reports, Max Millikan, directed the center, and a host of Pentagon- and CIA-linked scholars worked.

In 1995, Douglas Oliver explained to me that Modjokuto had been his idea and that Max Millikan had been involved in the project’s planning and funding from its earliest stages. Indonesia had been selected for this cooperative interdisciplinary research project in order to “fill a gap in the ethnographic record” (Oliver interview 7/10/95). In 1995, Clifford Geertz told me that he understood Kluckhohn had played an important part in designing Modjokuto and that Talcott Parsons may also have had a role. Geertz did not know why Indonesia had been selected, given that none of the principals involved in the project were Indonesian specialists (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95). Geertz’s “theory of what went on was that” Kluckhohn and Millikan were thinking of establishing something like the Russian Research Center except . . . the Center for International Studies at MIT and [Kluckhohn] suggested that when the actual Modjokuto Project was going — and this part is actual fact — it became
the first sort of enterprise of CIS [CENIS] really before CIS existed. Now whether Millikan was already on board as head of CIS, or whether CIS was still on the drawing board I’m not sure when we left, but I do think the Ford money and all that — which is what supported us — was got[ten] by Clyde or maybe by Millikan that’s conceivable. . . . But I’d never met Millikan [before going to Indonesia], and I’m almost certain . . . nor did any of the other members of the group — in fact I’m probably the only member of the group who knew him very well [later]. But we were sent out, and CIS existed as a kind of “paper thing,” but when we came back it existed as a reality. By then the economists were there . . . so it was formed in our absence. (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95)

After returning from Indonesia, Geertz wrote his dissertation and worked on his book Agricultural Involution at CENIS. He developed a friendship with Millikan (Hander 1991: 604, 605), describing him as “very supportive, but again, he had no intellectual input into it. His interests were elsewhere, and of course he was involved in various kinds of CIA research. The places were divided by people [who] could go in certain doors and people who couldn’t. Whether they were clear or not” (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95; cf. Gilman 2002: 5). Geertz told me he did not recall who could and who could not go through these doors, describing CENIS as having “this sort of split personality of being just a bunch of economists mainly, and the odd anthropologists, myself, working on research on the three I’s, Indonesia, Italy, and India. And then there was this other dimension of it, which was murky. I think that some of my colleagues were — reasonably enough — and so was I, a little bit dubious about that” (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95).12

Geertz had no knowledge of any work that Millikan might have done with Oliver before leaving for Indonesia, but when I told him that Oliver said Millikan helped secure Modjokuto funds even before CENIS existed (CENIS began in 1952), he said: “That sounds right to me. That’s what I’d really assumed. I didn’t really know this, but there was a certain mild paranoia among us — not so much me, but some of the people on the project — about CIS, and Millikan and so on, especially after we got back.” According to Geertz, some people “worried about its involvement in the CIA and so on. I mean, they weren’t really deeply worried about it. Most of them stayed away from [CENIS], in fact, once they got back they didn’t want to be deeply involved” (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95). Geertz explained that he did not feel the same need to stay away from CENIS as his cohorts:

It’s just that they wanted to do their thesis and didn’t want to become involved with CIS as an institution. I didn’t mind. I didn’t have a thing to do with the secret
part — as I said — but I worked for them. I had a project for a year, I worked for them — and it was Max who decided. I remember I went to see him and he said, “Yeah, OK.” It wasn’t my idea that I should do this, it must have been [Benjamin] Higgens or somebody that they should hire me and then they said yes, and then I worked there for a year. All that I did was write Agricultural Involution, I didn’t do anything else at all. (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95)

Although Geertz’s anthropological analysis generally downplayed political forces, he understood how such forces framed his first Indonesian fieldwork opportunity. Geertz said that Indonesia in the early 1950s “was an important part of the world, and it was one of the earliest states to get independence, and there was a big communist movement and so on. [If Modjokuto had links to intelligence agencies,] it would have been totally unwitting, because nobody ever said anything to us about gathering . . . any kind of information that would have been of any use to the government” (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95).

