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Americanization and Its Limits:  
Reworking US Technology and Management  
in Postwar Europe and Japan

JONATHAN ZEITLIN

**RSC No. 99/33**

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WP  
321.0209  
4 EUR





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**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE**  
**ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE**

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Reworking US Technology and Management  
in Postwar Europe and Japan**

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**Printed in Italy in December 1999**  
**European University Institute**  
**Badia Fiesolana**  
**I – 50016 San Domenico (FI)**  
**Italy**

## ABSTRACT

This paper develops a new and conceptually distinctive analysis of Americanization in European and Japanese industry after the Second World War, based on a comparative research project involving an international group of scholars. The project highlights the autonomous and creative role of local actors in selectively adapting US technology and management methods to suit local conditions and, strikingly, in creating new hybrid forms that combined indigenous and foreign practices in unforeseen but often remarkably competitive ways. Its findings will be of compelling interest not only to historians and social scientists concerned with the dynamics of postwar economic growth and industrial development, but also to those engaged in contemporary debates about the crossnational transfer and diffusion of productive models.

The paper itself is divided into three main sections. The first section re-examines the historiography of postwar Americanization, highlighting the theoretical assumptions underlying contending perspectives in order to bring out the distinctive features of the conceptual approach developed in this project. Only by substantially modifying or discarding altogether a series of widely-held assumptions about the nature and transferability of productive models, it argues, can the pervasive evidence of selective adaptation and innovative modification of US techniques and methods uncovered by our research be convincingly accommodated. The second section draws together the empirical findings of the project to sketch out a complex, multi-levelled comparative analysis of similarities and variations in postwar European and Japanese engagements with the American model across firms, sectors, and national economies, stressing the creativity and reflexivity of local actors together with the resulting proliferation of hybrid forms and practices. The third and final section considers the implications of our interpretation of postwar Americanization for current debates on the transfer and diffusion of foreign productive models across national borders, underlining the historical grounds for skepticism about the likelihood and desirability of international convergence around any single "best practice" model of economic and technological efficiency, whether Japanese or Anglo-American.



A conspicuous feature of the development of the modern world economy has been the emergence of new models of productive efficiency and their attempted diffusion across national boundaries. Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; the United States from the late nineteenth century through the 1960s, and once again perhaps in the 1990s; Japan in the 1970s and 80s: each of these countries generated innovations in technology and business organization which were widely believed to define a transnational standard of productive efficiency. In each case, foreign observers flocked to the rising industrial power of the day to determine the secrets of its success, while business people and government officials sought through a variety of means to transplant the new methods into their own domestic soil. In each case, moreover, such experiments touched off far-reaching debates about the essential features of the new production paradigm; its economic, social, cultural, institutional, and political preconditions; and its transferability across national borders.<sup>1</sup>

Although responses have varied widely across firms, countries, and periods – and any definitive judgement would be premature in the most recent cases – historical experience suggests that wholesale imitation of foreign “best practice” has typically proved less common than piecemeal borrowing and selective adaptation to suit the divergent requirements of local economic and institutional circumstances. Often, too, such incremental modifications of the internationally dominant model have given rise to innovative hybrids which became sources of competitive advantage in their own right – as in the case of Japanese manufacturers’ postwar transformation of US mass-production techniques.<sup>2</sup> In theory as in history, moreover, there are strong grounds for believing that “any successful imitation of foreign organizational patterns requires innovation”, and that “the process of transfer and adaptation of a productive model from a parent context to another site will always lead to the hybridization of the logic and elements of the productive organization” because of inevitable differences between the original and new environments. Modification and hybridization of imported technology and management methods, on this view, should not be understood as a negative expression of domestic resistance to the transfer process, nor even as a regrettable if perhaps necessary consequence of compromises in adapting a foreign “best practice” model to fit local constraints, but rather as a positive opportunity for decentralized innovation and learning by self-reflective actors.<sup>3</sup>

This paper focuses on the largest and to date most significant example of this global phenomenon: that of Americanization after the Second World War. For a central problem confronting Western European countries and Japan alike was how far their domestic industries should be reshaped in the image of the United States,



unquestionably the dominant economic and military power of the postwar world. To contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific, the “American model” meant above all mass production – the high-volume manufacture of standardized goods using special-purpose machinery and predominantly unskilled labour – together with the host of “systematic” management techniques, organizational structures, and research and marketing services developed for its efficient administration and effective exploitation. Beyond the intrinsic appeal of such methods to nations aspiring to emulate American productivity and abundance, US policy makers actively sought to promote their diffusion through the technical assistance programs and counterpart funds associated with the Marshall Plan in Europe and on a more modest scale with the military occupation and procurement authorities in Japan. At a deeper level, finally, US officials and business leaders aimed to recast European and Japanese patterns of corporate organization and competitive order through assertive support for antitrust, decartellization, and deconcentration policies, together with international market integration and trade liberalization.<sup>4</sup>

Much of the historical literature on postwar Americanization has tended to assume without extensive supporting evidence that this process proceeded relatively smoothly and rapidly, at least in its narrowly economic and technological dimensions. The real barriers to Americanization, from this perspective, lay rather in the social, cultural, institutional, and political spheres, where established elites and popular classes each proved reluctant, to varying degrees and for different reasons, to embrace transatlantic models of labour-management relations, mass consumption, and macroeconomic management. Western Europe, as one influential formulation puts it, was only “half-Americanized” during the postwar reconstruction period; but productive organization and techniques in such accounts are squarely allocated to the “Americanized” half.<sup>5</sup> Even where the limits of industrial Americanization are recognized, as in recent studies of postwar Britain, the persistence of “pre-Fordist” production methods is typically taken as a sign of backwardness and complacency, an avatar of and contributory factor in the subsequent decline of domestic manufacturing.<sup>6</sup> Only in the Japanese case has there been much explicit discussion of possible efficiency gains obtained by modifying the American model to suit local circumstances; and even there, the reconstruction of the postwar workplace is often nonetheless assimilated to the broader triumph of a transnational “politics of productivity” exported from the United States.<sup>7</sup> Yet in an era when American manufacturers have themselves struggled to respond to the challenges of new competitive strategies based on greater product diversity and productive flexibility, there can be little justification for considering mass production and systematic management as they were practiced in the United States



during the 1940s and 50s as a universal model of industrial efficiency which other nations failed to embrace at their peril.<sup>8</sup>

Based on the results of a collaborative research project by an international group of leading scholars, this paper seeks to develop a new comparative analysis of industrial Americanization in postwar Europe and Japan aimed at overcoming the conceptual limitations of the existing literature in a number of respects. *First*, we closely examine European and Japanese responses to postwar efforts at promoting the transfer and diffusion of US management methods and manufacturing practice. Paying particular attention to issues of impact and implementation at the level of individual sectors and firms, we emphasize the autonomous and creative role of local actors in the reception – both positive and negative – of American techniques and methods, above and beyond the influence of US government agencies, Marshall Plan institutions, or national productivity councils. *Second*, we look carefully not only at *what* the historical actors did, but also at *why* they did it: at the processes of reflection and debate, both public and private, which underlay their strategies and choices. Historical actors, like contemporary historians, disagreed sharply about the possibilities and limitations of postwar Americanization in different national and sectoral contexts, while the ensuing debates, often exercised a decisive influence on the decisions taken, and thus on the trajectory of economic development in the broadest sense. Contemporary objections to the American model, as we shall see, were not purely socio-cultural, nor can they easily be dismissed as blinkered conservatism even in hindsight: on the contrary, their economic and technological reservations foreshadowed much of the subsequent critique of US manufacturing practice in the face of the Japanese challenge. *Third*, we treat established market and industrial structures not simply as objective parameters for entrepreneurial decisionmaking, but rather as contested terrains whose contours were shaped by rival visions – both foreign and domestic – of the bases for competitive order, technical efficiency, and democratic stability in a modern economy. *Fourth*, rather than posing the problem in terms of wholesale acceptance or rejection of the American model, we underscore instead the importance of selective adaptation to fit the demands of domestic markets and institutions, giving rise to a multiplicity of hybrid forms of productive organization, some of which would eventually develop into significant innovations in their own right. Such creative modifications of US practice, as the participants in this project found, could be observed not only among outspoken critics of Americanization, but also paradoxically among many of its most ardent European and Japanese admirers. For all these reasons, *finally*, we argue for a shift in analytical perspective from the transfer and diffusion of US technology and management to their active reworking in postwar Europe and Japan, while

preferring in the end to speak not so much of “Americanization”, or even of its limits, but rather of “American engagements”, with all its multiple, ambivalent, and actively charged connotations.

The balance of this paper is divided into three main sections. The first section re-examines the historiography of postwar Americanization, highlighting the theoretical assumptions underlying contending perspectives in order to bring out the distinctive features of the conceptual approach developed in this project. Only by substantially modifying or discarding altogether a series of widely-held assumptions about the nature and transferability of productive models, it argues, can the pervasive evidence of selective adaptation and innovative modification of US techniques and methods uncovered by our research be convincingly accommodated. The second section draws together the project’s empirical findings to sketch out a complex, multi-levelled comparative analysis of similarities and variations in postwar European and Japanese engagements with the American model across firms, sectors, and national economies, stressing the creativity and reflexivity of local actors together with the resulting proliferation of hybrid forms and practices. The third and final section of the paper considers the implications of our interpretation of postwar Americanization for current debates on the transfer and diffusion of foreign productive models across national borders, underlining the historical grounds for skepticism about the likelihood and desirability of international convergence around any single “best practice” model of economic and technological efficiency, whether Japanese or Anglo-American.

## **I. POSTWAR AMERICANIZATION: CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES AND THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

Few historiographical propositions are more deeply entrenched than the claim that the transfer of US technology and managerial know-how lay at the heart of the extraordinary economic growth experienced by Western Europe and Japan during the “golden age” of the long postwar boom. This view, which originated in the self-presentation of the Marshall Plan institutions and their contemporary supporters, has been reinvigorated over the past decade and a half by the burgeoning economic literature on international catch-up and convergence of productivity. “The spread of best practice American technologies and systems of work organization throughout Western Europe and Japan”, write Andrew Glyn, Alan Hughes, Alain Lipietz, and Ajit Singh in a widely-cited essay on “The Rise and Fall of the Golden Age”, “was reflected at the macroeconomic level in the slow process of ‘catch-up’ of average productivity levels [...]. Common to all [countries] were productivity missions sent



to the US to bring back the message as to how American prosperity could be emulated.” “High [postwar] growth”, Nicholas Crafts and Gianni Toniolo likewise observe in an overview of current historical-economic research, “was made possible by the gains deriving from the transfer of the (Taylorist) mass production technology in a receptive (socially capable) environment stabilized by a strong American leadership”.<sup>9</sup>

Many postwar historians carry this interpretation further in stressing not only the transfer of American production techniques and management methods to Western Europe and Japan, but also the realignment of economic structures, institutions, and practices in the latter countries with those of the United States. Thus as John Killick contends in a recent synthetic text on the United States and European reconstruction:

“Since 1945, the European economy has developed many characteristically American features. For instance, huge increases in intra-European trade, encouraged by improved transport and EC legislation, have produced large-scale industrial restructuring and many firms now operate throughout Europe. These new corporations are organised more like American oligopolies than traditional British or German firms: their managers use American methods, often learned in American-style management schools; their products and services are advertised in American-style media and are marketed in American-type stores. This market is kept closer to full employment than in the 1930s by the use of relatively active and coordinated fiscal and monetary policies – which were developed, in key respects, in the USA. The market is policed by European adaptations of American anti-trust legislation and regulatory agencies”.<sup>10</sup>

Much writing in this vein similarly emphasizes the more or less transformative influence on West European and Japanese society resulting from the postwar diffusion of American models of mass consumption, commercialized culture, industrial relations, and the displacement of distributive conflict by an ideological consensus around the pursuit of economic growth – what Charles Maier has influentially termed “the politics of productivity”. Radio, television, advertising, and above all Hollywood cinema, according to this view, worked alongside Marshall Plan propaganda to diffuse seductive images of the “American way of life”, driving “the demand side of the economic and social transformation, speeding and channelling the changes in mentality and behaviour” towards an Americanized “era of high mass consumption”.<sup>11</sup>

For other postwar historians, however, the European and Japanese adoption of US production techniques and management methods was not matched, at least in the short and medium term, by a parallel embrace of the social, cultural,

institutional, and political components of the American model. Business and political elites in many countries, on this view, long remained highly skeptical of, if not actively hostile to, the New Deal-inspired dimensions of the Marshall Plan program such as high wages, domestic mass consumption, cooperative union-management relations, public welfare expenditure, decartellization, and Keynesian macroeconomic management, as well to US proposals for international market integration and the liberalization of trade and payments. Important and in some cases dominant sections of the labor movement likewise rejected the US-sponsored vision of a productivity partnership between depoliticized unions and progressive managements based on plant-level contractual bargaining. For all these reasons, US diplomatic historian Michael Hogan concludes, borrowing a phrase from Pier Paolo d'Atorre's analysis of Italy, "In the end [...] Western Europe was only 'half-Americanized'"; whereas "the Marshall Plan had aimed to remake Europe in an American mode...America was made the European way" – a judgement which could readily be extended with appropriate modifications to the Japanese case.<sup>12</sup>

