



# Americanizing Brazilian management

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper aims to discuss, from a post-colonial perspective, the context and process of the Americanization of Brazilian management.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paper first briefly discusses post-colonialism and “Latin-America”. After this, it analyzes the content of US management and its prevalence in the world. The paper then presents the process of the intentional Americanization of Brazil, in order to contextualize this process in management. It follows an essayist style.

**Findings** – The paper argues that the Americanization of Brazilian management is an intentional process that resembles colonialism.

**Originality/value** – The paper’s contribution is to analyze the establishment and growth of what is one of the largest management academies in the world, showing how it was created under colonial logics. This case may also suggest how these logics have a wider influence on how management knowledge is produced and reproduced in developing economies.

**Keywords** Brazil, Americanization, Post-colonialism, General management, Management styles

**Paper type** Literature review

## 1. Introduction

The numbers are impressive for the almost 60 years of Brazilian management education. The country has around 50 PhD programs in management, more than 10,000 executive education courses and about 250,000 management teachers and professors. There are a little more than 1 million enrollments every year in more than 2,000 management undergraduate courses. About 1,500 Brazilian academics attend The Brazilian Academy of Management Annual Meeting and the number grows every year. In addition, there are about 50 peer-reviewed journals in the area (see Bertero, 2006).

The profession of manager in Brazil and the creation and development of management in the country came amid significant United States (US) influence. Despite the impressive figure cast by management in Brazil, few papers have analyzed management’s development and the role of the USA in this process (Bertero, 2006).

This paper aims to discuss from a post-colonial perspective the context and process of the Americanization of Brazilian management. It follows an essayistic style and, thus, in methodological terms it is a literature review. To this end it first briefly discusses post-colonialism and “Latin-America”. After this, it analyzes the content of US management and how it might be a tool of Americanization. The paper then lays out the process of the intentional Americanization of Brazil, in order to contextualize the Americanization of Brazilian Management. Finally, it argues that the Americanization of Brazilian management was an intentional process that resembles colonialism. Brazil is an interesting case. Its management academy is among the world’s largest, the country is one of the emerging global powers and too little has been



written about its management. Moreover, the Americanization process in the country was intentional in character, aiming to protect the US and the world from Nazism and Fascism, as well as seeking to foster the US economic interest.

## 2. Post-colonialism and “Latin America”

Post-colonialism is an approach whose preeminence in social sciences has been increasing since the early 1980s, even though its roots can be found in the 1950s and 1960s. In general terms, it is a complex and ambivalent body of knowledge as authors in this tradition draw from diverse theoretical sources and stand-points. One of its precursors is Aimé Césaire (1955) who argued against the colonialist mindset that imposes Western logics over the people under Western rule. His work influenced Fanon (1961) who highlights the violence of colonization as a process that excludes the colonized human characteristics and conditions and imposes an inauthentic identity. Analyzing the specificity of Algeria, Fanon (1961) proposes the use of violence as a form of resistance and the only way to build up an authentic national identity. Among others, key thinkers to the development of post-colonialism are Edward Said and Homi Bhabha. Said (1979) discusses how over the years via various forms of cultural representations the West has constructed a distorted version of the Orient as if its inhabitants and their modes of living were barbaric. The “Orientalist” discourse acted as a justification for colonial activities and attitudes. Homi Bhabha (1994) defends “the third space” or “in between” as a way to highlight hybridism and to fight dualist (e.g. West/East) modes of representation that usually sustain and reinforce exclusion. To such a view, identities are not given, but are negotiated and renegotiated among the various possibilities of signification. Thinking of a third space is a way to avoid an essentialist mode of building meaning. Post-colonial thinking has influenced contemporary reflections about globalization and about world affairs such as the Darfur genocide and the Iraq war.

While post-colonialist perspectives are complex and varied, they all tend to denounce epistemology and many Western practices as being systems for the exclusion of other realities and forms of knowledge (Calás and Smircich, 1999; Prasad and Prasad, 2001). A recurring theme is the critique of the notions of “progress” and “modernity” as defined by theoreticians in developed nations. From this perspective, one generally focuses on economic aspects and depicts access to and progress of science and technology as justification for the “development” of certain countries while others remain undeveloped. This development within the parameters of the Western culture or wealthy nations concludes by categorizing people and cultures of “emerging” nations as “undeveloped” or “primitive”, which leads to the exclusion of their knowledge, values and cultures. From this perspective, science and technology arise as enablers of new forms of (neo) colonial control (Wyrick and Beasley, 1997). Post-colonialism also relates to the study of how Western academics create analysis and categories that hide their own ethnocentrism (Prasad and Prasad, 2001). In this manner, the postcolonial perspective also denounces the ethnocentrism of Western forms of thought and practices (see Mignolo, 2000).