Geertz liked the economists at CENIS and would talk with them, but he did not have an office at CENIS and mostly wrote at his home. When Geertz said that he did not know what Millikan had done before coming to CENIS, I told him that Millikan had been an MIT economist after the war, then assistant director at the CIA. Geertz said he had not known this, but that CENIS “had a split personality,” with people like Norman Weiner mixing with Rostow and Millikan types. He thought that probably “half of the people . . . had nothing to do with the secret part of [CENIS], and what the secret parts was, I have no idea, but it had a CIA dimension all right” (Geertz phone interview 7/19/95).

The Ford Foundation’s Interest in Indonesia

The Modjokuto Project was only a small part of the Ford Foundation’s sponsorship of research efforts to understand and control the economic fate of Indonesia. As David Ransom wrote, in 1954 “Ford launched its efforts to make Indonesia a ‘modernizing country’ with field projects from MIT and Cornell. . . . Working through [CENIS] . . . Ford sent out a team from MIT to discover ‘the economic causes of stagnation in Indonesia.’ Part of this effort was Guy Pauker’s CENIS study of Indonesian ‘political obstacles’ to economic development, obstacles such as armed insurgency” (1975: 96). Ford also guided the production, interpretation, and consumption of knowledge about Indonesia by funding Cornell’s Academic Center for Indonesian Studies and establishing Cornell’s Modern Indonesia Project in 1954.
Though Geertz insisted that CENIS’s economists did not impact his work, his analysis aligned neatly with theirs. Geertz explained away the systemic poverty and political brutality of Indonesia with models of “involution” steeped in cultural traditions. He found colonialism’s Pax Nederlandica a stabilizing influence, and he downplayed the devastating effects of colonialism and Cold War relations of dependency (Geertz 1963a: 80). He found the Javanese solution to the conditions of diminishing returns for agricultural intensification under conditions of population growth was a strategy of what he called “shared poverty,” a concept that was an application of the sort of Parsonian political doctrines he had learned in Harvard’s Department of Social Relations (Gilman 2002: 7). Geertz blamed Javanese poverty on ideology, not on the material forces of colonialism: for Geertz, the values and social constructs of poverty were independent of poverty itself. Javanese poverty was caused by cultural values that gave primacy to sharing and communalism, values that inhibited external efforts to modernize. Java was caught in a homeostatic feedback loop in which increases in production designed to modernize led to increased population and entrenched systems of shared poverty. Gilman later argued that Geertz’s analysis of peasant behavior paralleled American military policy in Vietnam; insofar as the United States “could be seen as justifying wars against insurgent peasantries on the grounds that their radicalism had to come from without, Geertz’s narrative of recent Indonesian economic and cultural history fit the ideological needs of those justifying the Vietnam War” (13). Geertz’s later involvement with University of Chicago’s Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations extended his early theoretical contributions to development-linked programs. Anthropologists’ critiques of the political orientation of Geertz’s work first appeared in the early 1970s, when some, such as John Moore, attacked the political message of Agricultural Involution as “an economic plan for the capital penetration of every region in Indonesia” (1971: 40). Geertz’s Involution followed Rostowian modernization logic, calling for Western administrators to interrupt the Javanese involuted economic stagnation. Despite Geertz’s insistence that he was not impacted by CENIS’s economic theoreticians, his model of traditional society and the solutions he endorsed aligned with the economic policies developed by Edward Shils, Guy Pauker, Millikan, Rostow, and others at CENIS. Geertz’s economic history of Java featured resilient traditional social structures that coexisted with external economic change. Because he argued that national identity could be impervious to economic penetration and captivation, his work rebutted indigenous critics of global development strategies.
(see Knight 1982). The developing markets and entrepreneurs in Geertz’s *Peddlers and Princes* (1963b) awaited one of Rostow’s or Millikan’s capital infusion development projects.

