



From Americanization to Colonization: The Diffusion of Productivity Models Revisited

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Abstract

Drawing on postcolonial studies, this article seeks to add a layer to the literature concerning the Americanization of productivity models and management in general. Based on a genealogical analysis of Israel's productivity models, we juxtapose two processes by which productivity models were disseminated: first, by the British colonial authorities, and then as part of American technical assistance to Israel. Thus, we draw attention to the close ties between *Americanization* and *colonialism*. Our objective is to show empirically how earlier colonial practices preceded and set the stage for later processes of Americanization, and to stress the similar logic that both processes tend to follow.

Keywords: productivity, Americanization, colonialism and postcolonialism, Israel

The *Americanization* of productivity models across national boundaries is a topic that has recently attracted increasing scholarly attention (see, for example, Killick 1997; Guillen 1994; Sable and Zeitlin 1997; Kipping and Bjaenar 1998; Djelic 1998; Zeitlin and Herrigel 2000). The main argument around which the literature on Americanization is crystallized claims that, given the success of the American industrial system and growing American influence (particularly) after the Second World War, (mostly) European and Japanese industrial firms have adopted American managerial practices directed at increasing productivity. Inevitably, this process has resulted in a growing convergence of production and organization methods across nation-states (Westeney 1987; Strang and Meyer 1993; Chandler 1990; Djelic 1998; Kipping and Bjaenar 1998; but see Guillen 2001).

Drawing on the Israeli case, this article seeks to add a layer to the Americanization literature by turning to analyze the spread of productivity models outside of Europe and Japan, or in other words, outside the so-called 'First World'. At face value, Israel, like many other post-Second World War countries, went through a process of (slightly delayed) Americanization of its productivity practices and its field of management at large. In 1949, soon after the state of Israel was established, the country was flooded with American experts. With a population of less than one million inhabitants, in its first decade the country received a massive inflow of more than 200 experts from the US Operation Mission (USOM) alone. About 20 percent of these

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experts worked directly in the field of increasing industrial productivity, while others were indirectly involved with it (Israel State Archives). Within a single decade this effort yielded several institutions based on an American model of productivity increase. Departments for productivity increase became common in Israel's new governmental, public, and private institutions. American experts were frequent guests in such departments, and Israeli experts were sent to the USA to be trained in the field of industrial productivity increase (Frenkel 2000).

Yet, while the *Americanization* of productivity models is usually conceptualized as a unique historical and geographical phenomenon facilitated by the exceptional global conditions of the postwar era, particularly international relations and technological development, the genealogical analysis of Israel's productivity models offers a whole different story. It shows that the 1950s *Americanization* process was not the first wave of 'western' productivity models to reach the country. It was preceded by an earlier British effort (during the 1920s to 1940s) to introduce productivity models in Palestine (pre-state Israel) as part of its colonial mission. Much like the Americans, British colonial rulers invited other European and American experts to establish institutions that facilitated productivity increase, such as the Middle East College for Public Administration, which was the first to teach productivity models, and the Institute for Standardization, set up with the help of the International Labor Organization (ILO), to implement these models in industrial firms.

Drawing on the postcolonial perspective (Said 1978; Spivak 1988; Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1998; Loomba 1998; Gandhi 1998), this article juxtaposes the processes of British colonial dissemination of productivity models with the subsequent American ones to draw attention to the close ties between *Americanization* and *colonialism* in the field of productivity and management. We suggest that the two phenomena are not only similar in many aspects, but also that the early colonial diffusion of productivity models formed an essential infrastructure for the later processes of Americanization.

Contrary to the literature on Americanization (which by and large overlooks colonialism), we turn to postcolonial studies, which emphasize the importance of the unequal relationships in the world system in understanding the diffusion of western knowledge across national borders (see, for example, Said 1978; Bhabha 1994; Asad 1981). Postcolonial studies focus on analysis of the western bodies of knowledge that developed in the light of the colonial encounter and deal, directly or indirectly, with the colonies and their characteristics and culture. This offers a broader cultural and historical scheme within which the Americanization of processes of management can be understood and analyzed.

At the theoretical level, therefore, this article seeks to offer a critique of the Americanization literature, pointing to its failure to place the cross-national spread of managerial models in the colonial matrix. Our objective is to show empirically how processes of Americanization were preceded by earlier colonial practices, which set the stage for later processes, and to stress the similar logic that both processes tended to follow.

By so doing we wish to contribute both to the management literature and to the postcolonial paradigm. To the best of our knowledge, postcolonial theory has so far not directly addressed management studies, and nor has management studies lent itself to explicit examination within the framework of postcolonial thought. Comparative management literature, even when dealing with former colonized societies such as Egypt and India, never reads their colonial experience as relevant to the development of their field of management (see, for example, Harbison and Myers 1959; Hickson and Pugh 1995). Local writers in these former colonies, on the other hand, do recognize the impact of colonialism on management development, but they mention it only as an explanation for the absence of an indigenous management model (see, for example, Singh 1996). The introduction of the postcolonial perspective into management literature, therefore, contributes a new and much-needed perspective on the comparative management literature as well.

This article is structured as follows. We begin with a short and eclectic discussion of postcolonial theory and its potential contribution to the understanding of the spread of productivity models and their Americanization (second section). After a short methodological section (third section), we provide empirical materials that examine the spread of productivity models in pre-state Israel during the British colonial era (fourth section), as well as in the (so-called) 'decolonized' state of Israel under American influence (fifth section). Placing these two processes side by side, we underscore the similarity between them, as well as the importance of the former in creating the infrastructure for the latter. We will end with an attempt to assess the hybridization processes of different productivity models, and the reciprocal effects that the colonial discourses had on the patterns of management and control which developed in various metropolises as a result of the colonial experience (sixth section).

Theoretical Prism: From Americanization to Colonization

Researchers studying the spread of productivity models across national and cultural boundaries seem to begin their story with (at the earliest) the introduction of American models of management in Europe in the early decades of the 20th century or even later (Maier 1987; Guillen 1994; Djelic 1998; Kipping and Bjaenar 1998). By so doing, they subscribe to the canonic American chronology marking the emergence of Taylor's scientific management as the point of departure for institutionalizing productivity models (Scott 1992; for a problematization of this approach, see Shenhav 2003). The diffusion of these models is generally tied to the establishment of American-like professional institutions in the fields of industrial engineering, efficiency engineering, and industrial management (see, for example, Djelic 1998; Kjeaar 2000). Accepting this point of departure, the literature dealing with models of productivity increase tends to overlook indigenous models of productivity emerging in Europe since the onset of modernity. Consequently, the possibility of the spread

of these indigenous models outside Europe before the American model was even crystallized is largely ignored.