Within this vein, Central and South American issues have inspired post-colonial analysis. In fact, it is possible to find early ideas of a post-colonial stripe in Brazil as of the late 1950s. For instance, Guerreiro Ramos (1958) challenged Brazil’s colonial condition and defended a “revolutionary nationalism”. He also advocated that foreign

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sociological notions, when imported, had to take into account the Brazilian institutional context in order to be appropriate to the local reality. During the 1980s and 1990s there was the emergence of a more robust post-colonial thinking to tackle issues from the region. The key themes of interest were social development in the region; the complexity of “Latin America”, inequality, and the imposition of Western “development” notions on the South and Central Americas realities (see Rodríguez, 2001).

“Tropicalism” is an important notion in post-colonial thinking about Central and South America. This notion seeks to illustrate how the West has represented these regions and their inhabitants. Since “discovery” there has been a tendency for the non-Anglo Saxon America to be construed through travel writing, literary works, academic texts, films and different types of media as an exotic and luxurious subcontinent, with impressive fauna and flora and warm climate, i.e. a paradise on Earth. On the other hand, these characteristics could be used to explain the region’s lethargy and backwardness. This backwardness, according to the tropicalist version, can also be explained by characteristics inherent to the native people, who are usually considered corrupt, lazy, exotic, inferior and overemotional. Therefore, the (sad) tropics are supposed to be a decadent place of pleasures populated by an inferior people (Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman, 1997).

In this way, it is possible to argue that the very notion of “Latin America” helped to build up and reinforce a “tropicalist” and subaltern version of the region (see Mignolo, 2008). This notion has been constructed by the European colonizers and it homogenizes different populations with different ethnic backgrounds and cultures (and originally with different religions), into a unified and homogeneous “Latin America”. With the “Latin America” construct emerges the “Latin-American” subject representing the phenotypic difference to the European subject (see Mignolo, 2008). For Quijano (2008), it is from such differences that it was possible to classify the controllers and the controlled, establishing hierarchies and social roles to each group. Over the years, the term has been transformed to signify implicitly those who are in the “other” America, those excluded from “North-America”. In fact, one only needs to travel around Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina to realize that any notion that lumps together such complex and different countries and populations can only be a mere simplification, at best.

After presenting essential elements of post-colonialism that are important for denaturalizing established Western notions and knowledge, in the next section we will analyze how a particular form of management has been globally diffused and legitimized as a US institution (see Khurana, 2007).

### 3. US management

Management, even in its rudimentary manner, encompasses activities that involve planning, gathering people around a particular objective, making a group achieve particular aims, dividing tasks and coordinating activities. These elements were crucial for building pyramids and religious temples, fighting wars, or even for ruling kingdoms. It is thus possible to track to the beginnings of humankind the origins of activities that resemble what we currently consider management. In fact, management in whatsoever form is a necessary element for any type of organized human activity. Following Tsoukas (1994), assuming that management is a collective process implies that it is an institutional necessity.

Even though there have been forms of management since the remotest times of civilization, it is only under capitalism that management has grown as a distinct occupation (see Chandler, 1977; Khurana, 2007). In fact, it is not possible to separate the development and the wide dissemination of management from capitalism, as the logics of management as we know them today are embedded in a particular societal context and this context is heavily influenced by that particular mode of production (see Tsoukas, 1994). The development of management as a profession can be explained by the growth of the large corporation and the development of a professional body of employees to manage it, which is neither traditional worker nor owner (see Chandler, 1977). Management also represents a particular type of knowledge that is taught in educational institutions across the globe.

A key element in management's rise to prominence is its association to a particular location in the globe and to a peculiar period in history. Management gained importance after the Second World War and took shape as a US institution (see Chandler, 1977; Khurana, 2007, p.1; see Westwood and Jack, 2008). US management, which is one particular form, is today taken for granted and is extremely influential. Despite the importance of rudimentary forms of the phenomenon since antiquity, Frederick Taylor is regarded as the father of management and some consider Peter Drucker as the father of modern management. Not coincidentally, both are North-Americans. Another example is discussed by Cooke (2004) who analyzed Development Administration and Management (DAM). Commonly regarded as a subset of public management, this is a knowledge articulated within the realms of institutions such as the World Bank, United Nations agencies, IMF, etc. The promise of modernization and of fighting poverty and inequality is accompanied by the imposition of one particular view of development, by a neoliberal agenda of actions and by an undermining of indigenous ways of managing (see Cooke, 2004).

In its US version, management implies the separation between "brains and hands", the notion that some individuals have the right to direct others, to make decisions and to control the company's money transactions. Moreover, US management naturalizes hierarchy and task division, and mainly focuses on using minimum input to generate maximum output. It is underlined by goal-directed instrumental action. These elements are clearly present in US managerial models such as Taylorism and Fordism. In other words, in its US form management takes place mainly in capitalist organizations and aims to generate the best economic result possible. The existence of alternative modes of managing such as cooperativism, which are less prevalent than the dominant one, illustrates that the US model makes a particular form of management seem natural to a particular type of organization.