Geertz’s involvement with the Modjokuto Project, the Ford Foundation, and CENIS fits a dual use model of the half-unwitting scholar who was not directly concerned with the forces and politics of the Cold War, even while contributing to the intellectual discourse in ways that supported American hegemony. Geertz was not privy to CENIS’s classified projects, but his lack of access to classified materials did not diminish the fact that Millikan, Rostow, and the others at CENIS had access to his research. Geertz’s work was shaped by the milieu of CENIS. As Gideon Sjoberg observed, irrespective of an individual’s ties to classified work, the presence of CIA funding for even some CENIS projects “may well leave a subtle impact upon the research process itself, especially where researchers are interested in attracting continued support from this agency. For example some projects may have been selected over others because they are congruent with the goals of the funding agency” (1967: 156).

Geertz’s memoir *After the Fact* (1995) revealed too little too late about the Cold War struggles he removed from the foreground or background of his classic thick descriptions of Bali. As Nancy Scheper-Hughes observed, “Geertz’s celebrated Balinese ‘cockfight’ scenario was developed within the larger context of a national political emergency that resulted in the massacre of almost three-quarters of a million Indonesians, though it took Geertz three decades to mention the killing that had engulfed his Javanese field site, now forever associated in our minds with those semiotic fighting roosters” (1995: 437; see also Reyna 1998). Geertz’s silence over Modjokuto’s links to CENIS and his involvement in politicized social science projects had links to Parsons’s notion of power, particularly the denials of any universal commonality to the political economy of the human condition. Instead, for Geertz, “All politics is quarrel, and power is the ordering such quarrel sorts out: that much is general. What is not general is the nature of the quarrel or the shape of the ordering” (1995: 39).

**Cold War RANDthropology**

Anthropologists served as consultants at the RAND Corporation throughout the Cold War, producing work that included village studies in Thailand or Vietnam, analysis of cultures of the Himalayas, research on Laotian traditions and innovations, studies of Japanese social organizations, analysis of authority structures in Soviet society, or linguistic simulation studies (see Phillips and
Ruth Benedict was the only anthropologist, and the only woman, who attended RAND’s First Conference of Social Scientists. This New York conference, held in 1947, was conceived by John Williams, a RAND game theoretician, and Warren Weaver, social science chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation, “to get RAND started on a social science program that would be useful to national security” (RAND 1948: viii). A classified restricted transcript of the conference recorded candid conversations focusing on the range of Cold War–related research projects that RAND might fund. Benedict discussed methods for studying Communist Party members in the United States, differences in cultural perceptions of atomic weapons, the extent of pro-Russian feelings in the United States, and other Cold War research topics. She sought to use anthropology for peace, but the resulting discussions show a general lack of participants’ interest in pursuing these goals (RAND 1948: 16). Instead, the projects under consideration had titles like “Psychology of Attack Behavior,” “Public Apprehension of Threats to Physical Security,” “Morale Policy in Wartime,” “Emotional Impact of Atomic Bombing,” and “Psychological Effects of Reconnaissance Satellite” (19–23). There were proposals outlining the construction of a “Belligerency Index,” numerous counterintelligence programs, and new methods of tracking Russians, and while there was much talk of peace, most proposals explored new ways to wage war.

Conference participants considered research ideas in free-flowing discussions of how social scientists could reshape the postwar world with methods developed during the recent war. The ethnocentric insouciance of the discussions is striking. Harold Lasswell discussed the cultural mitigation of aggression and prospects of a social science for the “management of peoples’ responses” (RAND 1948: 110). Benedict stressed the necessity of understanding cultural subtleties before attempting such changes, though she appeared to accept as a given that such work should be undertaken (111).