Yet, as Max Weber (1971) aptly demonstrated in his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, such an indigenous European productivity model not only existed at this early stage of European history, but was actually one of the most dominant discourses of modernity facilitating the emergence of the spirit of capitalism. This early version of the productivity model, which preceded the emergence of the American professional productivity model, became an important disciplinary device (Foucault 1965). As such, it was applied by the European colonial forces in their 'non-western' colonies, thereby enhancing and legitimizing their political and economic control (Mitchell 1988). As Comaroff and Comaroff (1997: 166) indicate:

'In their effort to transform African agriculture, the nonconformists [colonizers] spoke of reclaiming the prodigal soul along with the wasted garden... saving the savage meant teaching the savage to save. It meant, too, that he be thought to recast his inefficient mode of production so that, using God's gift, he might bring forth the greatest possible abundance. Only then would black communities be animated by the spirit of commerce that — along with the gospel of Christ — promoted exchange on a worldwide scale.'

As the above text implies, like other western systems of knowledge and belief, early European productivity models were spread in the colonies as early as the 19th century, serving the colonial missions of civilizing the colonized populations, silencing their potential resistance and better exploiting their resources. To what extent should we analyze the Americanization of productivity as a continuation of the colonial process?

In its widest sense, 'Postcolonial Studies involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effect, both at the level of ex-colonial societies as well as the level of more general global developments thought to be the aftereffects of empire' (Quayson 2000: 2). Today, the main thrust of postcolonial studies is the analysis of western bodies of knowledge and belief, and their relevance to colonial and postcolonial global relations.

Theoreticians such as Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Talal Asad, and Gayatri Spivak provide insights about the colonial context in which western structures of knowledge develop and are shaped. They show that the source of these structures of knowledge lies in ethnocentric views, which define the West, directly or indirectly, as modern, rational, and homogeneous, whereas the 'other' (the 'East', the 'Third World', the 'native', and the 'ethnic') is perceived as less progressive and less rational. Understanding the intellectual sources of these structures of knowledge and of the ethnic hierarchy they create is of considerable importance in the struggle of ethnic groups for self-determination within the 'Third World'. Yet it is also of crucial relevance for the struggles of minorities in the western world to crystallize or preserve cultural identity within the framework of the multicultural idea (for example, Young 1990; Kymlicka 1995).

The current version of postcolonial studies originates in the highly influential book published by Edward Said in 1978 entitled *Orientalism*. In this book, Said examines the bodies of knowledge that developed in the West

about cultures external to it and the manner in which these Orientalist bodies of knowledge simultaneously create both the Orient and the ostensibly homogeneous identity of the West. 'Orientalism', he argues, is a 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (or any other non-western society) (Said 1978: 3). Spreading western discourses and models in the colonies as scientific models reflects a colonial practice in which the western colonial forces attempted to make the colonized population accept western superiority and, therefore, minimize their resistance. Socialized within the colonial educational and bureaucratic systems, the colonized elites internalized their rulers' point of view and developed a 'colonized self', blocking any attempt to resist the colonial power (Mitchell 1988). Similar views of colonial missions achieved by the circulation of western models and belief systems in the colonies are also presented by Anderson (1983), Asad (1993), and Bhabha (1994).

The postcolonial perspective, it is important to note, does not deal with the traditional colonial era of the 19th and early 20th centuries alone. The prefix 'post' in the term 'postcolonialism' refers not so much to movement on a temporal continuum as to a change in conceptual categories (Shohat 1992). That is, the term 'postcolonialism' does not refer to the period 'after colonialism'; it is, rather, an attempt at becoming liberated from the modes of colonialist discourse and speech, whether these occurred a hundred years ago or today. In other words, postcolonial theory does not mean to say that the era of colonialism has ended. As a matter of fact, the literature has now turned its attention mostly to the continuing unequal relations between the West and the rest, conceptualizing current American domination as yet another wave of neocolonialism (Young 1990).

From this perspective, the Americanization of the productivity model after the Second World War and its dissemination by the European colonial forces should now be analyzed as part of the same colonial continuum. The diffusion of productivity models (both before and after the Second World War) can no longer be analyzed as a neutral process free of issues of power differences, as the Americanization literature tends to view it. Furthermore, the reciprocal relations between the exporting (exploiting?) forces and the importing ones cannot be taken for granted. The possibility that the productivity model is spread as part of a framework of unequal relations between the colonizer and colonized, dominator and dominated in the world system, should be accorded more attention.

Instead of reviewing the outcomes of the Americanization or 'westernization' of management only in terms of industrial and organizational changes, the postcolonial literature leads us to look at the ways that the encounter with colonial (or neocolonial) knowledge and practices simultaneously transform the basic identities of both the colonized and the colonizer. The adoption of the productivity models, both European and American, should, therefore, be analyzed as a cultural transformation, which often faces resistance. This resistance, as Homi Bhabha argues in his 'On mimicry and men', often takes the shape of hybridization. The imposed western discourse is compounded with a different indigenous one to create a hybrid version, which simulta-

neously indicates the effect of the dominating force and the resistance to it (Bhabha 1994).

Drawing on this postcolonial lesson, we seek to reexamine the broad conflictual social and cultural context within which the spread of productivity models could have taken place, and demonstrate the strong ties between Americanization and colonialism as they are reflected in the field of management. We demonstrate below that the post-Second World War American effort to gain global hegemony in the 'decolonized' states had a part in many of these colonial missions. Much like the 'classic' colonial project, the neo-colonial project of Americanization meant the introduction of the productivity discourse and its practices in an attempt to bolster and legitimize a cultural and economic global hegemony (Williams and Chrisman 1994: 2–3). We maintain that the introduction of a colonial productivity discourse around the globe established the institutional and ideological patterns on which the American professional discourse of productivity and productivization could be disseminated in the 'decolonized' territories.