In response to the conflicting evidence thrown up by the opposed positions in this debate, some recent accounts of postwar Americanization accordingly emphasize the coexistence of trends towards international convergence of productive systems resulting from the attempted diffusion of the US model with the continuing persistence of national differences. Postwar Americanization, on this view, involved not only a transfer of US production techniques and management methods to Western Europe and Japan, but also a partial transformation of economic structures, institutions, and socio-cultural practices. The extent and forms of this latter transformation, however, varied across countries depending on pre-existing features of their domestic environment, together with the opportunities these created for local resistance to the adoption of the American model. Thus as David Ellwood writes in his broad synthetic text *Rebuilding Europe*:

"In historical terms Americanisation appears as a particularly distinctive form of modernisation, superimposed with great political, economic and cultural force... on each European country's own variant....Every nation arrived at its own synthesis of production and consumption, of collective and individual spending, of traditional ways and new practices directed to growth".<sup>13</sup>

Or as Marie-Laure Djelic puts it more theoretically in her comparative sociological study *Exporting the American Model*:



"[...] The American model was not accepted nor adopted to the same extent in all Western European economies. National peculiarities remained and they were more or less significant in each case. Indeed, for each country, the transfer process was embedded in different economic, political, cultural, and institutional environments. In turn, those national differences had an impact not only on transfer mechanisms and their efficiency but also on the nature and degree of resistance and opposition that was to emerge, nationally, to the cross-national transfer process".<sup>14</sup>

Whereas Djelic and others influenced by the new sociological institutionalism adopt a self-consciously agnostic stance towards the efficiency or performance consequences of such national differences in the reception and transfer of the American model, other writers – above all historical economists – have no such reservations. For the latter school, the effective absorption of US mass-production technology, Taylorist or Fordist work organization, and systematic management methods – regarded as the key to productivity catch-up – depended in turn on complementary shifts in socio-economic institutions and practices, from wage bargaining and union structure to corporate organization, market regulation, and macroeconomic management. National institutional environments across Western Europe (and Japan) varied in their compatibility with a growth model based on the importation of American productive techniques, and the resulting differences are assigned a key part in explaining cross-national variations in economic performance during the postwar "golden age". "In order to take full advantage of the adaptation of American technologies to European conditions", Crafts and Toniolo insist, "business and trade union practices had to be adjusted accordingly." Even if "the spread of the new productivity ideology...was universal", they observe, "the speed and lasting impact of adaptation varied from country to country...".<sup>15</sup> For Eichengreen, similarly, Institutions were not equally well adapted to the needs of growth in all European countries. Some, notably the UK and Ireland, failed to develop the relevant domestic institutions. Others, such as France and Italy, managed to do so only with delay....These different institutional responses go a fair way towards accounting for variations across countries and over time in European growth performance.<sup>16</sup>

Superimposed on these conflicting views of the extent and consequences of postwar Americanization is a crosscutting debate about the role of the United States and the Marshall Plan in the transfer and diffusion of productive models and techniques. For many authors, predominantly but by no means exclusively American, US initiatives such as the Marshall Plan, the technical assistance programs, and the policies of the German and Japanese occupation authorities were crucial in transferring managerial expertise and know-how, financing investment in mass production technologies, reshaping institutions, and creating a consensus

around productivity and economic growth across the Atlantic and the Pacific. For others, notably but not solely non-American, the primary impetus behind postwar reorganization of production and the introduction of new techniques and methods – including those borrowed from the United States – came rather from the European and Japanese themselves, deriving its real power from national policies and domestic institutions, with the Marshall Plan and other US programs significant mainly at the margin.<sup>17</sup> Here, too, much of the recent literature has sought to steer a middle course between these polarities, presenting the Marshall Plan and other US policies as an “important catalyst” rather than the driving force behind the postwar economic transformation of Western Europe and Japan; “not the fuel” but instead “the lubricant in [the] engine”, according to a slightly different metaphor. “Transfers of complex models”, argue Ove Bjarnar and Matthias Kipping in their introduction to a recent edited volume on *The Americanization of European Business*, “are likely to take place more effectively when an active exporter is faced with an active importer”; while for Djelic, similarly, the postwar success of the US authorities in exporting the American productive model depended on their relative ability in different countries to collaborate with institutionally powerful local elites in a cross-national modernization network.<sup>18</sup> Most of the contributors to our project, however, go significantly further in emphasizing the active reworking and transformation of the American model in postwar European and Japanese industry. Modification and hybridization of US technology and management practices, on this view, should not be interpreted as a negative phenomenon, an index of domestic resistance to the transfer process, nor even as a sign of unavoidable compromises in adapting or “translating” the American model to fit local constraints, but rather as a positive source of experimentation, innovation, and learning for European and Japanese firms during the postwar era.<sup>19</sup>

Beneath this welter of contrasting historiographical interpretations, however, can be discerned a deeper set of theoretical differences about the nature of the “American model” and its transferability to other national settings. Although these differences will be examined here in the context of the literature on postwar Americanization, very similar theoretical oppositions and assumptions, as we shall see in section III, inform current debates about the international transfer and diffusion of productive models, whether from Japan or once again from the United States. With appropriate adjustments, therefore, the conceptual approach and historiographical critique developed here should prove more widely applicable.

A first axis of disagreement concerns whether the United States should be considered a unitary or heterogeneous model for European and Japanese industry. For most writers on postwar Americanization, there can be little doubt about the



essential features of the US model during this period: large, hierarchically managed corporations, using mass production and distribution techniques to compete in oligopolistic markets policed by antitrust regulation. Insofar as internal diversity within the US economy is acknowledged at all in such accounts, it is typically assimilated to the persistence of small and medium-sized firms in labour-intensive industries peripheral to what Alfred Chandler has termed “competitive managerial capitalism”.<sup>20</sup> At the opposite pole are historians such as Alf Lüdtke, Inge Marssolek, and Adelheid von Saldern, who emphasize instead the “polymorphous” multiplicity of competing representations of US economy and society which allowed European and Japanese observers to interpret and appropriate contemporary discourses of “Americanization” in contradictory ways according to their own subjective experiences, interests, and desires.<sup>21</sup> Between these two extremes stand those, like the contributors to our project, who accept the idea of an “American model” with certain core characteristics as a contemporary historical construct, while at the same time calling attention to significant ambiguities, undercurrents, and disparities within US industrial practice, from which foreign visitors could accordingly draw a variety of lessons.

A second and closely related polarity regards the relationship between the constituent elements of the American model. For many writers on postwar Americanization, as we have seen, there was a close linkage not only among mass-production techniques and systematic management methods, but also between these and US forms of corporate organization, industrial relations, and market regulation. Though it could be applied to varying degrees in different settings, the American model, on this view, can best be understood as a coherent package of tightly-coupled elements characterized by a high degree of mutual complementarity. Another group of historians maintains by contrast that even the Americans themselves did not seek to market a single self-contained productive model, but instead offered a wide array of discrete stand-alone techniques from which European and Japanese industrialists could select the most useful and cost-effective, as if in a “sort of department store”, to cite Luciano Segreto’s evocative if exaggerated phrase.<sup>22</sup> Here again, the participants in our project pursue an alternative path, highlighting both the deconstructibility of the American model and the interdependencies among its elements. Thus as a number of studies demonstrate, high-volume US manufacturing techniques and management tools such as standardization, automation, flow-line layout, mechanized materials handling, job evaluation, statistical quality control, training within industry, or time-and-motion study could be successfully introduced by European and Japanese firms making a more diverse range of products in smaller quantities, but only

through careful adaptation and modification to fit with the other elements of their own production systems as well as the external environment.

A third contested issue involves the degree of universality or context-dependence of the American model. In a simple neoclassical world characterized by perfect information, competitive markets, and uniform factor supplies, a more efficient new technique will be rapidly adopted by all producers throughout the economy. Yet few if any historical commentators subscribe in practice to such a naïve view. Thus Moses Abramovitz, one of the founders of the modern convergence approach, insists that productivity catch-up is not an automatic process, but depends on supplementary conditions such as “social capability” (a loosely-defined complex of national attributes, attitudes, and institutions favourable to the absorption of foreign innovations), natural resource endowments, and “technological congruence”: “the relevance or usefulness to less advanced countries of the techniques and forms of organization that characterize the frontiers of productivity in a leading economy.” Given the distinctive developmental path followed by the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Abramovitz suggests, “countries less well endowed with natural resources and with smaller domestic markets could not easily adopt and exploit American technology”; only as resource disparities became less important, incomes rose, and markets became more integrated through foreign trade could Europe and Japan begin to catch up by emulating US production methods.<sup>23</sup> Other writers in this tradition, as we have seen, place substantially greater emphasis on the economic, organizational, and institutional requirements for successful adoption and exploitation of American techniques and methods. Most of the contributors to our project would push this line of argument further to question how far market structures and institutions in Western Europe and Japan did in fact converge with those of the United States, and thus to what extent the conditions for technological congruence across these economies have ever fully obtained. Insofar as economic and institutional conditions in Europe and Japan continued to diverge from those in the US, local adaptations, alterations and hybridization of the American model, on this view, remained both necessary and desirable in theory as well as in practice. Only by being substantially modified or even transformed to fit a broader range of local circumstances, paradoxically, could this putatively universal productive model be widely diffused beyond its original economic and institutional context. A fourth opposition centers on the extent of institutional plasticity or path dependence in the receiving countries. For some writers in the catch-up and convergence tradition, the institutional environments of postwar Western Europe and Japan were sufficiently plastic to permit extensive transfer of US techniques and management methods even under conditions of high context-dependence and



tight coupling among their constituent elements. For others, by contrast, institutional environments, even more than technologies themselves, are highly path dependent, creating substantial barriers to the adoption of new production and growth models outside of extraordinary historical moments. "Socioeconomic institutions", Eichengreen argues, necessarily displayed considerable inertia. Their function, in part, being to serve as coordinating mechanisms, their very nature created coordination problems for altering them. Institutions function as standards, giving rise to network externalities that tend to lock in their operation. The exceptional circumstances of war and reconstruction provided singular opportunities for coordinating wholesale adjustments in institutional arrangements. Even under these extraordinary conditions, however, radical changes in coordinating institutions were necessarily difficult to organize. Inevitably, the important institutional changes of the postwar period were only marginal adaptations. They were feasible only where considerable progress had already been made in developing the institutional structures required for growth after World War II.<sup>24</sup>

More typically, however, as we have seen, recent scholars have viewed the institutional environments of postwar Western Europe and Japan as both plastic enough to allow a significant transfer of US techniques and methods, and at the same time sufficiently path dependent to inhibit full convergence on the American model. Many of the contributors to this project would contest this polarity altogether, emphasizing the ways in which even quite stable institutional arrangements, like technologies and production models, may be reconfigured through apparently marginal modifications to operate quite differently under new environmental conditions. Thus continuing relationships or network ties between institutions may belie a deep transformation in the ways actors conceive of themselves, their mission, and their strategic possibilities, as we shall see for example, in the case of the German and Japanese steel industries before and after the Second World War. History, on this view, surely, matters, as in the path-dependency story; but its consequences may often be to facilitate rather than to obstruct economic adjustment by serving as a cognitive and practical resource for self-reflective actors in responding to external challenges – without, however, leading to convergence around a single set of institutions, techniques, or practices.<sup>25</sup>

A fifth and perhaps most crucial line of theoretical cleavage concerns the underlying efficiency characteristics of the US model. For most writers on postwar Americanization, as we have seen, the US model of mass production and systematic management unambiguously represented a global productivity frontier, deviations from which, for whatever reason, would give rise to inferior economic

performance, as most notably in the case of Britain.<sup>26</sup> For most of the participants in our project, by contrast, US manufacturing techniques and management practices represented at best a more or less effective response to an historically specific set of environmental conditions, outside of which there could be no presumption they would prove equally successful. In a longer historical perspective, such as that adopted in this project, many core features of the American model would widely come to be seen as liabilities rather than assets as the international environment became increasingly volatile from the 1970s onwards, while the individual studies, as we shall see, offer striking examples of the pitfalls resulting from excessive emulation of postwar US practice – both technological and managerial – under rapidly changing competitive circumstances. Deviations from the American model, on this view, need not result in inferior economic performance, but could instead give rise to incremental innovations which enhanced productivity and competitiveness, as is broadly acknowledged in the case of Japan.<sup>27</sup> Synchronically, too, European and Japanese manufacturers might develop alternative technologies and production methods better adapted to their own circumstances but functionally equivalent or even superior in performance to that of their American counterparts, as for example in the case of Michelin and the radial tire revolution studied by Paul Erker.<sup>28</sup>

Based on various combinations of these underlying theoretical oppositions, the salient differences among the contending historiographical perspectives on postwar Americanization can be represented schematically as in table 1. The remainder of this section draws together and elaborates the conceptual approach to postwar Americanization pursued by the organizers of this project and shared to varying degrees by the other participants. In each case, as can be seen from table 1, the approach pursued in this project either reverses the dominant position within the historiography or rejects the theoretical opposition on which it is founded. Only by substantially modifying or abandoning altogether these widely-held theoretical assumptions about the nature and transferability of productive models, we contend, can the pervasive evidence of selective adaptation, creative modification, and innovative hybridization of US technology and management in postwar Europe and Japan uncovered by our research be convincingly accommodated.