A project called “Pro-Russian Feeling in U.S.” proposed using public opinion surveys to track Americans’ pro-Russian sentiments. This proposed study would be secretly “carried out in cooperation with the FBI; public opinion surveys at regular intervals [would] study variations in the magnitude of the group in relation to current events” (RAND 1948: 26). Some participants found potential methodological problems with this research, but no concerns were raised about the ethical propriety of assisting the FBI in spying on Americans. Ernst Kris commented, “I find here cooperation with the FBI, which is fine, but
then also, public opinion surveys, which I can’t by any stretch of the imagina-
tion combine with information coming from the FBI” (123). While Kris was
confused about the FBI’s involvement, Herbert Goldhamer understood the FBI
would not passively digest survey data collected by others; it would use the
pretext of a legitimate survey to spy on citizens. Goldhamer observed that “the
FBI, or whatever agency keeps track of these things, might specify individuals
who fall in the group we are discussing. It might then be feasible to send out
public opinion interviewers with an arranged list of questions who would inter-
view these people, supposedly at random” (123). The fate of this proposal is
unknown, but Clyde Kluckhohn’s involvement in the University of Michigan’s
Survey Research Center project interviewing Russian émigrés demonstrates
that similar projects were undertaken (see Diamond 1988; 1993: 412).

Research on Contemporary and Distant Cultures

In 1946, Ruth Benedict launched a cross-cultural anthropological seminar at
Columbia University to teach the wartime techniques developed by the Office
of War Information to study enemy cultures (R. Métraux 1980: 367). Benedict’s
students were enthralled with this approach, and Benedict’s $100,000 Office
of Naval Research (ONR) grant empowered Columbia University’s Research in
Contemporary Cultures (RCC) project to fund a large group of students and se-
nior scholars (R. Métraux 1980: 367). The RCC piggybacked on the institutional
successes of the Institute for Intercultural Studies (IFIS). The RCC research
was unclassified and used interviews with foreign-born individuals living in

Among the anthropologists employed by RCC were Conrad Arensberg, Greg-
ory Bateson, Jane Belo, Ruth Bunzel, William Chen, Francis L. K. Hsu, Rosemary
Spiro, and Eric Wolf (Peterson 2005: 47). At Cornell Medical School, neurolo-
gist Harold Wolff directed the RCC project “Studies in Human Ecology-China”
(R. Métraux 1980: 362). Other projects studied the cultures of France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, shtetls of Eastern Europe, Syria, pre-Soviet Russia, and prewar
China. Margaret Mead and Geoffrey Gorer directed the RCC Russian group
(Mead 1959: 435; Mandler 2013: 223–53).

Mead later admitted there were initial concerns about academic freedom
when Benedict first gathered anthropologists for this project, writing that
everyone knew “that a study of Russia was vitally important. We knew, equally,
that it could be done — if at all — only under government auspices because of
the hazards, if not to the senior people, at least to any beginners who ventured
to show any interest in Soviet materials” (1959: 432). McCarthyism’s academic orthodoxy made it difficult to interpret RCC findings without considering the climate of doublethink permeating academic research during this period.

There was a flurry of activity after Benedict announced the receipt of the ONR grant, as Mead and Benedict recruited junior and senior scholars to build a prototype interdisciplinary project to expand techniques pioneered at OWI, OSS, and other intelligence agencies. Mead wrote that they recruited “the gifted people who had somehow managed in wartime but who did not fit into the peacetime mold — the aberrant, the unsystematic, the people with work habits too irregular ever to hold regular jobs” (1959: 434).16

The RCC struggled to establish work space at Columbia. Once the ambitious project was under way, its sizable funds began to look inadequate, and in 1948 Benedict applied for, and received, supplemental funds from RAND (Mead 1959: 434, 438). Mead worked to overcome the sort of hierarchical culture of rank that had predominated in war work. The large seminars had their own dynamics. As many as seventy-five people participating, and “every individual — including the secretaries and the youngest graduate student — was regarded as a full member of the group” (435). Mead thought of this project as the spiritual descendent of a Boasian seminar (436); yet, unlike in Boas’s seminars, participants focused not on esoteric features of language, culture, or mythos as a tool for understanding the psychic unity of humankind but on cultural features for ends linked to Cold War contexts. This shift enticed some anthropologists to refocus their intellectual depth of field from one of theoretical abstractions to a plane of interest aligned with the growing militarized state.