Yet, arguing that the two processes (colonialization and Americanization) have much in common does not make them identical. The productivity model spread by traditional colonial forces was indeed different from the more professional one circulated by the Americans a few decades later.

In its early stages, the demand for increased productivity in Europe was not efficiency oriented or technical, as the subsequent American models would become. It mainly reflected a moral and religious demand for participation in the productive workforce and for the enforcement of normative rules on the behavior of individuals.

In bringing a postcolonial perspective to the Americanization literature, we also expand the neo-Marxist critique which, in the 1970s, was already being used to explain the institutionalization of the American productivity discourse as part of an attempt to control and discipline (Braverman 1974; Edwards 1979, 1984; Burawoy 1979; for a review of the role of productivity models as control devices, see also Barley and Kunda 1992). This lesson, which originally addressed only the attempt made by western employers to control and exploit workers in the capitalist world, should be extended to include the action taken by the 'West' to control and discipline other parts of the world beyond the economic sphere alone.

Drawing on the Israeli case study, we argue and wish to demonstrate below that the postwar American effort to gain global hegemony in the 'decolonized' states shared many of these colonial missions. Much like the 'classic' colonial project, the neocolonial project of Americanization meant the introduction of productivity models and practices in an attempt to bolster and legitimize a cultural and economic global hegemony (Williams and Chrisman 1994: 2–3).

Israel constitutes an especially interesting case of a *triple colonialism*, exposing the country to the concurrent influence of three colonial forces, as follows.

- 1 A conventional 'European (British) colonialism', grounded in a military occupation which started in 1917 and in a Commonwealth mandate

given to Britain to manage Palestine's affairs in 1920. British rule was terminated in 1948 with the foundation of the Jewish nation-state of Israel.

- 2 A 'national (Zionist) colonialism', a (predominantly) European Jewish settlers' movement aiming at building a national home for the Jewish people, which settled in Palestine from the 1880s onward, but was institutionalized as a colonial project mainly with the arrival of the British colonial project in 1917. (This is somewhat controversial in Israeli historiography. Defenses of this argument can be found in Ram (1993), Pappé (1997), Shamir (2000), and Frenkel (2000).)
- 3 A 'cultural-economic (American) neocolonialism', which became prominent in 1949 and is still shaping Israeli society and its productivity discourse.

It is this matrix of triple colonialism which provides the context for the introduction of the various modern discourses of productivity in Israel, their adoption, and in some instances also the resistance toward them.

Methodology

Taking the postcolonial perspective seriously, we substitute the conventional historical methods usually applied to study the process of Americanization, with a genealogical method (Foucault 1965, 1975, 1977). European history is a paradigm that in itself is a product of the 19th-century colonial *episteme* (Saïd 1978, 1993; Bhabha 1994). It is shaped by the concept of time that is bounded by European nationalism, which reflects Protestant history and colonial roots. Genealogical analysis allows for a multiplicity of voices and 'origins'. It suggests that the historical story can be read differently, and from a different starting point.

The attempt to explore the changes in the productivization discourse and the various meanings that it imparted to each colonial power requires broad-spectrum historical research, rich in empirical sources. Since the history of Israel management is only now beginning to be studied and secondary sources are scarce (Frenkel 2000), the present research began with the methodical screening of *Ha'aretz*, Israel's longest-established daily newspaper. With funding from the Israeli National Academy of Sciences, we employed six researchers who were asked to read a sampling of texts from *Ha'aretz*, dating from the period 1920–60, and to collect any mention of the issues of productivity. Through these newspaper articles, advertisements, and editorials, we identified the major actors in the discourse regarding productivity, and through them, using the snowball method, we also examined archival sources and secondary literature that helped to expose the basic assumptions of the discourse and the central actors who were involved in shaping it.

In view of the lack of secondary sources and prior research on the subject, this research method was the only one that allowed us to reveal at least a part of the mechanism through which this discourse appears and its underlying

principles. However, the method has some significant disadvantages. Of these, the most prominent is the fact that the sources at our disposal were written only in Hebrew and English, with a significant bias toward the Hebrew language. The Arabic discourse, which is not reflected in *Ha'aretz* and in the archives that we surveyed, is absent from the picture that we wish to chart here, and requires further in-depth research. In this sense, the research is biased and is not in accord with the postcolonial attempt to let the 'subaltern' speak (Spivak 1988). The Palestinian Arabs were, without any doubt, the group that was subject to the most sweeping influence of the different control practices exercised by the various colonial powers in mandatory Palestine and the state of Israel. In this sense, the research reflects mainly the attempts at control and productivization that were made by rulers over the ruled, but less so the responses and the forms of resistance that were displayed by the ruled.

The Colonial Context of Americanization: Productivity Discourse During the Colonial Era

The British productivity discourse was first introduced in Palestine as part of the British attempt to establish colonial rule in the territory. The British were rather ambivalent toward the Jewish population in Palestine. On the one hand, the British mandate from the Commonwealth to manage the affairs of Palestine was based, to some extent, on Britain's political commitment to establish a National Home for the Jewish people, thus arousing the national aspirations of the Zionist movement in Palestine. On the other hand, British interests in Palestine and in other parts of the colonized Arab world demanded the holding up of the Jewish demand to open the colony to massive Jewish immigration and settlement. Such Jewish settlement, the British feared, would commit the British government to invest heavily in Palestine, on the one hand, and would generate a growing Arab resistance in Palestine and in other parts of the Middle East, on the other (Shamir 2000).

The presentation of the productivity discourse by the British was meant to solve some of these dilemmas. It was aimed at restricting Jewish settlement in Palestine, while creating a clear connection between the size of the population and its level of productivity. A further purpose was to reduce the colonial empire's financial investments, while at the same time taking increased advantage of the colony's resources for the benefit of the colonial metropolis.

This claim is well borne out in the first two instances in which the colonial government was involved in the dissemination of the productivity discourse. In the first event, the British, in collaboration with the Zionist movement, invited a committee of American experts to judge, objectively and scientifically, how many Jews the country could absorb. It is an accepted assumption that by inviting these experts the British had hoped to limit legitimately Jewish immigration, but the results were different. Based on their experience in the Western USA, the American experts ruled that the absorption capacity was dependent on productivity rates that could be increased using American

productivity methods (Troen 1996). The more productive the Jews became, decreed the American experts, the bigger the Jewish population that the country could absorb. The experts were very specific in their view of the changes needed in Palestine's production system, mostly in terms of land cultivation. However, through this back door they allowed the productivity discourse to become a critical issue in the relations between the British and Zionist colonial forces and the Arab population.