Table 1: Theoretical Approaches to Americanization

Unitary or heterogeneous model?	Tightly or loosely-coupled elements?	Universally applicable or context-dependent?	Global or local efficiency advantage?	Institutional plasticity or path dependency?	Theoretical approach
+	+	+	+	+	Naive convergence theory (pure neoclassical economics)
+	+	-	+	+	Mainstream catch-up and convergence theory: transfer of best-practice techniques dependent on technological congruence, resource endowments, and social capability (Abramovitz)
+	+	-	+	-	Institutional lock-in/lock-out of best-practice techniques as an explanation of national differences in economic performance (Eichengreen, Crafts, Toniolo)
+	-	+/-	+	-	"Half-Americanization" of European and Japanese societies (Hogan, d'Atorre)
+	+	-	+/-	+/-	Transfer process embedded in and shaped by national institutional environments (Djelic, Ellwood)
-	-	+	+	+/-	"American model" as a divisible set of globally efficient and transferable stand-alone techniques (Bjarnar/Kipping, Segreto)
-	X	-	-	x	"American model" as a locally effective ensemble of interdependent elements, which could be deconstructed, modified and recombined to suit foreign circumstances by self-reflective actors (Zeitlin/Herrigel)

Key: + = first alternative; - = second alternative; +/- = intermediate position; x = rejected polarity.

"Americanization", in our view, should be understood not as a neutral analytical concept but rather as a contested historical project, referring to the putative diffusion of an ensemble of interdependent characteristics, techniques, and practices – from mass production and systematic management to corporate structure, oligopolistic competition, and antitrust policy – which domestic and foreign commentators alike took to be distinctive features of mid-twentieth century US industry.<sup>29</sup> Such contemporary definitions of an "American model" were far from arbitrary, often reflecting, as the studies in our project show, long acquaintance with and keen observation of US industrial reality stretching back well before the Second World War. These contemporary definitions, however, were by no means univocal, nor could they be, given the internal diversity and heterogeneity of industrial practice across the American economy at the time, which remained visible to attentive foreign visitors – as to latter-day historians – not only in the surviving redoubts of speciality manufacture, but even in core mass-production sectors like motor vehicles.<sup>30</sup> US industry, moreover, was by its very nature a moving target, as newer high-profile practices such as the creation of centralized corporate R&D laboratories and the application of government-sponsored "big science" to technology increasingly caught the eye of foreign observers, while public antitrust policy slalomed through a dizzying series of twists and turns from the 1910s through the 1950s in its stance towards competition, cooperation, and merger among rival firms.<sup>31</sup> Different observers therefore interpreted the "American model" in varying ways, depending on their own perceptions, experiences, frames of reference, and not least their political and ideological relationship to the United States, drawing divergent conclusions about its substantive merits, ease of exportation, and applicability to European or Japanese circumstances.

Many contemporary actors, as several of the contributors to our project underline, thought of themselves as "modernizers" rather than "Americanizers", or understood the latter in terms of the former. But others, as a number of our studies also document, contested this universal vision of industrial modernity in the name of economic and technological objections which cannot easily be discounted in retrospect: indeed, their warnings about the inflexibility of special-purpose equipment, the high overhead costs of bureaucratic management, the wasteful accumulation of buffer stocks and work-in-progress, and the restrictive impact of standardization on product innovation anticipated much of the critique of US manufacturing practice in comparison to that of the Japanese which became commonplace during the 1970s and 80s. Postwar strategic debates and decision-making processes, it cannot be too strongly emphasized, were conducted under conditions of radical uncertainty: about the size, structure, and stability of demand



in markets at home and abroad; about the trajectory of technological development for particular products and entire industries; about the institutional framework for business activity across individual nations, regional trading blocs, and the international economy as a whole. Even where visionary entrepreneurs and policy makers apparently succeeded in reshaping industries and markets through “self-fulfilling” bets on American-style mass-production technologies and supranational commercial integration – as Matthias Kipping for instance suggests in his study of French steel users and producers – the outcome does not thereby “prove right” their position against the doubts raised by contemporary critics. For the realization of the optimistic projections of rapid and steady expansion of demand which underlay these investment strategies depended in part on contingent developments beyond the full control of the relevant actors themselves, from the Korean War boom to the completion of the Treaty of Rome. Under somewhat different macroeconomic circumstances, growth of demand for steel and metalworking products might easily have proved subject to sharper cyclical fluctuations, leading to substantial underutilization of costly investments in high-throughput, high minimum-efficient-scale plant, as European and Japanese firms following similar strategies discovered to their chagrin during the 1970s.<sup>32</sup>

For just such reasons, as many of the studies in this project demonstrate, enthusiastic supporters and skeptical critics of the American model alike often sought to hedge against uncertainty and improve its fit with domestic markets and institutions through selective adaptation and modification of US techniques and methods, thereby giving rise to innovative hybrid forms of productive organization rooted in indigenous as well as imported practice. Crucial to such creative hybridization, paradoxically, was contemporary actors’ attentiveness to the close linkages between productive models and particular economic and institutional contexts, since as we shall see it was precisely those European and Japanese industrialists most acutely conscious of the distance separating domestic from US conditions who proved most aggressive and adept at deconstructing, modifying, and recombining elements of the American model for their own purposes. But this hybridization process, finally, was no one-way street, for in reworking US technology and management to suit local circumstances, postwar European and Japanese actors at the same time reinterpreted and reshaped their own practices and institutions in ways which theorists of path dependency would scarcely have imagined possible.

## II. AMERICAN ENGAGEMENTS: BEYOND TRANSFER AND DIFFUSION

The studies in our project are divided into two main groups. The first considers postwar efforts at exporting US industrial practice by public agencies and private enterprises respectively, highlighting the internal tensions and diversity among the would-be prophets of the American model. The second and larger group of studies examines the variety of European and Japanese engagements with US technology and management through a series of matched country cases focusing on key metalworking industries such as steel, motor vehicles, mechanical engineering, and electrical equipment, together with closely-allied sectors like rubber tires, electronics, and telecommunications. These sectors, it is widely agreed, lay at the heart of postwar reconstruction and economic growth in Western Europe and Japan, as well as of contemporary debates and struggles over industrial Americanization. The construction of US-designed wide strip mills, for example, were among the very largest new investment projects of the late 1940s and early 50s, while the French and Italian steel and automobile industries, as the studies by Kipping, Ranieri, and Bigazzi show, absorbed a high proportion of Marshall Aid directed to these countries, and indeed to Western Europe as a whole.<sup>33</sup> A more comprehensive survey of postwar Americanization would doubtless devote greater space and attention to light consumer goods like clothing and furniture, process industries like oil or chemicals, or services like finance and retailing, though individual chapters do consider European interactions with the US model in related sectors such as rubber products (Erker), telecommunications (Lipartito), and electricity supply (Glimstedt, Zeitlin), as well as artisanal firms and regional networks of small and medium-sized enterprises (McGlade). By focusing on a critical group of related sectors, however, the project more than makes up in analytical depth for any sacrifice in empirical breadth through the resulting opportunities for complex, multi-levelled comparisons and contrasts across industries, firms, and national economies.<sup>34</sup>

In chronological terms, too, the project's coverage radiates outwards from a central core. Thus all of the studies focus on the key reconstruction years (1945-60), when European and Japanese engagements with the American model were at their most intense, though many go further in following the trajectory of enterprises, sectors, and national economies through the heyday of the long postwar boom which ended with the first oil shock of 1973-4. In nearly all cases, however, the contributors also find it necessary to look back in greater or lesser detail at the prewar period in order to understand how far national and company responses to Americanization were inspired by earlier engagements with Fordism, Taylorism, and US business more generally, as well as by the historical contingencies of the



postwar era itself. Many of the studies, finally, glance forward, if only briefly, to the crisis of mass production and resurgence of flexibility since the mid-1970s as a means of contextualizing the distinctive environment of the postwar years and assessing its influence on the strategic choices of the historical actors.

Such multiple, overlapping, and crosscutting chronological perspectives – together with associated techniques such as flashbacks, anticipations, and epilogues – can also be understood as narrative strategies for challenging and subverting the unilinear, teleological presentation of postwar Americanization as progressive modernization which remains predominant in the existing literature. Like synchronic comparisons across firms, sectors, and countries, or the polyphony of multiple voices within a single text, the plurality of temporalities in this project contributes to what literary theorists Gary Saul Morson and Michael André Bernstein have termed “sideshadowing”: the narrative representation of action as a process of deliberative choice among an open (though not of course infinite) set of alternative possibilities, more than one of which might in fact have been realized. Morson and Bernstein counterpose sideshadowing narratives to those based on “foreshadowing” and “backshadowing”: the abuse of hindsight to recount events as if their outcome were predetermined and could be used to judge the choices of historical actors irrespective of what the latter could realistically have been expected to know at the time. Only by rigorously eschewing such fore and backshadowing narratives, we argue, can studies such as those prepared for this project hope to recover the decision-making horizon of contemporary actors and thereby arrive at genuinely *historical* accounts of postwar European and Japanese engagements with the American model.<sup>35</sup>

### Exporting the American Model?

One obligatory point of departure for historical analysis of postwar Americanization is the perspective of the Americans themselves. Many accounts of postwar reconstruction, as we have seen, depict the US authorities as seeking to export a unitary and coherent “American model” to Western Europe and Japan. Yet such interpretations, as Jacqueline McGlade’s study demonstrates, gloss over the deep internal divisions, conflicting objectives, and shifting priorities within the US camp itself which magnified the ambiguities surrounding the American model and inhibited its transnational projection. US policy makers during the late 1940s and 50s, McGlade argues, were divided between liberal and conservative internationalists whose “global developmentalist” and “strategic security” agendas coincided only briefly during the high tide of the Marshall Plan and the creation of NATO. The business community, too, was deeply split between liberal reformers

associated with the Committee for Economic Development who played a leading role in the European Recovery Program (ERP) on the one hand, and more conservative trade protectionists associated with organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Industrial Conference Board who were also hostile to New Deal domestic policies on the other.<sup>36</sup> The US occupation authorities in Germany and Japan, as Gary Herrigel observes, were similarly riven by internecine struggles between radical progressive trustbusters, often linked to the Republican Party, and "New Dealer" advocates of American-style oligopolistic big business and mass production, as well as between both of these groups and conservative stabilizers more concerned with economic revival and internal order than with democratic institutional reform.<sup>37</sup>

Not only were the would-be exporters of the American model themselves deeply divided, but the international priorities pursued by US policy makers also shifted repeatedly in reaction to changing domestic political alignments and external challenges. Thus the US Technical Assistance and Productivity Program (USTA&P), as McGlade shows, was initially created in response to a conservative backlash against the Marshall Planners' attempts to encourage broad-based recovery, industrial modernization, and democratic reform of West European economies in the context of mounting Cold War tensions. As military preparedness, rearmament, and containing Communism became increasingly prominent among US foreign economic policy goals during the 1950s, the USTA&P's original aim to boost European industrial output through a massive transfer of American business practices and production methods gradually gave way to more narrowly targetted and less directive assistance to defence manufacturers holding off-shore procurement contracts.

Alongside these internal divisions and shifting priorities ran parallel spatial and temporal variations in the scope, modalities, and effectiveness of American influence. Only in directly occupied territories like West Germany and Japan, as Herrigel notes, could the US deploy coercive power to reshape industrial structure, economic institutions, and market order in conformity with American normative ideals. But even there, as he also demonstrates, the externally-imposed reforms were progressively modified in key details by domestic authorities, and exerted their deepest long-term impact by creating conditions within which local actors could revise their own self-understanding and practices in ways that ultimately diverged significantly from both indigenous traditions and the American model.