After Ruth Benedict died in 1948, Mead took on most of Benedict’s RCC duties. Much of this work was later run through the Council for Intercultural Relations and the Institute for Intercultural Studies, organizations that over the years employed more than one hundred people conducting cultural research (Peterson 2005: 47; R. Métraux 1980: 371). Rhoda Métraux wrote that after Benedict’s death, Mead recruited anthropologists, many of whom after the war had “left government agencies, vowing never again to work within restrictions on open discussion and publication or to become involved in activities that might affect the lives of others, for good or ill, without their knowledge or consent. I was one of those who had to be convinced that there would be no undisclosed uses of our research. Margaret did convince me” (1980: 368). Métraux’s initial concerns were not without some basis. As described in chapter 8, her naive trust in those she met though Mead led to her work on Harold Wolff’s research on Chinese personality types — a project that linked RCC to CIA espionage efforts.
Margaret Mead’s *Soviet Attitudes toward Authority* (1951), published by RAND, simplistically characterized Soviet national character with references to authoritarianism and political police, ironically writing during a period in which the forces of American McCarthyism were already undertaking Red-baiting attacks on academic freedom. Other RCC projects had Cold War applications. Among the proposals Mead pitched to the National Institute of Health were Mark Zborowski’s pain research project and Martha Wolfenstien’s examination of “children’s expectations and fears which are developing in response to the civilian defense programs, the war news, the draft, etc.” (MM, M17, MM to JE 1/31/51).

In late 1956, while overseeing CIA-funded MK-Ultra research (see chapter 8), Harold G. Wolff wrote Margaret Mead, asking her for the IFIS mailing list so that he could alert IFIS-affiliated scholars to “the possibility for future research funding” (MM C37, HW to MM 12/3/56). Wolff did not disclose that his Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology was a CIA front, and Mead provided access to the mailing list (MM C37, MM to HW 1/4/57). Mead and Wolff had been friends since at least the 1940s, and over the years she had offered constructive comments on Wolff’s research papers (e.g., MM C19, MM to HW 1/2/48) and shared papers that she thought would be of interest to him, such as Daniel Gajdusek’s 1958 work on the “‘laughing death’ of New Guinea” (MM C41, MM to HW 7/21/58).

At IFIS, Mead worked with Brookings Institution pollster and social psychologist Donald N. Michael on the Man in Space project. Man in Space research tracked the spread of knowledge about satellites following the launch of *Sputnik*, tracking measurable shifts in the American public’s consciousness on topics ranging from popular understandings of satellites to how surprised Americans were that the Soviets had launched the first satellite (55 percent were surprised, 44 percent were not) (Michael 1960: 576). For this project, in the days after the satellite’s launch, Mead asked Melville Jacobs to poll Seattleites for their reactions to *Sputnik*, instructing Jacobs to not disclose to research subjects any information about this project (see Michael 1960: 573; MJ 5, 20, MM to MJ 10/6/57). Adopting techniques similar to those used in British anthropologist Tom Harrisson’s mass research project, Mead and Rhoda Métraux helped Michael gather and analyze these data (Michael 1960: 575).

*The Salzburg Seminars*

Another way that American Cold War political forces drafted anthropologists to spread particular forms of Americanized democracy after the war was as
participants in programs exposing foreign scholars to American intellectuals. The 1947 Salzburg Seminar in American Civilization symposium collected promising European student scholars at Salzburg’s Leopoldskron Castle to foster postwar intellectual growth and the spirit of a specific form of American internationalism. The seminar was conceived of by Harvard graduate students Clemens Heller and Richard Campbell and one of their professors, Scott Elledge. After being refused funding by Harvard’s President James B. Conant, Heller and Campbell received a few thousand dollars from the university’s student government to finance the basic needs of the seminar; later, after the Seminar was established, in the early 1950s, the Rockefeller Foundation provided $30,000 a year (Rockefeller Foundation 1952: 417).