In fact, what we consider today as the dominant form of management has spread globally via Americanization (see Ritzer and Ryan, 2004; Kipping *et al.*, 2004; Alcadipani, 2010; Alcadipani and Rosa, 2011). Americanization is the process of disseminating basic US values in countries – especially those directly under US influence (Gerstle, 1989; Tota, 2000; Alcadipani, 2010). Americanization is, put simply, the spreading of the Americanist ideology, with the liberal state as the required social structure for the Americanization of a nation. This ideology also includes democracy, which is one of the key elements on which Americanization is based; a progressivism that is clearly associated to rationalism and progress; as well as the imposition of American living standards as a desirable attainment. Another crucial component of the

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ideology that sustains Americanization is utilitarianism. Moreover, it is impossible to talk about Americanism without considering the market economy and mass society (see Alcadipani, 2010; Tota, 2000). Americanism is consistent with the beginning of Americanization in the 1920s. This was a time of major economic expansion; of Coolidge, Taylor and Ford; of intense mechanization; and of market growth.

Broadly speaking, the Americanization of management in Europe and Japan tends to be characterized by three phases according to Clark (2005). The first relates to the Marshall Plan, technical assistance programs, and associated management education trips to the USA in the immediate post-war years. The second can be characterized by the emergence of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Cold War, which had its initial consolidation with an intensive military-backed transfer of American management know-how. The third phase is educational, characterized by the Americanization of business consultancies, the American rhetoric of international business and the recent emergence of the business school culture in higher education. These phases are characterized by the determined efforts of institutions sponsored by the US state to diffuse and transfer US management, marketing and production techniques to Western Europe and Japan. These state institutions are supported increasingly by direct foreign investment by US multinationals and emphasize the professionalism of American management and the organizational and productivity capabilities that this yields – a competitive managerial capitalism which characterizes the US business system (see Clark, 2005, pp. 438-439).

This US management is grounded in US economic and material success after the Second World War, and has been perceived as a key element for delivering modernization and economic growth to different regions in the world (see Ritzer and Ryan, 2004; Kipping *et al.*, 2004; Alcadipani and Rosa, 2011). As an instrument of Americanization, it also represented a key ally in the fight against the communist threat (see Westwood and Jack, 2008). In this manner, US management has spread across the globe, from India (Srinivas, 2009) to Argentina (Gantman and Parker, 2006). For example, US management in action in India helped undermine local management practices and produced a workforce that seeks to defend multinationals rather than local priorities (Mir *et al.*, 2004). US management education has acted as a hegemonic discourse in the Arab world (see Neal and Finlay, 2008) and US productivity models have been implemented in Israel (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2003). Moreover, the Ford Foundation (Gemelli, 2004; Mir *et al.*, 2004) and US governmental agencies (e.g. United States Agency for International Development – USAID) (Leavitt, 1957) have played a key role in influencing the adoption of US management practices and knowledge worldwide (see Westwood and Jack, 2008). More specifically, US foundations, such as Ford and Rockefeller have played a significant role in spreading US values, to such a degree that some claim they exercise cultural imperialism (Arnove, 1980).

After discussing US management as a key element in Americanization, the next section will discuss the historic and cultural context within which Brazil was a direct target of broad Americanization efforts.

#### **4. Americanizing Brazil: a context**

Before presenting the historical movements pertaining to the Americanization of Brazil, it is important to mention that Brazil emerged as a country under the rule of a European nation. The country was a Portuguese colony from 1500 until 1822. When

the Portuguese arrived, instead of producing a local culture, they implanted a specific exploitative settling model (Holanda, 1973). This model implied not the negotiation, but the mere, truculent transplantation of precepts and references brought from Europe. The model and apparatus of Brazilian colonization and settlement preceded population inflow, with the purpose of creating a reality that resembled a “modern” Europe (see Faoro, 1976; Prado, 1965; Holanda, 1973). The social construction of the Brazilian imaginary takes place within these authoritarian, colonial Portuguese bowels, which press not only for a foreign imaginary, but for an absolute chasm between the dominated world and the conquering, superior world (Freyre, 1966; Calligaris, 1993).

The ideology of modernizing Brazil through foreign social and economic models has thus been present since the origins of the country (Faoro, 1976; Prado, 1965; Holanda, 1973) and the local elite has since borrowed from Western socio-economic models that aim to “modernize” Brazil. After Independence England and France, respectively, occupied the role of the “superior” foreign nation in relation to Brazil (Caldas and Wood, 1997). To some extent, it is possible to argue that much of the legitimacy of local elites comes historically from the deployment of foreign templates and references (see Faoro, 1976). These elites have historically imposed themselves over the other social groups in the population. Just by walking in Brazilian streets today it is possible to see that people with a European background tend to be better off than the population of native or African descent. Blacks represent the majority living in the slums and in the poorer areas. They also tend to be excluded from top universities and elite neighborhoods, while at the same time they represent a majority in the prison population.

The US currently occupies the role of the “superior foreigner” in relation to Brazil and in the remainder of this section and in the next ones we will discuss the roots of this. Authors such as Moura (1990), Accioly (1945) and Ianni (1979) have written extensively about the degree, form, and evolution of US influence in the Southern part of the American continent. They see this expansion developing as a political project in the twentieth century with the Pan-Americanist ideology. This expansion stemmed from a diplomatic drive to diversify influences away from English hegemony at the end of the nineteenth century and was further cemented by the “Monroe Doctrine”, whereby the US regarded itself as depository of international political interest and as representative of the civilized world. Through justifications of several types (political, religious, cultural, and economic), the expansion was explained by the so-called “democratic and egalitarian” tradition according to which it was Protestant America’s moral duty to civilize late-developing peoples, releasing them from Catholic barbarism.