Elsewhere in Western Europe, despite the evident power conferred by the United States' enormous military and economic resources, American influence on postwar reconstruction could be exercised principally through varying combinations of negotiation, persuasion, and voluntary emulation. US leverage might appear to have been greatest over financially weak countries like France and Italy which were particularly dependent on American aid. But as Chiarella Esposito has documented elsewhere, US authorities' reluctance to bring down fragile centrist coalitions in these strategically critical nations by withholding conditional aid drastically curtailed their ability to insist on policies opposed by domestic governments, such as macroeconomic expansion in Italy or increased expenditure on low-cost housing and financial stabilization to contain inflation in France.<sup>38</sup> American support and Marshall Aid were most effective in providing approved domestic actors with the additional financial and political resources needed to implement their own strategic visions, as Matthias Kipping argues in the case of Jean Monnet, René Damien (Usinor), Pierre Lefauchaux (Renault), the French continuous strip mill installations, and the opening of the domestic steel market to competition through the ratification of the Schuman Plan. Even in such instances, however, as Ruggero Ranieri shows in a marvellous piece of historical detective work, there was often a plurality of conflicting views among US advisors and policy makers at different levels, so that only by mobilizing an extraordinary coalition including American engineering consultants, steelmakers, and equipment suppliers as well as Fiat could Finsider's Oscar Sinigaglia succeed in overcoming the combined opposition of the World Bank, local Marshall Plan officials, Italian private steel companies, and other prominent US industrialists and consultants to the construction of a new integrated wide-strip mill complex at Cornigliano on the Genoese coast.<sup>39</sup>

American negotiating leverage over domestic economic and industrial policies during the Marshall Plan era was weakest, finally, in the case of more politically and financially independent Social Democratic nations such as Britain, Norway, and Sweden. Thus the British and Norwegian Labour governments insulated their ambitious capital investment policies from US interference by using counterpart funds mainly to retire public debt, while carefully devolving responsibility for collaboration with the American-led productivity drive to bipartite union-management bodies outside direct state control. Sweden, which remained politically neutral, created no counterpart fund at all because her Social Democratic government accepted only small loans but not outright grants from the Marshall Plan.<sup>40</sup>

Chronologically, too, US authorities' capacity to promote the transfer and diffusion of the American model to Western Europe and Japan moved through several distinct phases during the postwar reconstruction period. US direct influence over the European and Japanese economies reached its zenith during the immediate postwar years of military occupation and massive foreign aid, but began to fall off by the early 1950s with the onset of large-scale rearmament and the ascendancy of strategic concerns with Communist containment. Overt American hegemony declined still further during the late 1950s with the increasingly autonomous decision-making role assumed by European governments in multilateral institutions such as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation and the European Productivity Agency (EPA), and the gradual reintegration of both Japan and West Germany into the international community. During this latter period, as McGlade comments, initiative in the planning and usage of US aid and technical assistance passed increasingly into the hands of European actors who creatively adapted it for their own reform purposes rather than mechanically seeking to convert domestic manufacturing into a mirror image of the American model; and similar if perhaps less sweeping observations could also be made about the productivity movement in Japan, which has been termed "America's star pupil".<sup>41</sup> Few national productivity centers long survived the dissolution of the EPA in 1961, while even those countries such as West Germany, Japan, or Britain, which had enacted antimonopoly legislation under US pressure in the late 1940s, as Herrigel among others shows, deviated significantly from the American antitrust paradigm during the 1950s and 60s.<sup>42</sup> Attempts to institutionalize the transfer of the American model in Western Europe and Japan thus proved largely unsuccessful, leaving the enduring influence of US industrial practice dependent primarily on conversion and voluntary emulation, and hence ultimately on its interpretation, adaptation, and modification by local actors.<sup>43</sup>

But public policies such as the Marshall Plan, the USTA&P, and decartellization comprised only one side of contemporary American efforts to transform European and Japanese industry in their own image. Private business enterprises such as capital equipment suppliers, consultancies, and final goods manufacturers also played an important and growing part in the attempted transfer of US techniques and methods through a variety of channels from machinery sales, contractual advice, and patent licencing to technical cooperation agreements, joint ventures, and foreign direct investment. Thus in nearly every case considered in this project, European and Japanese manufacturers acquired American technical know-how in embodied form during the postwar reconstruction years by ordering machinery and capital equipment from US suppliers, often but by no means exclusively financed with American aid. In a few extreme cases, such as Finsider's



Cornigliano complex, Simca's Nanterre automobile factory, or Nissan's Oppama works, European and Japanese companies employed US engineering consultants and equipment suppliers to design, layout, and even install entire plants. Other companies like Volvo brought in American consultants to implement new payment and work-study systems such as MTM (Methods-Time-Measurement), while Finsider, as Ranieri details, worked closely with US steel companies and management consultants to import not only technological know-how but also budgeting, planning, and standard costing methods, as well as supervisory training, job analysis, and job evaluation. Many European and Japanese firms in sectors such as steel, rubber, automobiles, and electronics likewise purchased manufacturing licences to patented American products and processes either for their own use or to service a geographically delimited market, and such arrangements typically included fees for technical assistance and information as well as a pure royalty component. Not all technical cooperation agreements, however, involved cash payments, since well-established European companies like Fiat or Continental possessed sufficient research, design, production, and marketing expertise of their own to place them on a more or less equal footing with US partners such as Chrysler, Goodyear, or General Tire. More rarely, as in the case of Phoenix-Gummiwerke and Firestone Tire & Rubber, such transatlantic collaboration could extend as far as the marketing of jointly-branded goods and a US equity stake in the partner company, leading to more rapid and intense know-how transfer, but also as Paul Erker points out, to a risky and eventually dangerous dependence on American products and technology.<sup>44</sup>

A striking feature of industrial Americanization during the early postwar period is the comparatively limited impact of US management consultancies, especially in larger European countries such as Britain, France, and West Germany. In each of these markets, as Matthias Kipping has suggested elsewhere, US consultancy firms made little inroad during the 1940s and 50s both because of the prior existence of domestic service providers apparently able to meet the needs of local clients, and because of their own relative failure to adapt the American model to indigenous corporate structures and management styles. It was only during the 1960s that US management consultancies, notably McKinsey & Co., established a major role for their overseas operations in transferring the multidivisional form of corporate organization to large British and to a lesser extent French and West German companies. Even then, however, as a growing historical literature shows, the multidivisional structure was often implemented in incomplete, "corrupted", or modified form, especially in Britain, while an important group of West German steel, automobile, engineering, and electrical equipment firms either never adopted

the M-Form at all, or returned to older functional and holding company structures during the 1970s.<sup>45</sup>

In each of these cases, whatever the eventual outcome, US consultants and manufacturers functioned primarily as brokers or intermediaries in the attempted transfer of American techniques and methods, responding to initiatives from European client firms and/or US public authorities. The major exception to this pattern is of course foreign direct investment by US multinational companies, the eye of the resurgent storm over the "American challenge" to European business during the 1960s.<sup>46</sup> Surely it is to such companies if anywhere that we should look for robust, coherent, and successful efforts at transplanting the American model? Although historical research on this crucial question is still in its preliminary stages,<sup>47</sup> Steven Tolliday's study of the European operations of US multinational automobile firms yields some surprising answers.<sup>48</sup> Even the "Big Three" auto makers themselves did not fully conform to a single American model: thus the Ford Motor Company itself had to be comprehensively reorganized with the assistance of ex-General Motors managers during the late 1940s to repair the damages inflicted by the latter days of its founder's rule before it could begin to tackle the problems of rebuilding the company's various European subsidiaries. And even once Ford had ostensibly embraced GM's principles of managerial decentralization and divisional autonomy, the former continued to diverge from the latter in its greater functional centralization and stronger orientation towards the pursuit of production economies of scale through automation and plant integration.<sup>49</sup> Nor did it prove an easy task to integrate and coordinate Ford's separate British, French, and German companies, each of which had its own distinct products, production facilities, distribution networks, and management strategies, especially since trade barriers, government policies, and variations in competitive conditions continued to fragment European automobile markets even after the creation of the EEC. Under these conditions, as Jonathan Zeitlin also shows in the case of Britain, adjustment of US mass-production methods to the size and structure of domestic markets, including the development of distinctive local designs and the use of intermediate technological solutions for accommodating shorter runs and more frequent changeovers, gradually became a distinctive feature of both Ford and GM's postwar European operations (with the partial but significant exception of Ford-France, which was sold to Simca in 1954). Even during the late 1950s and early 60s, proposals by Ford-International to achieve European-wide economies of scale through cross-national harmonization of model planning and commonization of components ran into fierce opposition not only from the management of its British and German companies, but also from its own central marketing staff. In many cases, therefore, as Tolliday observes, through much of the postwar period US



multinational auto companies often found themselves running third- or fourth-rate European subsidiaries and struggling to establish effective managerial control from Detroit, while European manufacturers such as Volkswagen, Fiat, Renault, and even for a time Simca surpassed the masters in finding ways to adapt, develop, and reinterpret American practice to suit domestic markets and conditions.<sup>50</sup>

### **Reworking US Technology and Management: National, Sectoral, and Firm-Level Variations**

European and Japanese responses to postwar efforts at exporting the American model and their engagements with US technology and management can be analyzed at a number of different levels. Painting with a broad brush, the countries considered in this project may be grouped into three related pairs, as reflected in the organization of the chapters, based on their degree of political and financial autonomy from the United States, their economic and technological self-confidence, and the enthusiasm of key decision-makers in business and government for emulation of the American model. Each of these axes of variation can in turn be further specified. We have already seen how the forms and extent of US influence on domestic policy varied across militarily-occupied territories like Japan and West Germany, financially weak but strategically critical countries like France and Italy governed by fragile centrist coalitions, and more politically and economically independent Social Democratic nations like Britain and Sweden. Such differences can be clearly observed, for example, in the relative importance of Marshall Aid: thus in 1948-9, as Milward has shown, net ERP aid as a proportion of national income ranged from 6.5 percent in France and 5.3 percent in Italy to 2.9 percent in Western Germany, 2.4 percent in Britain, and 0.3 percent in Sweden.<sup>51</sup>

A key dimension of national economic and technological self-confidence is the degree of industrial backwardness relative to the United States in the minds of domestic engineers, managers, and government officials, which was arguably greatest in the cases of France, Italy, and from some points of view Japan, but least in those of Britain, Sweden, and Germany. Another important element is the intensity and continuity of interactions with American industry before 1945. Here the UK was clearly in a class of its own, as Anglo-American economic cooperation and technological exchange deepened substantially during the war, in contrast to hostile powers such as Germany, Italy, and Japan, which had already moved towards autarky in the late 1930s, or occupied countries like France, whose industrial contacts with the US were largely cut off after 1940. More elusive but no less significant is the extent of domestic industrialists' faith in the competitive value of indigenous technological styles, organizational models, and innovative



capabilities. Here the Japanese, with their long and proud tradition of modifying and improving imported technologies, arguably stood closer to the British, Swedes, and Germans than to the Italians or the French, though even in the latter cases, as the studies by Bigazzi and Kipping show, the creativity and self-reliance of domestic engineers and managers should not be underestimated.<sup>52</sup>

The intersection of these axes of variation shaped the relative strength of domestic commitment to and enthusiasm for emulation of the American model. Britain and Sweden on the one hand and France and Italy on the other could thus be located at opposite ends of an international spectrum of postwar responses to industrial Americanization. The position of West Germany and Japan on this continuum is complicated by the disjunction between their dependent status as occupied powers, which unlike the former permitted the external imposition of far-reaching changes in industrial structure and market order, and their autonomous technological style and innovative capabilities, which made them more critical and selective in the reception of US practice than the latter.<sup>53</sup>

Such overarching generalizations must be immediately qualified by a recognition of the multiplicity of actors and their divergent stances towards Americanization within each country itself. In Italy, for example, both the Christian Democratic-dominated government and the peak business association *Confindustria* were actively hostile to the Marshall Planners' self-consciously progressive efforts to promote mass consumption and union-management cooperation, while both bodies remained lukewarm at best towards the USTA&P and the National Productivity Center (*Comitato nazionale per la produttività*) until the latter's reorientation in the mid-1950s towards the organization of management education courses and the provision of financial assistance to small and medium-sized firms. It was only the alliance between public-sector technocrats from the great state holding companies IRI (*Istituto per la ricostruzione industriale*) and AGIP (*Azienda generale italiana petroli*), big private industrial companies such as Fiat, and their supporters within the governing parties, that ensured the use of a substantial proportion of Marshall Aid funds to support large-scale investments in American-style mass-production technologies. But serialization of production and the assimilation of US high-volume methods in Italy were not confined to large public and private enterprises: as Duccio Bigazzi points out, a significant body of smaller firms manufacturing consumer-orientated products like typewriters, sewing machines, motor scooters, and domestic electrical appliances also took great strides in this direction during the 1950s and 60s.<sup>54</sup>

In most European countries, the postwar productivity drive raised sensitive and contentious questions about the role of the state in private industrial decision-making which aroused mistrust and even hostility among business interest organizations. Business spokesmen returning from transatlantic study missions expressed open reservations about the domestic applicability of American manufacturing techniques and management methods not only in Britain and Italy but also in France, where their peak association, the *Conseil national du patronat français* (CNPF), like the Federation of British Industries (FBI), was officially committed to the US-sponsored productivity program and directly involved in the administration of ERP counterpart funds.<sup>55</sup> In most countries, too, including France, Britain, West Germany, and Japan, both peak and sectoral trade associations staunchly opposed actual or proposed antitrust legislation inspired by the American model, and fought with varying degrees of success during the 1950s against statutory prohibitions of cartel arrangements.<sup>56</sup>