This early introduction of the productivity discourse tied together the interests of British colonialism with those of Zionist colonialism. For the Jews, productivity increase was a condition for British collaboration in bringing in more Zionist settlers, while for the British, it meant more Jewish production to send back home, more royalties and taxes, and the development of Palestine's infrastructure with minimal British investment. The capital that was invested in Palestine was, instead, Jewish national capital.

Moreover, the increasing productivity rates could have served to silence Arab resistance toward Zionist immigration — 'scientifically' arguing that the Jews were bringing in more resources, rather than decreasing those available for the Arabs.

The affinity constructed between productivity increase and the Jewish national aspiration is echoed in the Zionist productivity discourse, which at the time was affected by both British demands and by the European modernist tradition within which the Zionist movement emerged. This affinity is demonstrated, for example, in the words of one of the most prominent Zionist leaders in Palestine at that time, who would eventually become the first president of the state of Israel, Chaim Weizmann:

'When a productive Jew comes to the country, he takes up one place, but then he creates one new place, or half a place, or two places. Thus we see the amazing vision, and I am sure that it is not an idle fancy, that in December 1924, with the huge *aliyah* [immigration] there will be hardly any unemployed while in December 1923, with its negligible *aliyah*, the numbers of unemployed attained two thousand and more.' (*Ha'aretz* 1925)

Weizmann's words reflect the growing understanding of the Jewish leadership that the entire Zionist national-colonial project is dependent on cultivating and subscribing to the discourse on productivity. This affinity, as we later show, generated wide Zionist political support for the introduction of both the productivity discourse and practices by the British colonial forces, despite growing general dissatisfaction with the British intervention.

This joint British-Zionist effort to bring in a productivity discourse, each for its own benefits, is also reflected in our second example, that of the case of the Dead Sea mining franchise. The Dead Sea was the sole source of potash, an essential item for the explosives industry throughout the British Empire and Britain itself. The fears of the British regarding the loss of this resource were translated into the claim that the Jewish entrepreneur, Moshe Novomeysky, could not keep up with the rate of production required for the Empire's needs (Frenkel et al. 1996). The franchise was eventually granted in 1929, after Novomeysky acceded to His Majesty's condition and placed

at the head of the Palestine Potash Company's board of directors a British chairman with great prestige and also undertook to attain a production rate that would both satisfy the Empire's needs and yield substantial royalties to the Crown. Lord Lytton, who was appointed chairman of the board, was one of the people who pushed for increasing the company's manufacturing quota. His demands were met by the Jewish managers and the American Zionist directors, who saw productivity increase as a Jewish national goal. As part of the negotiations with Lytton, the company adopted administrative practices that were customary in Britain, such as company towns and welfare endeavors identified with British 'welfare capitalism' (Frenkel et al. 1996).

The centrality of the idea of increasing productivity in Palestine Potash Ltd (PPL) is well reflected in documents from the company's archives. One of the workers, for instance, complains in the following terms:

'the company's mechanisms do not allow for such feelings: "output", they say, that's the main thing, "output" is the prayer recited by all departmental managers, general managers, and even the head managers. Output — whistle the carriage wheels...'. ('Machanenu', PPL workers' newsletter, 2)

The drive to increase productivity also found expression in the company's demand that the mandate government should let it found settlements on the company's lands, following the idea of company towns that was popular in Britain at that time. Permission was granted (Frenkel et al. 1996).

Against Arab protest (and, to an extent, that of some British entrepreneurs), the priority given to Jewish entrepreneurs was presented as an objective decision granting the charter to the more productive enterprise. A similar priority which was later given to Jewish workers in more professional and profitable jobs in Palestine Potash Ltd, at the expense of the Arab workers, was explained in similar terms. Due to their modern and western background, Jewish workers were claimed to be more suitable for advanced jobs, while Arab workers were better equipped for the simple and less profitable manual positions (Novomeysky 1956). In more general terms, one can say that the ostensibly objective, western productivity discourse serves to justify 'West/East' segregation in the way depicted so forcefully by Edward Said (1978). The conventional colonial wisdom, according to which 'western' workers and productivity methods are always more rational and productive than non-western and non-modern ones, served the Zionist movement on other occasions in its attempts to gain autonomy for the Jewish civil system.

It is important to note here that several contemporary researchers have acknowledged that Arab agricultural workers were commonly viewed as more productive than their Jewish compatriots, mainly given their experience with the local conditions (for example, Shapira 1977; Shalev 1992; Shafir 1989). However, the 'Orientalist' view, shared by both British and Zionist colonial movements, which conceptualized western methods as inherently superior to the Oriental ones, gave Jewish agriculture important leverage in their relations with the British authorities.

Throughout the pages of *Ha'aretz*, Zionist leaders and spokesmen vied in creating links between the Jewish people's productivity and the colonization

process that they considered a nation-building project. Hillel Zlotopesky, a prominent spokesman for the Zionists at that period, illustrates the power of the national productivization discourse in addressing the supreme goals of Zionist settlement in Palestine:

‘We will not make do with simply transferring Jews, but we will help them to renew their way of living in the country.... We stopped understanding and loving nature. All our education was based on abstract studies. Nor did we establish enterprises for work and craftsmanship in Eretz Israel, and we must do so, because our whole national psychology will develop through manual labor, through working the soil, by all the work slogans that elevated the spirits of former generations — handed down to us by prophets, who were shepherds and herdsmen.’

The stress on the productive nature of work in terms of redemption, not the subjugation of workers (as the workers’ federations in Europe presented it, for example) was a central part of the socialist-oriented rhetoric that was crystallized by the Zionist Movement’s leaders. It is worth noting the substantive difference between the moral national discourse of productivization that came into being as part of the Zionist colonialist project and the economic-management discourse that was taking shape at that time in the USA in the form of paradigms of scientific management and human relations.

‘The individual should aspire [to the idea] that the most important part would not be the wage he receives for his work, but the work itself, the actual product that is created.... The worker should produce beautiful work, but work is beautiful only when it cultivates the human being, no less so than when it cultivates the land.... Productive work is the great human ideal of the future — and its greatness derives from its healing component.’