It is currently accepted that the explicit political project aimed at an approximation with the Southern part of the Americas began during the Republican Herbert Hoover administration. It was accompanied by the appearance of Pan-Americanism – a movement that started from the US in the 1920s and advocated the continent’s economic and political union, with the region’s defense and development in mind. After his election in 1928, President Hoover went on a journey across the continent proclaiming a “good-neighbor policy” between the US and its Southern neighbors. The purpose was to set the stage for a “Latin America”-oriented foreign policy, as the region was regarded as a major consumer market and had very significant strategic characteristics. Notwithstanding, Hoover’s administration was unable to attain its

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objective, which would be later taken up by Roosevelt (Moura, 1990; Accioly, 1945; Ianni, 1979).

American influence particularly increased between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War, when throughout the world, the US started being regarded as an emerging power. The infiltration of US references into Brazil in this period was also driven by the clear signs of economic and industrial prosperity that the US displayed during the Coolidge age. Technical and material advances, as well as the dramatic market expansion enabled by the Taylorist and Fordist mechanization in the 1920s, were enough to make the US one of the preferred models of efficiency and modernization for the incipient Brazilian industrial elite, particularly in São Paulo. The elites were seeking a Western model to draw from, as at previous times in Brazilian history, and the US appeared to be the most “developed” one. The creation in July 1931 of IDORT (*Instituto de Organização Racional do Trabalho – Institute for the Rational Organization of Labor* – a professional training institution aimed at promoting the “rational organization model” among Brazilians) by this group of industrialists marks the beginning of a systematic effort to emulate and absorb US productive and managerial technology (see Vizeu, 2008). This management modeling and mimesis movement had a profound effect in terms of absorbing and incorporating US managerial references in Brazil in the second half of the century and influenced similar institutions and efforts. From the 1920s onwards, the US-as-economic-power gradually became an important cultural reference for many Brazilians, because of “US progress” dissemination institutions and the signs of progress from the many products and technologies that reached Brazilians from North America. In the cultural arena, the 1920s and 1930s are also landmarks for the dissemination in Brazil of other US references that would later have a great influence on Americanist consolidation. In this period, US music, literature and, chiefly, US movies started to become popular in Brazil (Tota, 2000). It is important to mention that the US cultural products were very influential for the aspirant urban bourgeoisie. Consuming US cultural products was seen as a way of showing “progressive thinking” (see Tota, 2000).

Pan-Americanism developed slowly and was disseminated as a political project with only a moderate degree of acceptability in US foreign policy, until it was finally embraced as a political project by Roosevelt in 1940. In the 1930s US influence in Brazil and the rest of the continent intensified both diplomatically and economically in order to prevent an approximation with Germany, but it was in the 1940s that US influence really displayed massive growth. This was especially due to the deliberate Americanization actions orchestrated by the third Roosevelt administration and because of the resultant, continuous American political and economic support to the continent for the purposes of “hemispheric solidarity” (Moura, 1990; Accioly, 1945). It is important to mention here that on the verge of a World War the USA presented itself as a way to resist the German and Italian tyranny of the time.

After this presentation of key elements in order to have a panorama of US influence in Brazil, in the next section we will focus on the 1940s when it appears that Brazil experienced a clear inflection point after which the hub of influence clearly shifted towards the USA.

### 5. The orchestrated Americanization of Brazil in the 1940s

After the end of the First World War, the USA avoided involvement with European politics. As a result, the USA wished to remain neutral at the beginning of the Second World War. However, because of Nazi Germany's actions, US relations with Europe, particularly Britain, grew steadily closer. In the war period of the 1940s, Roosevelt made his attempt at a third term, against American political tradition. The Southern part of the Americas played an important role in this process, as the candidate emphasized continental cooperation and defense, which garnered him support from many Republicans. This buttressed sectors that advocated an approximation of the USA and "Latin America" (Tota, 2000). Proximity with its closest neighbors was a fundamental defense strategy and a way to keep the danger of Nazism and Fascism out of the region. By doing this, the USA genuinely intended to defend the World from tyranny.

For Tota (2000) the loudest proponent of this approximation was a group led by Republican millionaire and industrialist Nelson Rockefeller – who himself made large donations to Roosevelt's campaign. With Roosevelt's election, the industrialist played an important role in the creation of a policy for approximation with the southern neighbors. Many of his family's companies were located in the region, which increased his interest. In addition, he made several business trips to the area. When Germany invaded Denmark in 1940, the need to defend the entire American continent became evident to the USA. The nation's security relied on good relationships with the remainder of the continent's countries. Therefore, Rockefeller headed a plan that included political and economic steps oriented toward "Latin America" as a whole. Its central goal was to prevent the influence of the axis powers in a region that displayed a peculiar sort of anti-Americanism, especially from left-wing groups. Roosevelt had decided that armed intervention was to be avoided, as it would go against the good-neighbor policy he advocated and also would alienate a large consumer market. Rockefeller's proposals were challenging: the elimination of tariffs on products imported from the other Americas, the development of means of transport to carry Americas' production, incentives for investments, and reduction of the countries' debt (Tota, 2000).