In France and Italy, the trade-union movement split after 1947 into a Communist-led majority wing, which was politically and ideologically hostile to Americanization and the official productivity drive (while often sharing a similar underlying vision of technological advance), and a Social Democratic/Catholic minority wing, which was initially sympathetic to the idea of plant-level cooperation for productivity improvement, but became progressively disillusioned by management's unwillingness to negotiate over the distribution of the ensuing benefits. In Britain, as in West Germany, the unitary trade-union confederation actively supported the postwar productivity drive and associated US study missions. So, too, did most of its constituent organizations, despite criticisms from the left-wing Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions of the Labour government's unwillingness to make factory-level Joint Production Committees compulsory or to give tripartite consultative bodies an effective role in industrial planning. In Sweden, as Henrik Glimstedt's study shows, the Metalworkers' Union, like the Engineering Employers' Association, initially opposed the introduction of MTM at Volvo both as a violation of industry-wide collective bargaining agreements and as an undesirable deviation from domestic standards of good engineering practice, but eventually negotiated a compromise solution over the objections of the Communist-majority factory club in the face of company managers' evident determination to impose the new payment system. In Japan, as Herrigel observes, blue-collar workers, foremen and enterprise unions during the 1950s pushed steel plant managers to modify imported US job evaluation and statistical quality control methods to balance merit assessment with seniority in wage payment and to diffuse responsibility from centralized engineering bureaux to shop-floor quality circles respectively.<sup>57</sup>



As in the case of the American model itself, the emergence of broad national patterns in postwar European and Japanese engagements with US technology and management could thus go hand in hand with significant interpretative ambiguities and finer-grained variations among domestic actors within each country.<sup>58</sup> The most important such variations for our purposes, on which the studies for our project largely concentrate, are those between individual sectors and firms.<sup>59</sup> In Britain, for example, as Zeitlin notes, component manufacturers saw greater scope for reduction of product variety than did makers of capital equipment and consumer goods, while several of the most ambitious postwar experiments with standardization and mass production were undertaken by nationalized enterprises such as the railways or the electricity supply authorities. In France and Italy, as Kipping and Ranieri show, a major impetus to the expansion of steelmaking capacity, the importation of American strip-mill technology, and the opening of the domestic market to greater competition came from the user industries, especially but not exclusively automobile manufacturers. In Sweden, as Glimstedt demonstrates, the motor vehicle and electrical engineering industries followed opposite trajectories during the 1950s and 60s. Thus Volvo moved towards volume production of standardized passenger cars in response to government restrictions on demand for its main heavy truck business and the opening of the domestic automobile market to foreign imports. ASEA conversely used the income stream from light, mass-produced "bread-and-butter" lines such as meters and small motors to finance a move into more complex and technologically sophisticated heavy equipment such as transformers, circuit breakers, and High Voltage Direct Current distribution systems in collaboration with its major customer, the Swedish State Power Board.<sup>60</sup>

Within a single industrial sector, as the studies for this project reveal, there could often be sharp differences in strategic approaches to Americanization and mass production among rival enterprises. Thus, as Ranieri describes, the Italian steel industry in the late 1940s and early 50s was bitterly divided between public-sector managers led by Sinigaglia on the one hand, who wanted to build giant integrated coastal works capable of turning out vast quantities of sheet steel for nascent mass manufacturers of consumer durables, and private-sector industrialists led by Falck on the other, who wanted instead to concentrate investment on more flexible plants capable of serving diversified final markets, even at the cost of importing cheap semi-finished ingots from other European countries. In France, as Kipping likewise details, François de Wendel, the largest Lorraine steel magnate, initially denounced Usinor's continuous strip mill plans as a "crazy" venture "not suitable for the conditions of the French market", and could only be induced to participate in a second such installation under intense pressure not only from the

state Planning Commission (*Commissariat général du plan*) but also from Renault, which credibly threatened to acquire a semi-continuous mill for its own steelmaking subsidiary. Nor was there any necessary or uniform connection between public enterprise and support for Americanization: as Bigazzi documents, Pasquale Gallo, interim CEO of the state-owned Alfa Romeo, argued immediately after the war that the Italian automobile industry could aspire to nothing more than “organized craftsmanship” based on short-series quality production, while Vittorio Valletta of the privately-owned Fiat defended his company’s measured but determined drive towards mass production based on expanding volumes of small, cheap cars and the exploitation of scale economies.<sup>61</sup>

In Britain, as Zeitlin points out, pronounced variations in managerial strategy could be observed between a firm like Standard Motors, which staked its postwar fortunes on high-volume output of standardized cars and tractors using a single interchangeable engine for both types of vehicle, and other domestic automotive manufacturers such as Austin, Morris, Leyland, or Rover, which maintained more diversified model ranges while selectively modifying US-style mass-production methods to accommodate greater product variety and smaller quantities. In the West German rubber tire industry, as we have already seen, Phoenix and Continental pursued contrasting approaches to cooperation with US companies, as the former committed itself to a long-term dependent relationship with Firestone, while the latter remained careful to preserve its technological and commercial autonomy in successive partnerships with General Tire and Goodyear. In Japan, similarly, Nissan and Toyota after as before the war followed opposed routes to the mastery of Western mass-production methods, with the former focusing on imported technology and licencing agreements with foreign manufacturers, while the latter relied instead, as Kazuo Wada and Takao Shiba show, on independent adaptation of American techniques and borrowing of organizational practices from other domestic industries like textile machinery, aircraft, and shipbuilding.<sup>62</sup>

Even inside a single firm or enterprise group, finally, conflicting attitudes towards the benefits of Americanization could on occasion precipitate fierce struggles between managers and engineers at different levels. Thus within IRI, for example, as Ranieri observes, Ilva managers remained much less enthusiastic than their Finsider counterparts about US technology and management, including wide strip mills, open-hearth converters, standard costing, statistical planning and budgeting, while the differences between these groups persisted even after the two companies were merged into Italsider at the beginning of the 1960s. Within Volvo, similarly, as Glimstedt shows, car and truck manufacturing continued to be organized along distinct lines throughout the postwar period, while craft-orientated



engineers hostile to the wholesale adoption of mass-production methods were forced out of the passenger car division in the late 1950s, only to be recalled during the mid-1960s to assist in overcoming mounting quality problems with its vehicles.<sup>63</sup>

## History and Hybridization

A central theme of this project is that of proactivity. European and Japanese industrialists did not wait passively after the end of the Second World War for enlightenment about the American efficiency gospel from Marshall Plan evangelists nor for invitations to participate in productivity missions to the US. More influential and significant in many cases than the public missions organized by national productivity centers were the private American study trips organized by leading firms such as Lucas, Renault, Peugeot, Thomson, Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Finsider, Continental, Phoenix, or Toyota, often involving repeated visits by managers and engineers at different levels over a period of several years. Still more striking are the images of American dreams in occupied France delineated by Kipping, with Renault engineers secretly developing the 4CV and a new type of modular transfer machine, Peugeot managers clandestinely ordering US machine tools, and the Vichy Organization Committees (*Comités d'organisation*) in steel and motor vehicles formulating plans for postwar installation of high-throughput strip mills on the one hand and a drastic rationalization of models and standardization of components on the other.<sup>64</sup>

European and Japanese manufacturers could be so proactive in engaging the US model precisely because Americanization was far from a new issue for them after 1945. Fordism, Taylorism, and the "American System of Manufactures" had already begun to attract widespread foreign interest before the First World War, while public debates about them took on new cultural and political as well as economic urgency during the 1920s as US mass-produced goods and investment capital flooded into international markets. In Europe and Japan alike, industrialists and engineers closely monitored the evolution of US mass-production techniques and systematic management methods, heatedly discussed their applicability to domestic economic and institutional conditions, and sought with varying degrees of ambition and success to transplant into their home soil elements of the American model.<sup>65</sup> Many European and Japanese manufacturers, as the studies in this project document, also had extensive prewar contacts with US industry through a multiplicity of channels from study visits, equipment purchases, and consultancy contracts to product licencing, technological cooperation agreements, joint ventures, and participation in international cartels.

Nor was the United States the only foreign point of reference for European and Japanese industrialists during the 1940s and 50s. A significant countercurrent to postwar Americanization was the re-evaluation of Germany as an alternative economic and technological as well as political and cultural model. In many cases, not surprisingly, the outcome of the war induced a sharp reaction against German industrial practice even among its most ardent erstwhile admirers. Thus Sinigaglia, as Ranieri details, explicitly saw Americanization of the Italian steel industry as a rejection of the prewar German model based on vertical intrafirm linkages between Thomas converters and small, flexible rolling mills turning out a wide array of low-volume products marketed under cartel agreements. In engineering, similarly, as Bigazzi observes, Italian manufacturers turned back to the US after 1945 as their main external source of technological and organizational know-how after an intense – and in his view fruitful – period of engagement with large German enterprises during the late 1930s and early 40s. The depth to which German industrial prestige had sunk in British eyes can be gauged from the plant visit reports of postwar intelligence missions: despite grudging respect for the skills and training of the workforce, UK engineers and managers, as Zeitlin notes, found “very little to learn” in terms of production methods or internal organization from their major prewar competitors in many metalworking sectors. In other cases, however, the eclipse of German influence was less extreme. In Japan, for example, as Wada and Shiba demonstrate, the “takt” or “rhythm” system and other modified flow-line methods adapted from German aircraft manufacturers during the 1940s were carried into leading postwar metalworking assembly industries such as shipbuilding, cameras, and automobiles by domestic efficiency engineers with experience in wartime production.<sup>66</sup> In France, too, despite the postwar ascendancy of American technology and management models, Patrick Fridenson has argued that expatriated German engineers and scientists “played an important part, and sometimes a key role, in the modernization of major branches such as the automobile, chemical, aluminium and professional electronics industries”.<sup>67</sup>

The wartime productive achievements and postwar commercial ascendancy of US industry thus rekindled longstanding sparks of attraction to the American model in Europe and Japan, while dimming if not altogether extinguishing interest in alternative national paradigms. Yet internal disparities and ambiguities within American industry meant that the US model did not always offer clearcut lessons even to its most enthusiastic would-be imitators. British civil servants and telecommunications engineers, as Kenneth Lipartito shows, greatly admired the US Bell System and sought to learn from its achievements in reforming domestic provision at various points during the postwar era. But which features of the US



system should the British emulate: centralized corporate research and vertical integration of equipment design and manufacturing; universal service and the rapid expansion of network demand through low-cost flat-rate pricing; or the broader antitrust paradigm of arms-length competitive relations among suppliers? Each of these features of the "American model", as Lipartito argues, pointed in different directions and carried divergent implications for the restructuring of British telecommunications, while oscillation between efforts at rationalization along Bell lines and contrary attempts to promote increased competition proved highly damaging in his judgement.<sup>68</sup>

Visitors from different countries might also draw opposite conclusions from the same observations. Both British and Italian engineers, as Zeitlin and Bigazzi each comment, were surprised by the large quantities of materials and work-in-progress they encountered in postwar US automobile and metalworking factories. But whereas the British and later the Japanese rejected such multiplication of buffer stocks as a wasteful deviation from good manufacturing practice, the Italians accepted it as a necessary sacrifice for the attainment of higher production volumes which was further justified by the greater complexity of product variations handled by US factories. The Japanese in particular often seized upon US practices and ideas which were either neglected or becoming obsolete in their original setting such as quick die-change equipment for stamping presses, mixed-model assembly or the preventative and participatory approach to quality control management associated with Deming, Juran, and Feigenbaum.<sup>69</sup>

Determined efforts to emulate American practice under sharply different product market and factor supply conditions could lead European and Japanese in technologically conservative as well as innovative directions. Both Fiat and Volkswagen managers, for example, were extremely cautious in automating their production operations during this period, with the latter in particular waiting until they were sure the market would absorb the additional output before introducing Detroit-style transfer equipment first in body manufacture and then in the mechanical departments.<sup>70</sup> In Japan, too, as Wada and Shiba note, companies like Canon abandoned their relatively successful "work center" systems, an indigenous analogue to cellular manufacturing, in favour of dedicated automation and conveyor assembly during the late 1950s as output volumes reached minimum efficient scale for American-style mass production. In Italy, where the size and composition of future steel demand remained highly uncertain, Finsider hedged its bets by opting for a semi-continuous but upgradable wide strip mill at Cornigliano which could also turn out ship plate if sales of auto body sheet proved disappointing, whereas in the larger French market Usinor and Sollac installed

more powerful continuous strip mills but with less up-to-date capacity specifications and plant layouts.<sup>71</sup>

In some cases, too, uncritical imitation of foreign practice without sufficient appreciation of its potential limitations in different organizational and environmental contexts could yield highly deleterious results. Thus, as Zeitlin observes, British public-sector attempts during the late 1940s to standardize steam locomotives and turbo-alternators slowed down the introduction of more powerful and efficient alternatives, raising rather than reducing operating costs in the longer term as contemporary critics had forewarned. In the private sector, too, Standard Motors' postwar use of a common engine in its Ferguson tractor and medium-size Vanguard car compromised the latter's export market success as competing models became more widely available. In telecommunications, similarly, Lipartito contends that American-inspired efforts by British Post Office administrators during the 1950s and 60s to promote both competitive tendering and consolidation among equipment suppliers disrupted established patterns of coordination between technology, manufacturing, and the network without putting in place a coherent market alternative, thereby contributing to development delays and eventual commercial failure of its System X digital switching project. In the Italian steel industry, as Ranieri points out, American management tools such as job analysis, job evaluation, and standard costing, which had worked reasonably well at Cornigliano, became ineffective and even counterproductive when extended to the much bigger workforce and more diverse plants of Italsider, a vast merged corporation whose centralized functional organization was closely modelled on that of US Steel. The huge new coastal plant complex built at Taranto in southern Italy during the 1960s, like its contemporary French counterpart at Fos-sur-Mer near Marseille, proved both too large and too inflexible to cope successfully with the turmoil in world markets during the 1970s, though Taranto's internal problems also stemmed from Italsider managers' misreading of the Japanese model, which had begun to displace the US steel industry as an international yardstick of best practice. In the rubber industry, finally, as Erker argues, over-reliance on the technological and commercial judgement of US manufacturers of fabric-breaker tires inhibited German companies from appreciating and responding to the challenge of innovative steel-belted radial designs developed by Michelin in France, a fatal error in the case of Phoenix and very nearly so in that of Continental as well.