The affinity created by such speakers between productivity, national interests, and labor class interests legitimized the demand made by the British to increase productivity, and silenced the voices calling for the rejection of some of the productivity practices at PPL and other agricultural and industrial enterprises (Frenkel et al. 1996).

In any case, beyond the profits that the British Empire garnered from the productivization of Jewish industry in Palestine, the introduction of the productivity discourse held a secondary profit for British capitalists. Jewish industrialists were asked to purchase raw materials and products solely in Britain, and to favor them over German goods and other cheaper, better-known ones. Under the title ‘The government fights products of Eretz Israel’, the local Jewish daily, *Ha’aretz* bemoans the ‘demand by the colonial institutions of Jewish towns to use only clay pipes from England... in so doing it prohibits the government from using pipes imported from Belgium and Germany, which were used in previous years and whose prices are much cheaper’ (1931; see also 1934).

Britain’s dependence on increasing Jewish industrial manufacture in Palestine grew significantly during the Second World War, when supply lines to the Middle East from Europe and other parts of the British Empire were cut off. The British army in the Middle East became totally dependent for the supply of its needs, in terms of clothing, footwear, food, and ammunition, on

Jewish industrial manufacturing and the ability of Jewish industrial firms to increase their output, or in other words, to boost productivity. The British productivization discourse was expressed in attempts to supervise the Israeli suppliers and in attempts to determine which employees would be sent to undertake construction work in British army camps. Solel Boneh, a Jewish company owned by the Zionist Workers Federation, which was involved in constructing military camps for the British far beyond Palestine's territorial limits, was asked, for example, to select its most productive workers for this purpose. The Potash Company was asked to bolster its manufacturing output during the war, and the bureaucratic institutions that the British set up to supervise manufacturing, such as the Mandatory Department of Labour and the Department of Industry, were engaged in the close supervision of production patterns and so on. In 1945, at the end of the Second World War, H. Wilson-Brown, the British official in charge of heavy industry in Palestine, demanded that Jewish industry in Palestine increase its productivity:

'[There are] two points of importance for increasing productivity in industry[:] speeding up manufacture by [means of a] salaries method and thus granting development of a sense of recognition of the profession's value. Instead of the customary method of salary on a time basis, we should prefer ... salary methods that motivate the workers. But this salary should be based on a scientific calculation, and should not be lowered again after the goals of increased output [are] accomplished, unless the workers' agreement is obtained to this.'

He suggested that engineers with experience in manufacturing problems be sent to England and America in order to learn about the latest methods of linking salary to manufacturing output, and promised his help on this matter (*Ha'aretz* 1945a). The connection made here between the British call for higher productivity in pre-state Israel and the economic and political needs of the Empire perfectly demonstrates our claim that colonial logic fed the diffusion of the productivity discourse in the context of pre-state Israel.

It should be noted that the American productivization discourse, especially that of scientific management to which Wilson-Brown refers in his call, had not yet gained widespread acceptance in contemporary Britain (Guillen 1994), but, nevertheless, the call for productivization in the colonies was made with reliance on the American discourse. There is great significance to this fact, in terms of its recurring effects on the colonial experience to shape the metropolis (hereafter, termed 'writing back' (Ashcroft et al. 1989)).

The most explicit British demand for the colonies, including Palestine, to boost manufacturing in order to support the British Empire's economy and the British metropolis was heard, paradoxically, after the war, from the British Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech-Jones:

'The United Kingdom is facing an economic crisis, which in terms of its gravity is unprecedented throughout history... the colonial territories can help in various ways... His Majesty's Government is therefore interested in helping as much as possible the colonies' efforts to step up their output. In many spheres, technical inquiries are already underway, in order to assure that colonial territories will enjoy full satisfaction of their natural sources... however suggestions and money are not enough. Full cooperation from the governments of the colonies and their population is vital, so that

colonial manufacturing will play a role in rebuilding a world destroyed by the war, rehabilitating economic stability in the United Kingdom, and opening up the colonies themselves.' (*Ha'aretz* 1947)

This call, as we later demonstrate, did indeed generate more direct action to train Jewish and Arab administrators in that direction and to supervise organizations more closely.

In order to supervise increased production for Britain's needs, the British colonial bureaucracy used the specific and sophisticated administrative mechanisms that had been developed in other colonies (Mitchell 1988) and applied them to Palestine's industry and commerce too. The Mandatory Department of Labour and Department of Industry in Palestine possessed tools for supervising colonial productivization. Officials who were employed by these ministries, British, Jewish, and Arab individuals who lived in the colony, were sent to industrial plants and to service organizations in order to supervise at first-hand the boosting of production and compliance with the labor laws applied by the British in Palestine. These officials, who during their work had internalized British principles of rationalization, visited the various plants and collected detailed information on production processes. With the help of these visits, the British administration maintained direct control and deep involvement in production processes in Palestine, and also in the everyday life of employers and employees (see Ballas (1998) for a similar argument about the role of imported management models in maintaining governmental control by new regimes).

In internalizing a British mode of thinking, one should note, Jewish and Arab representatives of the British Empire became part of colonial control. With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, many of the Jews among these colonial administrators became part of the new state administration, constituting around one-third of the entire state service (Reuveny 1993). The British heritage that they brought with them facilitated the conceptualization of productivity increase as one of the new state's most prominent goals and, indirectly, openness toward the Americanization of Israel's productivity discourse.

However, as we suggested earlier, the British effort to introduce a productivity discourse was not the only one. It was met by a Zionist productivity discourse, which, like the British one, was shaped toward the colonial encounter in the local context of Palestine. In the absence of a military power, such as that of the 'classic' empires, the Zionist movement began (from the end of the 19th century) to take over territory by purchasing land that was for sale and conquering other land by cultivating it. Much like British productivization practices in Africa (but in contrast to British productivization in Palestine), Zionism established its colonial position through founding agricultural settlements, introducing plant species and European agricultural methods, and using European agronomists for agricultural management (Shafir 1989).

The attitude of Zionism and its various agents to the land-cultivation methods of the Palestinian Arab settlements as being primitive, uncivilized

methods was identical with the Orientalist approach of the western colonial powers described by Said (1978). Thus, due to their similar, although not necessarily mutual, colonial missions, British and Zionist authorities were active in importing the western productivity discourse to Palestine, paving the way for the Americanization of Israel's productivity discourse after statehood.