He created a commission to ensure the proper implementation of the project. This led to the creation of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), whose coordination was trusted to Rockefeller. Many of the actions, efforts, and investments coordinated by the OCIAA were unknown until recently – when official US government documents had to be disclosed by law. Historians such as Tota (2000) then swiftly went through these documents and, piece by piece, and started to make sense of this crucial portion of recent Brazilian history. It becomes clear that the department was responsible for coordinating efforts concerning the systematic export of US culture and it makes reference to the Southern part of the Americas. Thanks to the tycoon's presence, the agency had great political influence within the Roosevelt administration. It is worth noting that the main leaders of the agency were businessmen, rather than career politicians. This was fundamental for the Americanization of Brazilian management and economy (Tota, 2000).

The strategic purpose of the OCIAA was to implement US economic policies in countries such as Brazil, keeping the region politically stable in the defense of Americanist values and retaining the US as benchmark for these countries, as opposed

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to the axis powers. The intention was to keep the region free from Fascism and Nazism. There was also the goal of using US cultural and economic importance to enhance and protect US investment in the subcontinent. In order to accomplish this, the OCIAA employed several strategies. One key strategy was the dissemination of information that put the USA in a favorable light and that consolidated its positive image through the media. These efforts sought to spread a positive image of the USA in order to counter axis power propaganda. Rockefeller even convinced major companies, such as GE and Ford, to advertise their products and the American way of life, even if no sales were to be made out of it. They were selling the notion of a modern and happy future. Movies, radio, newspapers, magazines, music and other art forms were all used and assisted in the effort to sell America to the Brazilians. This concern with selling the American lifestyle and the progress and inexorable victory of the USA was present in all of these initiatives, through Rockefeller's direct or indirect influence. In the end, the agency run by the tycoon became a veritable ideologies factory (Tota, 2000).

As well as orchestrating the cultural industry in favor of the Americanization of the Southern part of the continent, the OCIAA stimulated and managed a concerted effort for the technical and scientific cooperation of the USA through several programs, many of which survived the demise of Rockefeller and the OCIAA in subsequent decades. As part of this initiative, Rockefeller conceived exchange programs for students and teachers; incentives for English language teaching and the dissemination of US culture; technical qualification and support missions; technological modernization programs; and economic assistance and financing programs. He also planned the provision of US government funds to eliminate poverty; the implementation of democratic institutions; trade with the USA; and initiatives for the USA to promote direct investment in countries in the region. Focusing on the first dimension (the geopolitical one), it is evident that Brazil had an important strategic position in the continent, and that Getulio Vargas' (Brazilian President at the time) flirtation with Germany made the US intervene more directly and effectively in Brazil. Focusing on the economic dimension, Brazil was clearly regarded as the largest consumer market in "Latin America" and its strategic importance also lay in the fact that the country produced iron and rubber, essential raw materials for the American production process.

By the time the Second World War was ending, Getulio Vargas had based the country's development entirely on the dependence of US funding. But by 1945, the Second World War was over, and Roosevelt was dead. After a while, Vargas was deposed. With the end of the war, the United States' attention shifted to Europe and Asia. The Cold War turned India, China and Korea into more crucial areas for US foreign policy. Communism and nationalism in those countries made them more important than the Southern American neighbors as targets for US attention. In this new context the OCIAA was no longer of any use and Truman shut it down in May 1946.

After this, the USA was no longer firmly and expressly concerned with the Southern part of the American continent and it is therefore difficult to identify direct and official attempts to Americanize the continent further. Despite the end of this explicit interest in Brazil after the Second World War, the Americanist effort of previous decades (particularly Roosevelt's) had set root. A leading form of continued US influence was via Brazil's economic dependence on the USA or on the incentive agencies that were strongly influenced thereby. This dependence began in the Vargas era and became

increasingly intense up until the end of military rule. It is the foundation of the neo-liberal pressure that has been exerted over Brazil since the 1970s, and which is reflected in the Americanization of management, as we shall see ahead. A second root left by the explicit Americanization of the 1940s can be seen in the prolonged US influence over Brazilian industrialization. The exchange of know-how and technology that the US government had begun in the 1940s was crucial for the Brazilian industrialization boom that took place in the 1950s and 1960s. It left its mark on the elementary institutions and references of the Brazilian economic, social and cultural fabric. In fact, as an appendage to the Americanist policies of Roosevelt and Rockefeller, as well as to the inertial approximation it gave rise to, the 1950s and 1960s witnessed Brazil solidifying its economic and thus its ideological alliance with the USA (Moura, 1990).