Margaret Mead was one of eleven American scholars who attended the first Salzburg Seminar. The first seminars were low-budget operations. The first year, the organizers traveled throughout Europe interviewing “about 150 students” and with 92 students attending the conference (Mead 1947: 2). Attendees read classics of American literature and political history in an informal setting that allowed select Americans to cultivate contacts with future leaders of postwar Europe. Conceived as an internationalist project fostering intellectual growth and humanitarianism in a land still decimated by the war, the seminar was controlled by the war’s victors.

The American presence at the seminar was significant. Not only was “American civilization” the central topic, but the seminar’s unsubtle political message was that it was time for Europe to learn intellectual lessons from the American victors (Mead 1947: 4). Representations of domestic American oppression were generally absent from Salzburg; academic press reports emphasized European student participants’ surprise at the levels of academic freedom and dissent. An account of the screening of the film *Grapes of Wrath* stressed a student’s amazement at Americans’ willingness to show such a depiction of abject poverty (H. N. Smith 1949: 35–36).

The U.S. Army Intelligence Service “dispatched agents to infiltrate [a Salzburg Seminar] session and report on the activities.” One army intelligence report, which summarized a spirited debate contrasting U.S. and Soviet economic and political systems, led to Clemens Heller being labeled as a “dangerous Red.” The State Department began proceedings to ban Heller from future entry to Austria and canceling future seminars, but calmer heads at State prevailed, and these plans were canceled (Ryback 2009).

Talcott Parsons participated in the second Salzburg Seminar, and the most notable political outcome of his attendance was that this trip marked the
beginning of his efforts to bring accused Nazi collaborator Nicholas Poppe to the United States (Gerhardt 1996). Given Kluckhohn’s documented reporting to the FBI and CIA during this period, his selection as the seminar’s anthropologist during its third year (Gleason 1949) raises the possibility of intelligence agencies gathering dossiers on seminar participants. By the end of the 1950s, rumors were circulating that the seminars had secret connections with the American intelligence community, though these accusations are unsubstantiated (see Wachman 2005: 44). But we do have documentation of the CIA funding other international seminars at this point in time following similar patterns of organization.

During this period, the CIA began providing funds that would total $135,000 for similar international summer sessions at Harvard organized by Henry Kissinger (NYT 1967b). In 1950, Henry Kissinger, then a Harvard graduate student, began planning a ten-week seminar that would bring fifty young European professionals to the university. This International Summer School program was run through Harvard’s Summer School, which a decade and a half later was discovered to have secretly operated with funding supplied by Frank Wisner’s Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) at the CIA. As Heller, Campbell, and Elledge had traveled throughout Europe collecting top participants for the Salzburg Seminars, Kissinger traveled in Europe, interviewing prospective students to attend the International Summer School, in some instances making political contacts that would have future uses. After CIA funding for the program was exposed, Kissinger insisted he had no knowledge of such support from the agency, but correspondence between Kissinger and William Elliott establishes his knowledge of CIA links (Wilford 2008: 126).

Although the CIA did not release any records in response to my FOIA requests relating to the Salzburg Seminars, it remains an open question whether the CIA or other governmental agencies had undisclosed contacts or influence with the students or others who attended. Given the CIA’s interest in, and covert financial support of, Harvard’s International Summer School during this period, this remains a possibility, and we know that military intelligence and State Department intelligence were monitoring seminar participants. Whatever the CIA’s involvement or noninvolvement in the Salzburg Seminars, the seminar’s propaganda value was clear, and anthropologists’ contributions to these efforts became a natural Cold War addition. A March 29, 1962, memo from the under secretary of state for political affairs advising DCI John McCone on various ways to infiltrate and influence international organizations mentioned the Salzburg Seminars as a model that the CIA could use for such efforts (CIA 1959c: Annex B, 2).
The Rise of Centers and Seminars

The rise of area study centers, international seminars, and research centers focusing on research problems framed by U.S. international concerns was shaped by Cold War political developments, and these centers and seminars were birthed with an infusion of governmental and private foundation funds. As David Nugent’s work shows, the value of social science to military and corporate foundations interested in maintaining power over, and controlling markets in, foreign countries “resulted in an unusual willingness on their part to subsidize the production of that knowledge” (2010: 2). At the time, the ways these funds supported American hegemony were not always apparent to those receiving the funds. It would not be until press revelations of CIA involvements became public in the 1960s that anthropologists began to consider the larger political context in which these systems of knowledge production were embedded.