No less important, as part of their colonial endeavor, both British and Zionist authorities were involved in the invitation of American experts to Palestine, first as development and agriculture consultants and later on as management and productivity experts involved, for example, in the rationalization of Palestine Potash Ltd and other industrial enterprises. In addition, it was a British and Zionist joint venture which eventually introduced into colonized Palestine American managerial models of productivity and constituted the first formal institution where such theories were translated into Hebrew: the Middle-East College for Public Administration, established by a high-ranking British officer who was also a Zionist activist, Sir Edwin Samuel (Samuel 1970).

In the mid-1940s, with the growing dependence of the British war machine on industry in Palestine, the college was established with the support of the British High Commissioner. It was intended to offer British, Jewish, and Arab officials the patterns of modern management and administration that were then accepted in Britain itself and in the USA. Samuel structured the college's curriculum as a hybrid of his bureaucratic training at Oxford University and his business administration studies at Columbia University in New York. Among the lecturers were the heads of the British administration, but there were also notable figures from the Zionist leadership and a handful of Palestinian Arabs.

In establishing the college as a single British, Jewish, and Arab framework, Samuel saw himself as a messenger of peace and unity, and the college as a mechanism to calm tensions and resistance between the different national groups. In accordance with the European colonial tradition, Samuel believed that modernizing and rationalizing the two ruled populations in Palestine would allow them to see their future as a shared one, could advance both the communities at the same time, and would lead to a robust economy and generalized well-being. Samuel thought that 'western' productivization theories (British and American) that claimed to reflect instrumental, apolitical rationality would serve this purpose very well.

By the end of the British colonial era in Palestine, then, productivity discourse was an integral part of Israel's public sphere, some productivity practices were already in use, and the first formal institution teaching professional productivity models was already operational. However, at this point Israel's productivity discourse was not yet Americanized. As we have mentioned earlier, both British and Zionist discourses were different from the American one. While productivity in the USA focused on technical and psychological means to increase cost-efficiency and profitability, these targets were only marginal to the European discourses spread in Palestine at the time.

Influenced by Marxist and Henricidean ideas, the Zionist movement was interested in productivization mostly in its moral interpretation, as means for individual redemption and national liberation. In a socialist-oriented society such as the Jewish community in Palestine, profitability was not a desirable value, nor was professionalization. Similarly, the British productivity discourse was not directed at cost-efficiency and profitability, but toward effectiveness and increasing production scales. The Americanization of this discourse was yet to come, with the strengthening of American neocolonial influence after the establishment of the state of Israel. But as we shall demonstrate in the following section, US interests in the Americanization of Israel's productivity discourse are not far from those which motivated the British and Zionist colonial forces to push for the productivization of pre-state Israel.

Post-Statehood Americanization as Neocolonialism

As the term 'neocolonialism' hints, at no stage did the Americans aspire to take control of territory in Palestine, in military or administrative terms. The concept of 'neocolonialism', which was developed mainly in neo-Marxist literature since the 1970s, relates to the continuation of western culture and economic influence on countries that had apparently undergone a decolonization process. One of the pivotal missions of American neocolonialism in Palestine, and subsequently in the state of Israel, was to draw the Zionist entity in Palestine into the American bloc. This mission became even stronger in the aftermath of the Second World War and upon Israeli statehood.

At the very start of American intervention in Palestine, one can already identify the mission that would later become the central mission of the American experts — positioning Jewish society in the country within a capitalistic, not socialist, infrastructure, within a market economy instead of a centralized one. The discourse regarding professional-management productivization constituted a significant element in this civilizing mission. For example, the intervention of American Zionists in inviting American development experts as early as the 1920s was set against the backdrop of their defeat in the struggle that was waged in the World Zionist movement on the way to consolidate the nation-building project in Palestine. The debate was between American Zionists, who believed that it should be grounded on the economic basis of a pragmatic market economy (like that of the USA in the early 20th century), and European Zionists, who maintained that a centralized economy with socialist, collectivist traits should be installed in Palestine. After their failure in Zionism's political institutions, the Americans attempted to promote their position by sending American development experts to Palestine. As mentioned above, the reports sent by the latter recommended establishing farms and farming villages in the style practiced in the Western USA (Troen 1996). Citrus-grower experts from California who came to help the Jewish citrus growers in Palestine also reached similar conclusions (Karlinsky 2000). When the British mandatory government in

Palestine adopted these attitudes, they gained validity and importance, in the face of opposition from the local Zionist leadership.

For those living at that time, particularly the left-wingers who wanted to avoid American influence, this picture was abundantly clear. Quoting the Polish delegate to the United Nations, the left-wing Jewish newspaper *Al Ha'mishmar* noted that the expansion of the Marshall Plan included dispatching American technical delegations to backward countries, under UN supervision, which was 'intended to enhance American control in colonial and semi-colonial regions, mainly in South American and the Middle East' (*Al Ha'mishmar* 1949).

Unlike the moral Zionist productivization discourse, and the discourse of the British administration, which proposed, respectively, reinforcing physical labor as a value in itself and enhancing output without connection to production, the professional-management productivity model that the Americans brought with them underscored a priori the issue of cost-efficiency. For example, this issue reflects the recommendations of an American advisor who was brought to Palestine in 1937 to rationalize production at the Palestine Potash Company (Frenkel et al. 1996), recommendations to implement Taylorist ideas in the citrus groves, and later in the recommendations of American experts who were sent to help advance industry in Israel. One of many examples of this influence are the following assertions by American experts from Stanford University in a major report that they drafted in 1954 for the American aid delegation and the Israeli government:

'It seems that more than anything else, Israel now needs outstanding managerial powers in all stages. The managers will do well to concentrate now on rendering more efficient the calculation of manufacturing costs, improving quality levels, and supervising quality, a more rational organization of management's roles, and a more thorough study of the markets and sales methods.' (*Ha'aretz* 1945c)

As part of the productivity discourse, the Stanford experts also recommended preventing the transfer of American aid funds to industrial organizations owned by the state or the national labor union, the *Histadrut*. Thus, under the ideological disguise of the professional productivization discourse (ostensibly neutral in political terms) they intended to create a parallel between efficient management and private ownership, and to bring Israel's political-economic culture even closer to its American counterpart.