And it appears that the culture of US dependency of the 1950s and 1960s led to the intensive establishment of US technology, capital, and social, aesthetic and consumption habits. Supported by a strong institutional system and an efficient cultural mobilization apparatus, the USA – no longer under an official, explicit governmental program but via private investment and the articulation of US interests in Brazilian soil – was able to enhance and perpetuate this influence in subsequent years, encouraging the consumption, dissemination and social reproduction of US references (Ianni, 1979). Such references were again fundamental for the local elite, which considered the foreign way of life as “superior” and “modern” (see Tota, 2000). It can be argued that being “Americanized” was a way for the elite to differentiate itself from the other local social groups and helped in its prevalence in Brazilian society.

After presenting the movements toward the Americanization of Brazil, we will discuss next how this process took place in relation to management. In fact, management, in its US version, can be seen as an instrument of Americanization (see Ritzer and Ryan, 2004) and as such it may have helped to Americanize Brazil.

## **6. Americanizing Brazilian management**

We have discussed how there was strong geopolitical, economic and commercial motivation behind the movement toward the Americanization of Brazil. In fact, the industrialization process, particularly during the Vargas age and in the late 1950s, created consumption patterns and habits based on those of countries with advanced industrialization, especially the USA. During this period, Brazil’s social contrasts and differences increased. According to Furtado (1975), the importation of foreign consumption habits in that period favored a small group of foreign companies that aimed at internationalizing their operations. It was mostly during the 1950s that American multinationals spread over the world and reached Brazil. Alongside the multinationals and their executives, the precepts and references of the American Way of Life were also imported, as were the teachings of US management – which needed to be disseminated and implemented in Brazil for the sake of “national development” and the “construction of the democratic institutions”. These were the references and teachings that slowly became the efficiency model for Brazilian organizations (see Fischer, 1984).

In the midst of this process, national development is regarded as the process of modernizing the country (Fischer, 1984). This is precisely where one can find a marked hemispheric economic causality after the Second World War, which encourages the

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importation to Brazil of foreign references, particularly US ones, as the economic level drives other social coexistence dimensions. In fact, importation was not limited to social and consumption habits, but included aesthetic and artistic standards, technology, and, as a result, management technology. For peripheral nations such as Brazil, trying to be modern corresponded to embracing the way of life, the arts, the production and the cultural imaginary imported from the so-called “First World” (Serva, 1990), then represented by the USA.

Education, understood here to range from English as a second language (idiom education) to higher, technical, and graduate education, was another institutional agent to filter, disseminate and support a US management mindset in Brazil during the late twentieth century. Idiom education was characterized by the transfer of references, methods and language from more developed urban centers to every nook and cranny in Brazil. But this effort was not only restricted to language education. Chauí (1985) points out that the demise of high-school teaching in Brazil took place after an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and USAID, as Brazil was faced with the reality of industrialization and as the workforce turned out by Brazilian secondary schools failed to meet the needs of Fordist production (e.g. pupils used to study sociology and philosophy in high school, with a strong presence of Marxist authors). To overcome this problem, the Brazilian-US Commission for Industrial Training (CBAI) was set up by means of an agreement between both countries’ governments. This agreement lasted from 1946 until 1963, with the aim of developing US-style technical training for Brazilian workers (Amorim, 2007). As a result, Chauí (1985) argues that public schools started to produce a mass of individuals to serve as cheap labor for the country’s industries. In this sense, the technical qualification missions that came to Brazil through OCIAA were fundamental for the Americanization of domestic management. This was particularly as regards the creation of a low-cost, value-added low-qualification labor pool, intended for the multinational organizations that were setting up in Brazil, and for recently-created or expanded national organizations (Covre, 1981; Tota, 2000).

The Brazilian State also had a leading part in the institutionalization of the American management model in Brazil, particularly during the Vargas era and onwards. The creation of IDORT in 1931 and the dissemination of its resources were crucial for the importation of managerial technology triggered by the industrialization of the mid-twentieth century (Serva, 1990; Vizeu, 2008). IDORT attempted to disseminate the teachings of the American management of the time, mostly those of Taylor. In the governmental sphere, the importation of US management technology in this period is tied directly to the creation and action of *DASP* (Brazilian Government’s Public Administration Department), starting in 1938 (see Martins, 1997). Later, the Brazilian government once again played – whether directly or indirectly – a leading role in the dissemination of US principles and references, by aligning the country’s economic policy and development doctrine with the precepts of international and development institutions that it had to resort to in order to finance growth.

Fischer (1984) discusses the process whereby several cooperation agreements and transfers of funds from the UN (United Nations), the USA, and other Western nations meant that the teaching and production of managerial technology in Brazil was based on the massive importation and dissemination US references. Fischer (1984) shows

how categories, experiences and models were imported as products, which points towards a comprehensive ideological reproduction process.