Often, however, European and Japanese industrialists' prior familiarity with American-style practices, whether through direct contact or domestic analogy, enabled them to treat US technology and management not as a unitary model to be



imitated wholesale, but rather as a suggestive point of departure for selective adaptation, creative modification, and innovative hybridization. Thus European automobile manufacturers such as Volkswagen, Renault, Citroën, Fiat, and BMC all developed original small car designs far removed from those of their US counterparts during the 1940s and 50s in order to reach mass sales in countries whose lower per capita incomes, higher fuel prices, shorter driving distances, more limited highway networks, and differential motoring taxation regimes held down demand for larger cars with powerful engines. Production engineers at Austin/BMC, as Zeitlin shows, developed novel types of transfer equipment based on standard modular units which could be easily reconfigured to cope with periodic design changes or even wholly new models, unlike contemporary "Detroit automation".<sup>72</sup> Both British and Japanese motor vehicle firms, as Zeitlin and Wada and Shiba describe, modified Fordist flow-line methods to handle greater product variety and shorter runs through practices such as quick tooling changes, mixed-model assembly, multiskilling, and functional flexibility, while likewise introducing innovative systems of production control and just-in-time logistics aimed at minimizing internal buffer stocks and work-in-progress. Japanese metalworking, steel and engineering companies also transformed US statistical quality control and job modification techniques by diffusing them from supervisors and specialist staff to groups of shop-floor workers.

In Sweden, as Glimstedt demonstrates, Volvo integrated US volume manufacturing methods such as MTM with indigenous traditions of high value-added craft production, socio-technical approaches to work organization, and pragmatic union-management relations to carve out an international market niche based on a distinctive new class of vehicle: safe, high-quality, but relatively inexpensive station wagons. Italian manufacturers of sewing machines, typewriters, motor scooters, and domestic electrical appliances, as Bigazzi points out, fused indigenous wartime experience of new processes and materials with imported American techniques and methods to reconcile low-cost serial production with a wide range of colors, a variety of shapes, and frequent adjustments in design. In West Germany, Herrigel argues that the revised antitrust law of 1957, which deviated from the American occupation statute by permitting rationalization cartels, smoothed the path of steel firms' adjustment to the emergence of excess capacity in the late 1960s through the formation of distribution syndicates for the allocation of their finished products, which then facilitated a recombination of assets and increased specialization within the industry. At plant level, too, the codetermination system which emerged from the postwar encounter between American pluralist ideals and German unions' challenge to capitalist property rights turned out to foster patterns of shop-floor cooperation between labor and management which

gave domestic steel companies far greater flexibility within high-volume production than their US counterparts.

Sometimes the innovations resulting from European and Japanese hybridization of US practices in turn became the basis for imitation and reverse learning by the Americans themselves. During the late 1950s and early 60s, for example, the "Big Three" auto firms brought out "compact" car models of their own in a partially successful effort to repel the invasion of their own home market by smaller European designs. Both Ford and GM likewise introduced "building block" or "unitized" transfer lines with a family resemblance to those developed by French and British manufacturers in response to the "horsepower race" of the mid-1950s and the premature obsolescence of tightly-integrated automated facilities like the former's celebrated Cleveland engine plant.<sup>73</sup> During the 1980s, as Erker observes, Continental used its lead in the assimilation of French radial tire technology first to instruct and eventually to take over altogether its former US partner General Tire. But undoubtedly the most conspicuous example of this phenomenon is the take-up in the United States and other Western countries over the past two decades of Japanese manufacturing practices such as quality circles, just-in-time logistics, teamworking, continuous improvement, and collaborative supplier relations.<sup>74</sup>

Not all modifications of American practice, however, proved equally successful. At Usinor, for example, the productive efficiency of the new continuous strip mill installation arguably suffered, as Kipping suggests, from the physical separation of the hot and cold-rolling facilities and the failure to adopt an integrated organization structure with more elaborate budgeting and control procedures, choices motivated at least in part by a desire to maintain the autonomy of the original family owners within the merged company, as well as to avoid excessive centralization and bureaucracy. At Fiat's Mirafiori plant, conversely, as Bigazzi comments, company technicians made far greater use of overhead conveyors than was typical in the US auto industry, permitting a rapid expansion of facilities in response to sudden changes in demand but necessitating a rigid central control and tight integration of the production process which would ultimately exacerbate both the logistical and labor problems of this huge manufacturing complex.

Yet without imposing teleological assumptions about the evolutionary trajectory of industrial and technological development, there can be no *a priori* grounds for determining which modifications of foreign practice may ultimately lead to significant innovations in a particular set of economic and institutional conditions, nor any solid theoretical basis for distinguishing between "creative" or



“progressive” and “adaptive” or “regressive” forms of hybridization.<sup>75</sup> Nor could it be specified in advance how far and in what ways the American model could be deconstructed, adapted, and recombined to suit European and Japanese circumstances, since this depended in the end on the imagination, reflexivity, and experimentation of local actors. Yet successful hybridization, as findings of this project suggest, also requires careful attention to the independencies among the constituent elements of imported and indigenous productive models. As in the case of modular product architecture, individual components of US mass-production practice could be redesigned or replaced altogether, provided that an appropriate interface could be devised to fit with the other parts of the model.<sup>76</sup> Thus, for example, American-style automated equipment and flow-line production could be reworked to accommodate a more diverse range of products in smaller quantities, but only through complementary adjustments in tooling, scheduling, logistics, and job definitions, which in turn implied deeper shifts in management organization, industrial relations, payment systems, training, and supplier relations. To take full advantage of the additional flexibility gained through such modifications of US high-volume production methods, furthermore, European and Japanese manufacturers also needed to integrate them with product and marketing strategies aimed at extracting a commercial premium from the resulting ability to alter their output mix and introduce new models rapidly in response to changing demand. “Learning”, as Boyer et al. observe of contemporary experience with the diffusion and transformation of Japanese manufacturing practices, “may come from multiple, and even incoherent, sources. What matters is the capacity of firms and related institutions to pull such changes together and make their patterns of hybridization coherent” – though any such coherence, like that of the original model itself, should be regarded as at best partial and provisional.<sup>77</sup>

## From Transfer to Cross-Fertilization

Compared to much of the literature on postwar industrial Americanization, the studies prepared for this project tell a substantially different story. In these tales, as we have seen, the “American model” itself turns out to be riven with internal ambiguities, tensions, and disparities, while direct transfer mechanisms such as Marshall Aid, US technical assistance, transatlantic productivity missions, and even the imposition of antitrust reforms exercised a decidedly limited impact on European and Japanese industry. The crucial initiatives in the postwar assimilation of US technology and management methods came instead from European and Japanese manufacturers, engineers, and public officials, who drew on prior experience with imported mass-production practices or domestic analogues to deconstruct, modify, and recombine elements of the American model to suit local

circumstances. In so doing, however, European and Japanese industrial actors at the same time reinterpreted, reshaped, and sometimes transformed their indigenous practices and institutions, while the ensuing process of hybridization not infrequently gave rise to productive innovations significant enough to be re-exported back to the US itself. For each of these reasons, as we noted at the outset, “American engagements”, with its multiple, ambivalent, and highly charged meanings, rather than “Americanization”, or even its limits, most fully encapsulates the theme of this project.

The findings of this project point to the need to revise not only the historiography of postwar Americanization, but also the conceptual framework and vocabulary used in wider analyses of the international transfer and diffusion of productive models. The ambiguity and deconstructibility of American practices; the internal conflicts and diverse objectives of the would-be exporters; the knowledgeability, self-reflectiveness, and proactivity of the receiving agents; the prevalence of selective adaptation and hybridization; the blurred line between imitation and innovation; and the shifting roles and relationships among the participants: all these features of postwar European and Japanese reworking of US technology and management call into question standard conceptions of the “transfer”, “diffusion”, “dissemination” or “transplantation” of a single globally-efficient model of “best practice” across national boundaries. Even apparently more interactive categories such as “transmission” or “translation” seem inadequate under the circumstances, since they imply that the underlying “message” of the original productive model remains fundamentally unchanged when it is “switched up” and “switched down” between different levels of abstraction, or converted into a foreign linguistic idiom. A more satisfactory metaphor for the processes analyzed in this project would thus be “cross-fertilization”, as Giuliana Gemelli proposes in her study of postwar American influence on the development of European management education: an apt term for what Paul Lillrank calls in the contemporary context “the most promising [form of] organizational transfer”: ‘an intelligent learning process, where examples from abroad are used as stimulation for one’s own thinking’.<sup>78</sup>



### III. AGAINST CONVERGENCE: CONTEMPORARY DEBATES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Historical interpretations of postwar Americanization, as we have often had occasion to observe, are closely bound up with wider contemporary debates about the putative transfer and diffusion of productive models across national boundaries. But just as the problematic of this project is deeply informed by current controversies over “Japanization” and the “new American challenge”, so too its conceptual approach and historical findings offer ample grounds for skepticism about the likelihood and desirability of international convergence around any single “best-practice” model of economic and technological efficiency, whatever its geographical origins.

In many respects, to be sure, the European and Japanese economies of the postwar reconstruction period constitute a “world we have lost”, more on the whole for the better than for the worse. Inconvertible currencies, capital controls, and scarcity of foreign exchange; import quotas and high tariff barriers; shortages of labour and raw materials; slow recovery of domestic demand and international trade from the ravages of depression and war: these distinctive characteristics, as the studies prepared for this project emphasize, mark the distance separating the conjuncture of the 1940s, 50s, and even to some extent the 60s from that of the 1980s and 90s. In international terms, too, this era differed significantly from our own, with countries divided into hostile camps by the overarching bipolar conflict of the Cold War, and national welfare states partially – though never entirely – insulated from the destabilizing forces of the world economy by the fragile regime of “embedded liberalism”, which emerged from the postwar policy struggles between the United States, Britain, Western Europe, and Japan.<sup>79</sup>

#### Japanization

Despite these evident contrasts, however, there are also remarkable similarities, both theoretical and empirical, between the issues at stake in historical and contemporary debates over the attempted transfer and diffusion of productive models, which can accordingly be examined within a common conceptual framework. Nowhere are the parallels with the historiography of postwar Americanization more striking than in the recent literature on “Japanization”. Here, too, for example, there are multiple and conflicting interpretations of the original model itself. Is the “Japanese production system” a sophisticated refinement of Fordism and Taylorism, which appropriates the tacit knowledge of shop-floor workers and suppliers to achieve higher quality and greater flexibility?<sup>80</sup> Or does it

instead represent a radically new technological and organizational paradigm, such as “lean production”, which reconciles quality, flexibility, and productivity by systematically eliminating waste and mobilizing the capacities and initiative of front-line workers; or “innovation-mediated production”, which blurs the line between new product development and incremental improvement in manufacturing through the functional integration of intellectual and manual labour?<sup>81</sup> Does the “Japanese model” entail an empowerment of shop-floor workers through enhanced opportunities for organizational learning and devolved decision-making, or does it rather amount to increased exploitation through intensification of work and “management by stress”?<sup>82</sup> Can a single national model be identified within Japan itself, or are there a multiplicity of industry and company variants, which differ significantly from one another in key respects? Is the “Japanese system” a bundle of discrete techniques and methods, such as just-in-time logistics, total quality management, teamworking, and continuous improvement? Or is it rather a tightly-coupled package of complementary elements, including on some views lifetime employment, seniority wages, enterprise unionism, and *keiretsu* relationships with suppliers and financial institutions? Is the efficiency of the “Japanese model”, however defined and understood, globally and absolutely superior to that of foreign alternatives, or is its performance advantage instead relative and dependent on a particular economic, social, cultural, institutional, and even political context?<sup>83</sup>

As in the case of postwar Americanization, too, there has been fierce controversy over the transferability of the Japanese model to other national settings. For some authors, such as the International Motor Vehicle Project at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Martin Kenney and Richard Florida, the Japanese system constitutes a universal model of productive efficiency “applicable anywhere by anyone”, whose principles and practices “can be successfully inserted into another society and then begin to reproduce successfully in the new environment”.<sup>84</sup> Others, by contrast, have questioned how far the “Japanese model” could – or should – be transferred to other countries with very different economic conditions, social institutions, and cultural values. Adversarial industrial relations, job-control unionism, high rates of worker mobility, and strongly individualist attitudes in Britain and the United States; occupationally-based identities and skill profiles, industrial unionism, and statutory codetermination rights in Germany; authoritarian management traditions, limited workforce skills and educational attainment, weakly developed supplier networks, and macroeconomic instability in developing countries like Brazil: all these have been seen as formidable barriers to a full-scale diffusion of the “Japanese production system”, whether through directly-owned transplants or through indirect imitation by indigenous firms.<sup>85</sup> As in the case of postwar Americanization, moreover, contemporary controversies



over Japanization also reflect deeper theoretical disagreements about whether productive models can be effectively broken down into their constituent elements or must be implemented as a coherent whole, as well as about the balance between institutional plasticity and path dependency in the receiving societies themselves.