The hundreds of American development and productivity experts who spent time in Israel throughout the 1950s also assisted the American neocolonial project in its second mission, that of creating colonial trade and industry and exploiting it for the purposes of capitalism in the metropolis. In order for it to acquire advanced management methods, efficiency, and productivity, the American experts recommended that the Israeli government encourage American companies to purchase Israeli industries or to become partners in them. 'Creating ties with a thriving foreign company very often constitutes a sound guarantee against the flaws of managers' lack of experience and skills,' the experts claimed (*Ha'aretz* 1954). At the time, such involvement was blocked by the Israeli government through legislation that ruled out foreign

ownership in Israeli companies exceeding 49 percent, to allow the independent growth of the national economy. The legislation hindered the takeover by American companies of Israeli companies, although the American experts attempted to downplay this, arguing that American ownership would lead to productivity increase. It is interesting to note at this point that in recently published comparative research, Mauro Guillen (2001) shows that, paradoxically, preventing takeovers by foreign companies in Korea is what enabled its rapid economic growth relative to Argentina and Spain, which were willing to grow by opening their economies to unlimited foreign investment.

Further testimony to the colonial approach of the American experts in developing the Israeli economy in the 1950s can be found in a statement made by an American construction expert named Kretcher, who, after eight visits to Israel, concluded that it possessed excellent potential for becoming a technological center for the Middle East, though it would not be able to compete with the western nations. As the daily newspaper *Davar* comments on his colonialist and Orientalist approach:

'He claims that there is no point in Israel's fighting to capture Western markets. Some parts of that region have highly-developed industries — and Israel has no chance of competing with the West's output. However, the whole East is open to us, including India.' (*Davar* 1952)

Kretcher further noted that Israel's prospects for economic development were, in the spirit of colonial thinking, founded on maintaining a very low standard of living:

'If the State of Israel really and truly wants to extricate itself from its economic straits and to overcome its difficulties, it must immediately stop constructing luxury buildings, large apartments, office buildings, theaters and so on, and should devote all its efforts to two fields of construction — industry, and mass housing for the people.' (*Davar* 1952)

The article does not hide the speaker's business interests in Israel, but attributes to him a position of legitimate and uncompromising 'expertise'.

Already during the period of British control of Palestine, and markedly so after the founding of the Israeli state, American experts were very active in 'the rationalization of the administration' of the state and the institutionalization of the practices that they propagated. However, some Israelis perceived those experts' endeavors as deriving from foreign control mechanisms. Under the headline 'This is not the way for industry to march ahead', a correspondent reacted to the proposal to bring to Palestine Americans with expertise in enhancing production through industrial engineering and management as follows:

'In the most up to date industries, labor productivity depends first and foremost on equipment, not on American experts in industrial engineering who come here at the expense of the *Histadrut* and the industrialists, to raise labor productivity.' (*Ha'aretz* 1945b)

The efforts of the various American experts, especially those from Stanford, which aroused great interest in all strata of the public entailed

amassing and analyzing a large amount of statistical data on the efficiency of Israeli industry and its productivity levels. However, unlike the Zionist tradition which considered productivizing the Jewish laborer as the very heart of the nation-building project and which viewed capitalists as an unproductive factor, the professional-management discourse of productivization radically changed the picture, and classified workers as a factor delaying productivization. This is clearly seen in a complaint by workers about the content of the Stanford report:

'In surveys on labor relations, output, labor- productivity and production capacity, the distinguished experts from the USA reach conclusions that reveal, in an unparalleled way, the influence of right-wing circles, and the heads of the Ministry of Trade & Industry. Among [other things,] we are told that there is no factory in Israel where social payments do not exceed well over 30% of salaries. The experts found that the labor-productivity of workers in the textile sector does not exceed 40% of the productivity of American workers. Even though more than a few attempts have been made to increase labor-productivity, the endeavor advances very slowly, because of the workers' hesitations. Moreover, the authors of the report complain about the absolute and almost dictatorial control of the labor unions.' (*Davar* 1954)

Contrary to the trenchant criticism leveled at the workers, complains the writer, the report contains not one word about the employers:

'Thus the impression is obtained that they — the pioneers of efficiency and saving — spare no efforts to amend and correct, but the evil workers and the *Histadrut* which stands behind them, prevent all attempts at rectifying the situation.' (*Davar* 1954)

The professional-management productivity model that assumed as its starting point the contribution made by employers and managers to the economy's productivity and that viewed the workers as a factor hindering that enhanced productivity which had to be encouraged and accelerated also had great significance in creating ethnic boundary lines in Israel. This is mainly due to the Zionist discourse, which drew parallels between low productivity, Orientalism, and Arabism. With the state's establishment, more and more people from Asian and African origin, and Palestinian Arabs, gradually entered the workforce as unskilled laborers in the lowest echelons, which had been vacated by workers of European origin who had entered positions in labor management or in senior management. In such circumstances, it was easier for the European Zionist elite to accept the discourse that held workers to be the unproductive side of the labor-relations equation and to apply the American professional productivization discourse in order to legitimize the ethnic hierarchy in the labor market.

Thus, similar to the British and Zionist introduction of productivity models, the American managerial models also served what is viewed in the post-colonial literature as colonial missions. Such missions served by the American models included strengthening American geopolitical influence in an age of growing polarity, exploiting the territory's economic resources, 'civilizing' in its political sense, and laying down ethnic-status boundary lines. However, the close connection between the neocolonialist cultural and economic project that the Americans instigated and the political apparatuses of the Zionists and

Israelis is a fine example of the claim raised in postcolonial literature about unclear boundaries and the complex hybridization that was the unavoidable result of colonialism in its various patterns.

In spite of the analytical attempt presented in this article to distinguish between the discourses of productivization that predated the various colonial powers in Palestine, those discourses intertwined in various sites and at different times, creating hybrid discourses and practices as well as formulating hyphenated identities that simultaneously reflected submission to colonial rule and resistance to it — both acceptance of the fundamental colonial assumptions and resistance to such acceptance when the issue impacted on the dominant group's identity (even when it was the ruled group).