This increasing availability of foundation funding was welcomed by anthropologists, who seldom considered what obligations might accompany such gifts or how the gifts might shape avenues of inquiry or analysis. But whether or not such issues were considered, these funds brought their own transformations. To receive this financial support, anthropologists “had only to learn to formulate research problems in categories established by the foundations and government agencies in the bureaucratic mold of rational procedure. The research proposal, and the thought process required to successfully fulfill it, therefore superseded the older, more individual approaches to the pursuit of knowledge. The changes in anthropology constituted just one small part of a wider process leading to the present situation in which government funding, tax-exempt foundations, and grant applications permeate all levels of American society, with their abstract formulas to which applications must either conform or die” (Denich 1980: 173). The conflux of the rise of tax-exempt foundations named after dead millionaires and anthropologists seeking research funds provided new life to Marx’s observation that “the more a dominant class is able to absorb the best people from the dominated class, the more solid and dangerous is its rule” (Marx 1894: 736).

In part, the area study centers rapidly appearing on American campuses during the early Cold War were intellectual extensions of wartime innovations made at the OSS and other intelligence agencies (Winks 1987: 115). Bruce Cumings observed how personal connections, skills, and mind-sets developed during the war influenced the interdisciplinary structural formation of area study centers; in addition, the centers frequently employed academics who maintained contacts...
with members of intelligence agencies in ways that mixed their academic pursuits with those of the CIA and other intelligence agencies (Cumings 1999: 173). Drawing on correspondence between Philip Mosely and Paul Langer from 1953, Cumings described how the Ford Foundation consulted with CIA director Allen Dulles to establish how Ford-funded research projects could be selected in ways that coalesced with the CIA’s needs (184). Cumings showed that Mosely was a “working linkage among Ford, the CIA and the ACLS/SSRC” extending from the early 1950s into the early 1960s to help “shape postwar area studies” (185).

Saunders (1999), Wilford (2008), Diamond (1992), Ransom (1975), and others document some of the ways that the CIA influenced intellectuals during the Cold War, at times using agencies like the Ford Foundation, as well as CIA front foundations, to steer intellectual movements (see chapters 7 and 8). The Ford Foundation played a vital support role, invigorating flaccid CIA-linked social science projects that were in need of support and legitimization. The pattern shown in the Ford Foundation volunteering to make up for the shortfall of funds at CENIS left by the CIA’s 1966 withdrawal was repeated in other CIA-exposed programs discussed in later chapters.

As one of the Cold War’s classic large, multisite ethnographic research projects, the Modjokuto Project demonstrated how large-scale projects required large, centralized funding sources. Such projects suggest similarities with how physics was transformed during the twentieth century, as it became tied both directly and peripherally to weapons lab research in classic dual use ways that nurtured the curiosity of those engaging in theoretical research and also produced findings that had implications for developing weapons systems.

Anthropologists and other scholars working at area study centers sometimes supported and sometimes scrutinized Cold War assertions of American hegemony, but even with occasional strong academic critiques, these centers produced the levels of technical cultural and linguistic knowledge needed to train those who supported American policy — and even the work of critics or politically neutral scholars was cannibalized for military or intelligence ends (Condannas 1973; D. H. Price 2003b, 2012a). These critiques of area study centers’ political alignments are almost as old as the programs themselves, with remarkably sophisticated critiques being made by anthropologist Jerome Rauch in his article “Area Institute Programs and African Studies” (1955). As an anthropology graduate student at Columbia University, Rauch traced the roots of the Cold War’s area study centers to the Second World War, writing that “the war-emergency agencies placed great emphasis on area organization,” producing information needed by agencies like the Office of Strategic Services, the Foreign
Economic Administration, and the Office of War Information (Rauch 1955: 409). Rauch described the Ethnogeographic Board’s coordination of the collection and distribution of ethnographic data to various military and intelligence agencies during the Second World War. He stressed how the board’s confidential reports and rosters “formed the backbone” of postwar area study center rosters (410). Rauch connected the 1950s area studies approach directly to U.S. cold war military and intelligence needs.