Current debates about Japanization began in the 1970s, and a large body of empirical research has now accumulated on the attempted transfer and diffusion of the “Japanese model” to different national and industrial environments. Although there is still considerable room for divergent interpretations of this literature, a number of substantive conclusions can nonetheless be drawn from its findings. First, Japanese manufacturing techniques and management practices have been broadly, though by no means universally, taken up and emulated in an extremely diverse range of contexts, including many which had initially been regarded as highly inauspicious such as the northeast of England, the US rustbelt, eastern Germany, or metropolitan Brazil.<sup>86</sup> Second, however, as in the case of postwar Americanization, the “Japanese model” has been widely deconstructed into a set of interrelated elements, which have been more or less significantly modified and adapted to suit local circumstances, giving rise to a broad spectrum of national, sectoral, and firm-level variants. Thus, for example, Japanese automobile transplants in the US and UK abandoned their highly individualized wage and assessment systems in favour of rigorous initial selection and training of new recruits, while their counterparts in North American and Australian electronics have typically made less use of long-term employment and seniority-based pay than of other practices such as job rotation and internal promotion. Among US and European companies, similarly, Japanese techniques and methods such as flexible job assignments, quality circles, or just-in-time component supply have often been integrated piecemeal into more traditional mass or craft-based production systems, while wide variations can be likewise observed across the international automobile industry in the organization and operation of “work teams”, particularly as regards the role of team leaders or supervisors.<sup>87</sup>

As with postwar Americanization again, deviations from the original “Japanese model” are increasingly seen not as negative consequences of resistance, retreat, and compromise in the transfer process, but rather as positive opportunities for experimentation, innovation, and learning. Thus Japanese automobile and electronics firms have discovered through modifications of domestic production and employment practices at their North American and European transplants new possibilities – some of which are being re-exported back to Japan itself – for organizing just-in-time logistics over wider geographical distances, reducing dependence on compulsory overtime, revising the division of labour between blue

and white-collar employees, or even coping flexibly with a more diverse range of models. Often, too, European and US companies have drawn on a complex mix of indigenous and imported influences from several national traditions, including but not confined to Japan, to develop creative and original hybrid systems, such as Renault's Spanish subsidiary FASA, Volvo's joint venture with Mitsubishi at the formerly Dutch-owned NedCar factory, Opel's Eisenach plant in eastern Germany, or General Motors do Brasil. In some cases, finally, Western manufacturers have used the Japanese example as an indirect inspiration for more radical and potentially innovative departures from established productive models like GM's labour-management partnership at Saturn or Volkswagen's "modular consortium" of assembler and suppliers at Resende in Brazil.<sup>88</sup>

### **The "New American Challenge"**

But what of the "new American challenge" of the 1990s? How does the re-emergence of the US economy as a model for foreign emulation fit into our conceptual framework, and what are its implications for the critical assessment of industrial Americanization advanced in this project? Like postwar Americanization itself, current debates on the "new American challenge" are the product of a very specific historical conjuncture, in which the US industrial resurgence and "jobs miracle" has coincided with the tarnishing of alternative models resulting from the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Communism; slow growth and high unemployment in European countries like Germany and France; prolonged recession and macroeconomic immobility in Japan; and most recently the Asian financial crisis. For many commentators on both sides of the Atlantic and the Pacific, moreover, these developments reflect deeper structural pressures towards international convergence of financial systems, corporate governance, labor markets, and productive organization on an Anglo-American model of "free market" capitalism: "globalization" of production, investment, and capital markets; the creation of new opportunities for exit by domestic firms from national systems of finance, innovation, skill formation, and industrial relations; the superior glamour and attractiveness of fast-moving American commercial/managerial culture compared to more staid forms of "Rhine" and Japanese capitalism; the declining policy and regulatory autonomy of national states; and mounting external demands for realignment of domestic institutions and practices with neo-liberal competitive norms from supranational bodies like the European Union and multilateral agencies like the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund, as well as from the US itself.<sup>89</sup>



Such sweeping claims about transnational pressures for institutional convergence on the Anglo-American model have not gone uncontested, however, while a growing body of critical arguments and counter-evidence suggests that contemporary processes of “globalization” are neither so novel nor so far-reaching as is often contended. Thus international capital, product, and labour markets were in significant respects more integrated before 1914 than they are today, while government expenditure still accounts for a higher proportion of gross domestic product in most advanced economies than even during the 1950s and 60s. Most so-called multinational enterprises continue to rely heavily on the economic, cultural, institutional, and political resources of their home country; productive capital remains far from fully mobile; and national states may enhance rather than reduce their capacity for effective economic governance through participation in multilateral agreements and supranational bodies.<sup>90</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this paper to adjudicate these debates, which are in any case still at a preliminary stage. But a few observations can nonetheless be ventured on the basis of the postwar European and Japanese engagements with the “American model” analyzed in this project. A first concerns the prevalence of heterogeneity and hybridization within the contemporary US economy itself. Even more than in the 1940s and 50s, there is no single, coherent “American model” of productive organization today, while the resurgence of US industrial competitiveness has taken very different forms across sectors such as automobiles, steel, electronics, telecommunications, and biotechnology. Some elements of the current American industrial revival are rooted in domestic institutions and policies from antitrust, health care, and defence procurement to interorganizational networks between firms, universities, and government agencies. But others are heavily dependent on selective adaptation and modification of Japanese methods of flexible production, rapid product development, and collaborative supplier relations, thereby reinforcing rather than refuting earlier critiques of the limitations of US mass production and systematic management.<sup>91</sup>

A second observation inspired by historical experience with postwar Americanization concerns the practical limitations, political obstacles, and unintended consequences of attempts to reshape foreign institutions and practices along US lines. Even in a post-Cold War world with a single superpower, the risks of political destabilization may limit external leverage over strategic countries’ domestic policies, as can be seen for example in the modification of IMF adjustment programs in response to the 1997-8 Asian financial crisis. Liberalizing initiatives enacted in response to transnational pressures such as deregulation and privatization may likewise be reinterpreted and reworked by domestic actors to conform with established national patterns, as in the case of Japanese reform of

retail trade regulation or Italian corporate governance arrangements in formerly state-owned firms.<sup>92</sup> In the transitional economies of East-Central Europe, similarly, privatization of state-owned enterprises has given rise to sharply contrasting patterns of ownership networks, with direct inter-firm linkages predominant in Hungary and meso-level ties between banks and investment funds more significant in the Czech Republic, differences rooted in the pre-existing organizational structures of the two economies during the Communist era as well as in the contingent institutional choices of reforming governments during the transformation process itself.<sup>93</sup>

A final observation concerns the likelihood and desirability of selective adaptation, creative modification, and innovative hybridization of imported practices in meeting the “new American challenge”. European and Japanese automobile manufacturers, as we have already seen, have borrowed liberally from one another as well as the US to enrich and revise their indigenous forms of productive organization. Across a wide range of sectors from electric power and food processing equipment to pharmaceuticals and electronics, moreover, multinational enterprises increasingly serve as agents of technological and organizational cross-fertilization between national or regional systems of production and innovation with distinctive capabilities.<sup>94</sup> Nor is such hybridization confined to the sphere of production itself. Thus informed commentators discern signs of the emergence of new hybrid forms of financial intermediation in historically bank-based systems such as Germany, in which increased reliance on external securities markets and emphasis on “shareholder value” goes hand-in-hand with pursuit of “learning by monitoring” through deliberative assessment and benchmarking of investment projects.<sup>95</sup> A number of European countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands have reduced unemployment to near-US levels during the mid-1990s without sharp increases in inequality through various combinations of consensual wage restraint, negotiated reform of public social welfare programs, and intensive training efforts; while others such as Italy, Ireland, Portugal, and Finland have similarly struck tripartite “social pacts” aimed at balancing macroeconomic stability, increased labour market flexibility, and high levels of social protection.<sup>96</sup> For all these reasons, therefore, today’s “new American challenge”, like that of postwar Americanization, seems likely to leave wide scope for strategic choice and creative hybridization by local actors at a variety of levels, leading to continued diversity of productive and institutional models across firms, sectors, and national economies.

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## NOTES

\* Earlier versions of this paper were presented at workshops and seminars at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (June 1998); the Economics Faculty of the University of Bologna (March 1999), the Institute of Economic History, Bocconi University (April 1999); and the Robert Schuman Centre/Department of History and Civilization, European University Institute (June 1999). For incisive comments, criticisms, and suggestions on earlier drafts – not all of which I have been able to incorporate in the text – I am very grateful to the organizers, discussants, and participants in these meetings, especially Gary Herrigel, Henrik Glimstedt, Patrick Fridenson, Steve Tolliday, Kazuo Wada, Peter Kjaer, Matthias Kipping, Ruggero Ranieri, Vera Zamagni, Aurelio Alaimo, Franco Amatori, Bo Stråth, Alan Milward, and Martin Rhodes, as well as to Chuck Sabel, and Sue Helper. The usual caveats *a fortiori* apply. A revised version will appear in Jonathan Zeitlin and Gary Herrigel (eds.), *Americanization and Its Limits: Reworking US Technology and Management in Postwar Europe and Japan*, Oxford University Press, 2000.

1 The literature on the international diffusion of technology, organization, and management models is too vast to cite here. For a representative collection of historical studies covering a wide range of countries over the past three centuries, see David J. Jeremy (ed.), *International Technology Transfer: Europe, Japan, and the USA, 1700-1914* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1991); *The Transfer of International Technology: Europe, Japan, and the USA in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1992). For a broad overview of social-scientific diffusion theory and research, see Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995).

2 A standard history of European industrialization emphasizing the diffusion of best-practice technology and productive organization from leader to follower countries is David S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). For an alternative view which highlights the critical reception of foreign models and their selective appropriation and transformation by local actors, see Charles F. Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin (eds.), *World of Possibilities: Flexibility and Mass Production in Western Industrialization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and for a national study in a similar spirit, see Gary Herrigel, *Industrial Constructions: The Social Foundations of German Industrial Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). On the pivotal Japanese case, see for example, Michael A. Cusumano, *The Japanese Automobile Industry: Technology and Management at Nissan and*

Toyota (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Koichi Shimokawa, "From the Ford System to the Just-in-Time Production System: A Historical Study of International Shifts in Automobile Production Systems, their Connection, and their Transformation", *Japanese Yearbook on Business History* 10 (1993), 84-105; Steven Tolliday "The Diffusion and Transformation of Fordism: Britain and Japan Compared", in Robert Boyer et al. (eds.), *Between Imitation and Innovation: The Transfer and Hybridization of Productive Models in the International Automobile Industry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 57-95.

3 See D. Eleanor Westney, *Imitation and Innovation: The Transfer of Western Organizational Patterns to Meiji Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 6; Boyer et al., *Between Imitation and Innovation*, esp. chs. 1, 2, 16 (quotation, 4).

4 For recent overviews on the European side, see John Killick, *The United States and European Reconstruction, 1945-1960* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997); David W. Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe: Western Europe, America and Postwar Reconstruction* (Harlow: Longmans, 1992); Maurice Lévy-Leboyer and René Girault (eds.), *Le plan Marshall et le relèvement économique de l'Europe* (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 1993); Jacqueline McGlade, 'The Illusion of Consensus: American Business, Cold War Aid, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe', Ph.D. thesis (George Washington University, 1995). On the Japanese side, see Andrew Gordon (ed.), *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Haruhito Shiomi (ed.), "Postwar Revival and Americanization", special issue of the *Japanese Yearbook on Business History* 12 (1995). From 1953 onwards, first the Foreign Operations Administration and then the International Cooperation Administration took over responsibility for US technical assistance and the promotion of productivity activities in Japan as in Western Europe.

5 For this formulation, see Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 436, drawing on Pier Paolo d'Attore, 'ERP Aid and the Politics of Productivity in Italy during the 1950s', *European University Institute Working Paper* 85/159 (Florence: European University Institute, 1985), Italian version in *Quaderni storici*, new ser., no. 58 (1985), 55-93. For a fuller discussion of their argument and its relationship to the broader historiography of postwar Americanization, see section I below.