In the last section of this article, we propose to make use of the two complementary theoretical points raised by postcolonial literature, which may contribute an additional angle for understanding the dissemination processes of productivity models beyond national borders: (1) the hybridization of the productivity discourse and its significance in shaping management discourse and (2) the recurring influence of colonial discourse on the discourse of the metropolis, known in postcolonial theory as 'writing back'.

Concluding Remarks: Writing Back the Hybrid Form

The idea of the hybridity of organizational forms and models of management is not new to writing on Americanization, for example, the term 'hybridization' is mentioned more than 20 times by different authors in Zeitlin and Herrigel (2000). The concept is used in this context to refer to the selective adaptation of managerial models 'to fit the demands of domestic markets and institutions' (Zeitlin 2000: 5). In that sense, the concept is similar in many ways to those of 'translation' (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996) or 'traveling' (Perry 1995). In most cases, the concept is sterilized of the conflictual meaning it has in the postcolonial literature. Zeitlin himself states, for example, that: 'Modification and hybridization of US technology and management practices should not be interpreted as a negative phenomenon, an index of domestic resistance to the transfer process, nor even a sign of unavoidable compromises in adapting or translating the American model' (Zeitlin 2000: 11). Yet, placing Americanization on the colonial continuum suggests that we may want to look at hybridization precisely as a form of cultural resistance.

In the past few years, the terms 'hybridity' and 'hybridization' have become key terms in postcolonial discourse, inasmuch as they generally address the cultural outcomes of the West's attempt to force its culture on to colonies. Benedict Anderson (1991) views hybridity as an outcome of western ambivalence that aspires at one and the same time to civilize 'the other', but also to preserve its 'otherness', claiming that it imitates the West, but not its fundamental values, only the external manifestations of them. Bhabha took issue with Said's dichotomous perspective of West versus the Orient and suggests that this dichotomy collapses through a double process of mimicry which strengthens the ruler's domination (Bhabha 1994). However, since the

West failed (and fails) to impose its culture ‘as is’ and always generated hybrid connections with the local culture, this third space between the western artifacts and the manner in which they were adopted in colonies still became a potential space for resistance and autonomy (Loomba 1998: 173–183).

The productivization discourse in Palestine and in the state of Israel became eventually a tangled, hybrid discourse that was comprised of basic assumptions that often contradicted the various discourses of productivization. Throughout the Second World War, the Zionist leadership called for boosting production in order to empower the British war machine, perceiving this activity as one that would establish the Zionist economy and lead to the end of British colonial rule. The superintendent of heavy industry in the mandate government promoted the American productivization practices of industrial engineering and management, under the customary British claim of strengthening the Empire by boosting productivization in the colonies (*Ha’aretz* 1945a).

However, perhaps the most interesting hybridization of the productivization discourse in Palestine was that between the Zionist discourse, with its anticapitalist traits and a certain degree of antimodernism in returning to the soil in the spirit of Israel’s prophets, and the American productivization discourse, with its fundamental and absolute assumptions of capitalism and modernism. This is reflected very clearly in the words of Berl Katsenelson, a leader of the *Histadrut* (the national workers’ federation which, more than any other organization, promoted the ideas of a centralized and collectivist economy). In the 1930s, using the ties created by the founders of Zionism between productivity and nation-building, and through a bitter argument with the workers’ leaders who considered the American Taylorist productivization practices as liable to exploit workers and create assets for capital, Katsenelson justified the adoption of the Taylorist practice of piece-rates, at the demand of the Jewish citrus-growers (who had received instructions from American experts):

‘The low productivity rates, partially justified, and partially exaggerated, was one of the central reasons in the war against Jewish labor. The *Histadrut* agreed to set norms, which will assure labor productivity. To which we reply, in chorus, this is subjugation of the workers. From all we have learned about the workers’ wars of liberation, we never heard that their subjugation will look like this — that his working hours must be fully productive. In our innocence or ignorance, we believed till now that subjugation of the workers implies annulling our right to organize, the negation of our political rights, planting masters over our heads and so on. But that the payment of wages according to productivity verges on subjugation — this is a new theory that is new for us.’ (Ardinest 1958: 12–13).

The blurring of the distinction between the Zionist productivization discourse and the American one, by using similar words to describe completely different practices, enabled this process, and provided an effective answer to the opponents of Americanization, who were accused of disloyalty to the nation and the state (Frenkel 2000).

These hybrid patterns, we argue, are what, in the long run, allowed legitimacy to be granted to the professional-management productivization discourse in Israel, despite the ambivalent attitude of Zionist ideology

regarding professionals and the professionalization process in Israeli society. While British and American productivization discourses are often presented as being foreign and antinational, the hybridization between them and the Zionist productivization discourse enabled their representation as local discourses that advanced the national interest and neutralized resistance to them.

However, the implication of a hybridized productivization discourse may extend considerably beyond the borders of the specific colony in which it occurs. Until recently, postcolonial research focused on practices imposed by the West on the subordinated 'other'. Although in *Orientalism* Said underscores the centrality of Orientalism's discourse in structuring the West, it is only in the past few years that postcolonial studies have turned to a cautious examination of the influence of discourses that developed within the colonies on the attitude of the metropolis to its own citizens. John and Jean Comaroff (1997) have drawn attention to the way in which discourses about colonized peoples were used in Britain to discipline urban labor. Did the British experience in imposing an American productivization discourse, such as Taylor's methods, on the colonies influence the opening of the way to adopting these methods in the metropolis too? Did the fact that defending workers' rights in the colonies was less important than defending those in the metropolis enable a priori the implementation of methods which were rejected in Britain because of the workers' objections? In addition, if indeed the discourse that was applied to colonial subjects was imposed on the workers in the metropolis, how did it affect the weakening power of the latter and the disappearance of class politics that was almost simultaneous with end of the traditional colonial era (Lash and Uri 1987)?

In other words, how, if at all, would the Americanization of the European and Japanese productivity discourse look without the infrastructure set by the colonial experience of these countries? Moreover, can we conclude something from the comparison between patterns of Americanization in economic development in various European states without taking into account their distinct colonial experiences?

These questions still await a comprehensive study that will draw on empirical material that was not available to us in this research. It is only reference to the influence of the complex balance of colonial power on patterns of the transfer of knowledge and its dissemination throughout the world, in the spirit of postcolonial studies, that can provide us with a better understanding of the globalization of the managerial processes that are currently the focal point of management research.

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