The creation of business schools played a central role in the importation of these models and methodologies and in the Americanization of management in Brazil. The pioneer management school, Escola Superior de Negócios (ESAN), was created in the late 1940s by a Jesuit priest. He had direct contacts with the Harvard Business School. ESAN's key theme was that education should be an instrument for development (Bertero, 2006). However, the importance of ESAN was shaded by the creation of the Brazilian Public Management School in Rio de Janeiro in 1951 and the São Paulo School of Management in 1954. Both schools were created by the Getulio Vargas Foundation, which was set up in 1944 with the aim of modernizing public services in the country. The São Paulo Management School (FGV-EAESP) was designed to be a business school. An agreement between the Brazilian Government, the US government, the Getulio Vargas Foundation and the Michigan State University was fundamental for the establishment of FGV-EAESP. It was agreed that the Michigan State University would send a mission to Brazil that would stay for a little more than ten years, with the aim of implementing a school of management in São Paulo. This was done and the school started as an executive education program that was followed by the creation of a bachelors' degree in business management. During this period, professors from the USA taught in English and local academics played the role of live translators of lectures. The São Paulo School of Management building was completed in the mid-1960s and is named after President John F. Kennedy. It has a bronze statue in his honor at the main entrance. During the 1960s, the Getulio Vargas foundation received funds from the Ford Foundation to develop teaching material (mainly textbooks) and to send academics to study in US business schools. The universities of Cornell and Stanford were popular destinations for Brazilian management academics. Not surprisingly, the entire curricula at the São Paulo School of Management's outset drew heavily from US management theories and practices. The institution also acted as a role model for the subsequent business schools that emerged in the country (Bertero, 2006). It started to receive innumerable visits from foreign representatives of other "Latin American" Universities willing to open management courses in their own countries. Later, it also started to train academics from other Brazilian states (Taylor, 1968). This is a staggering difference to the early Brazilian social science and engineering schools that were set up under a significant French influence (Miceli, 1989).

According to Taylor (1968), the way that the São Paulo School of Management worked when it was established differed greatly to the traditional Brazilian university system. It followed the US model where schools are divided into departments, while all the other universities in Brazil were structured according to *catedras* (where there are chair professors for the different subject areas, which is typical of European countries); and the first courses were full-time while elsewhere in Brazil students took part-time bachelor's and post-graduate courses. There was pressure from the US mission personnel to have local businesses provide endowments to fund the school, which was rather unusual for Brazilian universities. In addition, in the commission that was in charge of setting up the school there was the presence of the US Point IV officer, in a clear indication that the US government was interested in spreading its management in Brazil, which again was unusual in the Brazilian university system.

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Before the Sao Paulo School of Management there were no professional managers in Brazil. Economists were lawfully responsible for running organizations. The creation of the school and the setting up of an undergraduate course in management eventually generated the creation in Brazilian law of a new profession: the manager. It is only after the establishment of this school that bachelor's degrees in management were awarded in Brazil. This process generated some tension between the school and the economists whose privileged position was attacked (see Taylor, 1968; Anderson, 1987).

The creation of a new profession under the auspices of US management is a clear sign that this process has some colonial character. The new school imported to Brazil a different way of teaching pupils and also of managing educational institutions. It also helped in the emergence of a new profession grounded in the US model, preserved its interests, and qualified locals to work for US multinationals in the country. Another clear colonial character of this process is the idea that US management equals development, signifying that local Brazilian management practices of the time were "primitive". In fact, US management education was considered synonymous with modern management practices, and as diametrically opposed to traditional Brazilian forms of managing – which were thought to involve traditionalism, patriarchalism, etc, and as to be deeply rooted in the country's rural past (see Vizeu, 2008). While European productivity models were very influential in the origins of business and trade in Brazil, US management knowledge and tools appeared as a solution to modernize and support the country's industrial development (see Vizeu, 2008).

Subsequently, a network of social actors such as training and consulting firms carried on the process, while business schools retained their crucial role in the diffusion of management methodologies and models imported from the USA (Serva, 1990). Finally, some professions have also played a fundamental role in the past few decades in the institutionalization of the permeable Brazilian character. In the management field, the most common example is consultants (Serva, 1990). One could say that most managerial technology in Brazil until the mid-1960s was simply imported from the USA. This managerial technology importation process actually began in the first stages of Brazilian industrialization, in the early twentieth century, but is strongly reinforced by the accelerated industrialization that took place between 1930 and the late 1950s. A key point to consider is that US management has never faced resistance from the Brazilian bourgeoisie, the people who were the main recipients of US management training. This might mean that knowing US management techniques was a useful tool for the local elite to continue exercising its dominance, as at the end of the day members of the elite were those who ended up working for multinational companies in the country. This process is another chapter in the Brazilian elite's use of foreign models and references as a way of maintaining its legitimacy.

This process had its consequences. There were concerns that management education was simply importing a foreign model that had little to do with the Brazilian reality of the time (Covre, 1981). Furthermore, Dole Anderson (one of the US scholars who led the Michigan State University mission responsible for setting-up FGV-EAESP in Brazil) pointed out the following in the preface of a book in which he analyses the institutional building of management education in Brazil:

A general caveat is appropriate regarding my results. Explicitly sensitive though I am to my own ethnocentrism or the tendency to view and judge Brazilian matters through the prism of my own culture and its business education practices (..) equally serious in the adopted US

ethnocentrism of many Brazilian leaders in business education. Many of them have secured much of their own business education in the US and all of them have been surrounded by and bathed in US models (...) I sense that many of them judge and are unfairly depreciatory of their own accomplishments by comparing theirs with the older, better funded model in the more propitious US culture (Anderson, 1987, p. 9).