Rauch understood “the mantle of world hegemony” as providing “the propelling force behind foreign area research” (1955: 413). Rauch quoted George Peter Murdock’s realpolitik observation that “we shall have reason to believe that area research is prompted by pure science objectives when, for example, there suddenly appear in our universities ten times as many area programs concerned with Madagascar or the Fan Chaco as with Russia or China” (413).

Rauch understood the government outsourced needed analysis and training functions to area studies centers, a process in which “the subordination of area research to government and business policy has at times assumed war-time ‘crash project’ undertones” (1955: 415). While Rauch critiqued this approach, he recognized that others, like Karl Wittfogel, argued that just as the United States should dispense economic aid to underdeveloped nations only in ways that furthered the national interest, social science programs that were aligned with furthering the national interest should also be funded as a priority (415; Wittfogel 1950).

Rauch critiqued the Wenner-Gren Foundation’s role in funding anthropology and area studies, in what must be the first published academic criticism that alleged Axel Wenner-Gren’s connection with Nazis.21 The directness of his critique of the largest funder of anthropological research was unusual for the 1950s.

Rauch argued that “the themes underlying current African research” were aligned with America’s quest for “raw materials and investment opportunities, strategic and military import, the status quo and/or colonialism” (1955: 422). He rejected prevailing views that colonialism in Africa had brought positive impacts to those living under colonial rule, and he derisively quoted comments by Bryce Wood at a Princeton conference on Africa that called for American scholars to rethink their anticolonialist attitudes (423).

It is not surprising that Rauch’s critique of the dual use Cold War functions of area study centers did not garner praise: such interpretations were decidedly unwelcome in 1955. In 2001, Rauch wrote me that the publication of his paper produced unexpected results: “I had no great expectation that this analysis would be received as front page news, but I was taken aback by the way it
was totally rejected and assigned to oblivion. Over the years and to no avail I have submitted it to several bibliographic surveys hoping only that it would be listed” (JR to DHP 2/22/01). After Rauch published his analysis of area study centers, his adviser, Julian Steward, told him such forthright critiques were a form of academic suicide and suggested that he leave the field, which he did (D. H. Price 2011c: 350).

Critiques of Cold War agendas during this period brought career setbacks, and alignments with these agendas brought rewards. While anthropologists like Jack Harris, Bernhard Stern, Gene Weltfish, and Richard Morgan struggled to keep jobs or, after suffering the attacks of McCarthyism, left academia entirely to work as an insurance salesman or a chicken farmer, Clyde Kluckhohn’s career rose as a consequence of his alignment with nontransparent Cold War projects. Anthropologists who aligned their work with Cold War topics or regions of concern found broad career opportunities.

These campus-linked area study centers, seminars, and other research centers were not the only means of linking anthropologists to Cold War research projects. A wealth of governmental development projects focusing on global economic inequality and military-linked projects brought anthropologists into the orbits of the State Department, the CIA, and other governmental agencies.

In this context, anthropology’s neglect of the critique by sociology, its intellectual cousin, of the military-industrial complex through the writings of C. Wright Mills coalesced with the needs of state. The attacks on Mills at Harvard by Parsons and his followers produced dual use outcomes, as anthropology’s disciplinary elites drew attention away from power relations embedded in political-economic relations, even as anthropologists increasingly undertook fieldwork in societies of the “Third World,” where America fought for the hearts, minds, and bodies of those living on the Cold War’s proxy battlefield.