The above quotation indicates that the transference of US institutions of management is related to ethnocentric visions of local realities (the last phrase is a clear example) and that it also influences local actors to have a foreign mindset that depreciates their own achievements and local realities. The quotation clearly suggests that the logics underpinning Americanization are strongly related to the logic of colonialism (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2003) – which has severe impacts and consequences wherever it occurs. Colonialism is a forged concept that acquires significance in specific iterations and reiterations that are predicated on materially embedded political and cultural struggles (Lloyd, 2000, p. 382) which implies that this notion is always dependent on specificities and is itself a complex construct. Despite this, colonialism tends to refer to a process where there is the subordination, displacement and even the extermination of indigenous characteristics (Lloyd, 2000) and it is strongly related to the imposition of modern forms and institutional structures (Schwarz, 2000) as well as the construction of derogatory images of the Other (see Said, 1979). It is important to recognize that the coloniality of knowledge can have strong links to coloniality of power (Mignolo, 2000).

Americanization of management in Brazil seems to inflict a particular manifestation of colonialism, which is “epistemic coloniality” (Ibarra-Colado, 2006) i.e. a mode of colonization related to the process by which scientific knowledge permits the integration of native elites into the dominant Anglo-Euro-Centric ideology of modernity (Florescano, 1994, p. 65 quoted by Ibarra-Colado, 2006, p. 464). As such, this is a process that shores up the idea of US management knowledge as being superior to Brazil’s. For example, several studies have discussed how US knowledge and ideas are pervasive in Brazilian academic production in management. Bertero and Keinert (1994), for example, investigated the theoretical perspective used by the authors that published articles in RAE (the leading Brazilian academic management periodical) between 1961 and 1993. They concluded that Brazilian academic output was limited to consuming and repeating ideas produced elsewhere, most often in the USA. A previous in-depth analysis of theoretical and methodological trends of a large sample of published organizational studies came to the same conclusion (Machado Da Silva *et al.*, 1990). Through an analysis of the citations in Brazilian leading scientific periodicals in the management field, Vergara and Carvalho (1995) showed that most references to academic management studies were foreign, predominantly US, and that references to Brazilian authors were very limited. In a more recent study, Vergara and Pinto (2001) showed that American references represent 61.05 per cent of all references in Brazilian organization studies. Analyzing management publications of the 1990s, Rodrigues and Carrieri (2001) noticed that Brazilian organizational studies were strongly influenced by Anglo-Saxon authors. Often, the production that was directly or indirectly imported was not only isomorphic, but also published with considerable delay and often selected according to questionable criteria (Bertero *et al.*, 1999).

The reasons for this are known and predictable: the many forms of disqualification of local production and categories, and the strong foreign influence in the training of the authors themselves. Both feed a seemingly endless vicious cycle, highlighting a

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primary concern in post-colonialist theory: thinkers from excluded environments using their space to voice the theory that excludes them (Calás and Smircich, 1999; Gopal *et al.*, 1999).

From the perspective of education, in many ways management teaching in Brazil reflects this fixation with the US point of reference. Imported management and business teaching models and paradigms – such as business schools themselves, MBA programs, the paradigm of big (US) business and the 500 “largest or best” – have become hegemonic in the training of professionals and new generations of management researchers and professors. As a consequence and because of the colonialism that afflicts organizations, these institutions tend to emanate US references. This can be seen in the syllabi, and the origin/training of professors (Caldas and Wood, 1997).

## 7. Conclusion

Following a post-colonial perspective, this paper has sought to discuss the context and the process of the Americanization of Brazilian management. To do so, it first pointed out the key elements associated with post-colonial analysis, especially in terms of how this analysis offers a critique of the modernizing initiatives for the Third World, and in terms of how it can help thought about “Latin America”. After this, the paper discussed how management from Europe to Asia has been Americanized since the Second World War. The paper presented a detailed discussion of the historical process which resulted in the intentional Americanization of Brazil. The paper then demonstrated how the Americanization of Brazilian management resembles a process of colonialism whose consequences are still felt nowadays.

There has been a wider consequence of the Americanization of management in Brazil. This process has actively helped in the Americanization of the country, by creating a new profession and new modes of teaching under a very strong US influence. US management has spread widely in the country via educational institutions, multinational corporations and consulting firms. Through the ideology of “modernization” and “development”, US management in Brazil has also acted as a way to legitimize the local elite’s exercise of its dominance in Brazil. The roots of this can be traced back to the real US concern to protect itself and the world from Fascism and Nazism, as well as to a wish to foster US economic interest. By analyzing the Americanizing of Brazilian management, this paper has sought to make a contribution to the understanding of the establishment and growth of what is one of the largest management academies in the world. It has shown how this academy was created under colonial logics and it may also suggest how these logics influence how management knowledge is produced and reproduced in developing economies.

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