6 See, for example, N.F.R. Crafts, "'You've Never Had It So Good?': British Economic Policy and Performance, 1945-60", in Barry Eichengreen (ed.), *Europe's Post-War Recovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 246-70; S.N. Broadberry and N.F.R. Crafts, "British Economic Policy and Industrial Performance in the Early Post-War Period", *Business History* 38, 4 (1996), 65-91; Nick Tiratsoo and Jim Tomlinson, "Exporting the 'Gospel of Productivity': United States Technical Assistance and British Industry, 1945-1960", *Business History Review* 71 (1997), 41-81; idem, "Americanisation Beyond the Mass Production Paradigm: The Case of British Industry", in Matthias Kipping and Ove Bjarnar (eds.), *The Americanisation of European Business, 1948-1960: The Marshall Plan and the Transfer of US Management Models* (London: Routledge, 1998), 115-32; Paddy Maguire, "Designs on Reconstruction: British Business, Market Structures and the Role of Design in Post-War Recovery", *Journal of Design History* 4 (1991), 15-30.



7 See Cusumano, *Japanese Automobile Industry*; Tolliday, 'Diffusion and Transformation of Fordism'; Shimokawa, "From the Ford System to the Just-in-Time Production System"; Shiomi, "Postwar Revival and Americanization"; Andrew Gordon, "Contests for the Workplace" in *idem*, *Postwar Japan as History*, 373-94, esp. pp. 375-8. For the original formulation of the "politics of productivity", see Charles S. Maier, *The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II*, in *idem*, *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 121-52, and the fuller discussion in section I below.

8 For a sample of the critical literature linking postwar mass production and systematic management to the competitive difficulties experienced by US manufacturers during the 1970s and 80s, see William J. Abernathy, Kim B. Clark, and Alan M. Kantrow, *Industrial Renaissance: Producing a Competitive Future for America* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Michael J. Piore and Charles F. Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); H. Thomas Johnson and Robert S. Kaplan, *Relevance Lost: The Rise and Fall of Management Accounting* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1987); Michael L. Dertouzos et al., *Made in America: Regaining the Competitive Edge* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

9 Andrew Glyn et al., "The Rise and Fall of the Golden Age", in Stephen A. Marglin and Juliet B. Schor (eds.), *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 56; Nicholas Crafts and Gianni Toniolo, "Postwar Growth: An Overview", in *idem* (eds.), *Economic Growth in Europe since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25; cf. also Moses Abramovitz, 'Catch-up and Convergence in the Postwar Growth Boom and After', in William J. Baumol, Richard R. Nelson, and Edward N. Wolff (eds.), *Convergence of Productivity: Cross-National Studies and Historical Evidence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 100-101.

10 Killick, *United States and European Reconstruction*, 155.

11 Maier, "Politics of Productivity"; Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe*, ch. 12 (quotation, 227). See also Anthony Carew, *Labour under the Marshall Plan: The Politics of Productivity and the Marketing of Management Science* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); and the literature discussed in Killick, *United States and European Reconstruction*, ch. 14. An influential national study along these lines is Volker Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945-1973* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986); for extensions of his argument, see also *idem*, "Technology and the Export of Industrial Culture: Problems of the German-American Relationship, 1900-1960", in Peter Mathias and John A. Davis (eds.), *Innovation and Technology in Europe: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 142-61; "Resisting the Pax Americana? West German Industry and the United States, 1945-55", in Michael Ermath (ed.), *America and the Shaping of German Society, 1945-1955* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 85-100; "West German Reconstruction and American Industrial Culture, 1945-1960", in Reiner Pommerin (ed.), *The American Impact on Postwar Germany* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), 65-82. For the "postwar triumph of the 'politics of productivity'" and the "Westernization of consumption patterns" in Japan, see Gordon, "Struggles for the Workplace",

375-8; and Charles Yuji Horioka, "Consuming and Saving", in Gordon, *Postwar Japan as History*, 259-92, esp. 273-9.

12 Hogan, *Marshall Plan*, 436, 445; d'Attore, "ERP Aid and the Politics of Productivity in Italy", 37-41. Cf. also Federico Romero, *The United States and the European Trade Union Movement, 1944-1951*, trans. Harvey Ferguson II (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). Both Horioka and Gordon also emphasize the social, cultural, institutional, and political limits to Japanese convergence on Western models of mass consumption, mass culture, and labor-management relations: see Horioka, "Consuming and Saving", 290-1; Gordon, "Contests for the Workplace", esp. 377-8, 385-7, 391-4; and idem, "Conclusion", in *Postwar Japan as History*, 454-6. In the French case, similarly, Richard F. Kuisel highlights the strength of domestic resistance to American models of management, industrial relations, mass consumption, and mass culture despite industrialists' willingness to borrow US manufacturing techniques and the postwar development of a consumer society: see *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and "The Marshall Plan in Action: Politics, Labor, Industry and the Program of Technical Assistance", in Lévy-Leboyer and Girault, *Le plan Marshall*, 335-57. In Italy, conversely, Vera Zamagni argues that American consumption models found easier postwar acceptance than did US production processes and methods of industrial organization, which required more substantial adaptation to domestic market conditions: see "The Italian 'Economic Miracle' Revisited: New Markets and American Technology", in Ennio di Nolfo, *Power in Europe? II: Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 197-226, esp. 209.

13 Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe*, 236; cf. also idem et al., "Questions of Cultural Exchange: The NIAS Statement on the European Reception of American Mass Culture", in Rob Kroes, Robert W. Rydell, Doeko F.J. Bosscher (eds.), *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993), 321-33.

14 Marie-Laure Djelic, *Exporting the American Model: The Post-War Transformation of European Business* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 2-3; cf. Ove Bjarnar and Matthias Kipping, 'The Marshall Plan and the Transfer of US Management Models to Europe: An Introductory Framework', in Kipping and Bjarnar, *Americanisation of European Business*, 6. Both Djelic and Bjarnar and Kipping draw explicitly on the work of Mauro F. Guillén, who argues that "Nation-states are...the structured setting in which a variety of institutional patterns, as well as economic and technological factors, affect the adoption of different models of management": see his *Models of Management: Work, Authority, and Organization in a Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 6-7.

15 Crafts and Toniolo, "Postwar Growth", 23; contrast Djelic, *Exporting the American Model*, 10-11, 274. For the new sociological institutionalism and its rejection of efficiency-driven explanations of changes in business organization, see Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio (eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Neil Fligstein, *The Transformation of Corporate Control* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard



University Press, 1990); William G. Roy, *Socializing Capital: The Rise of the Large Industrial Corporation in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

16 Barry Eichengreen, "Institutions and Economic Growth: Europe after World War II", in Crafts and Toniolo, *Economic Growth in Europe*, 38-72 (quotation, 41). The French "Regulation School" similarly emphasizes the importance of domestic institutional forms – notably the "capital-labour nexus" – in shaping the postwar diffusion of "Fordist" production methods and consumption models from the United States to Western Europe and Japan, together with the impact of the resulting differences on national growth trajectories: for a recent restatement of this approach, see Robert Boyer, "Capital-Labour Relations in OECD Countries: From the Fordist Golden Age to Contrasted National Trajectories", in Juliet Schor and Jong-Il You (eds.), *Capital, the State and Labour: A Global Perspective* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995), 18-69.

17 The debate has been particularly fierce in the German case: see Charles Maier and Günther Bischof (eds.), *The Marshall Plan and Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 1991). Werner Abelshauser has been the principal spokesman for the autochthonous view of the sources of postwar German growth which downplays the impact of US assistance; for an English-language statement of his position, see "American Aid and West German Economic Recovery: A Macroeconomic Perspective", in Maier and Bischof, *Germany and the Marshall Plan*, 367-409. At a pan-European level, Alan Milward has argued most forcefully for the primacy of endogenous forces in postwar economic recovery and the marginal contribution of the Marshall Plan: see his *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51* (London: Methuen, 1984; *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1992); and for a particularly trenchant statement, "Was the Marshall Plan Necessary?", *Diplomatic History* 13, 2 (1989), 231-53.

18 Killick, *United States and European Reconstruction*, 184; Charles Maier, "The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in Twentieth-Century Western Europe", in idem, *In Search of Stability*, 153-86 (quotation, 173); Bjarnar and Kipping, "The Marshall Plan and the Transfer of US Management Models to Europe", 12; Djelic, *Exporting the American Model*, 275.

19 For a convergent view in the context of more recent debates over Japanization, see Boyer et al., *Between Imitation and Innovation*. Contrast Djelic, *Exporting the American Model*, esp. 272; Bjarnar and Kipping, 11-14. For similar positions in historical debates over the reception of American mass culture in Europe, see Kroes et al., *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions*, especially Rob Kroes, "Americanization: What Are We Talking About?", 302-18; Pells, *Not Like Us*, esp. ch. 9.

20 See, for example, Djelic, *Exporting the American Model*, ch. 1; Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); idem, "The United States: Engines of Economic Growth in the Capital-Intensive and Knowledge-Intensive Industries", in Chandler, Franco Amatori, and Takashi Hikino (eds.), *Big Business and the Wealth of Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 63-101.

21 Alf Lütke et al., "Einleitung", in idem (eds.), *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), 7-33, esp. 14-15.

22 For this second view, see Bjarnar and Kipping, 'Marshall Plan and the Transfer of US Management Models to Europe', 6 ("Actors were not compelled to 'buy' one big American model. Instead, it seems that they tried to pick up specific techniques from an ideologically defined 'American' set of models and attempted to mould them into existing institutions and business practices."); Luciano Segreto, "Americanizzare o modernizzare l'economia? Progetti americani e risposte italiane negli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta", *Passato e presente* no. 37 (1996), 55-86 (quotation, 57-8). See also the essays in Kipping and Bjarnar, *Americanisation of European Business* by Bent Boel, "The European Productivity Agency: A Faithful Prophet of the American Model?", esp. 43; Rolv-Petter Amdam and Ove Bjarnar, "The Regional Dissemination of US Productivity Models in Norway in the 1950s and 60s", esp. 103; and Tiratsoo and Tomlinson, "Americanisation Beyond the Mass Production Paradigm", esp. 115: "what the Americans wanted to supply was not a self-contained and entire 'model' of production....".

23 Abramovitz, "Catch-up and Convergence", 88, 96; cf. also idem, "Catching up, Forging Ahead, and Falling Behind", in his *Thinking About Growth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 220-42; and Richard Nelson and Gavin Wright, "The Erosion of US Technological Leadership as a Factor in Postwar Economic Convergence", in Baumol et al., *Convergence of Productivity*, 129-63, esp. 148.

24 Eichengreen, "Institutions and Economic Growth", 41-3.

25 I am indebted to Gary Herrigel for this formulation. For a broader critique of the path-dependency literature along these lines, see Charles F. Sabel, "Intelligible Differences: On Deliberate Strategy and the Exploration of Possibility in Economic Life", paper presented to the Meeting of the Italian Economics Association, Florence, October 20-21, 1995, available from his website, <http://www.columbia.edu/~cfs11/>. This paper draws on arguments from our joint introduction to *World of Possibilities*, "Stories, Strategies, Structures: Rethinking Historical Alternatives to Mass Production", 1-33.

26 See the references cited in note 6 above.

27 See the references cited in notes 7 and 8 above. Some catch-up and convergence theorists recognize that diffusion of new technologies to different physical and market environments may give rise to product or process improvements which are then transferred back to the country where the initial innovation occurred: see William J. Baumol, "Multivariate Growth Patterns: Contagion and Common Forces as Possible Sources of Convergence", in idem et al., *Convergence of Productivity*, 62-85, esp. 76. Steven Broadberry argues that US-style mass production methods yielded superior manufacturing productivity performance to that of the flexible production methods predominantly employed by British industry from the late nineteenth century until the 1980s, when the balance of competitive advantage swung back in the opposite direction: see *The Productivity Race: British Manufacturing in International Perspective, 1850-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

28 Paul Erker, "The Long Shadow of Americanization: The German Rubber Industry and the Radial Tire Revolution", in Zeitlin and Herrigel, *Americanization and Its Limits*.



29 For a similar argument against the use of Americanization as an analytical category rather than a historical concept rooted in the perceptions of contemporary actors, see Paul Erker, "Amerikanisierung; der westdeutschen Wirtschaft?", in Konrad Jarausch and Hannes Siegrist (eds.), *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland, 1945-1970* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1997), 137-45, esp. 145.

30 For modern historical studies documenting diversity within US industry, see Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), esp. ch. 13; Michael Schwartz, "Markets, Networks, and the Rise of Chrysler in Old Detroit", forthcoming in *Enterprise and Society* 1 (2000); idem and Andrew Fish, "Just In Time Inventories in Old Detroit", *Business History* 40 (1998): 48-71.

31 For an historical overview of the development of R&D in American industry, see David Hounshell, "The Evolution of Industrial Research in the United States", in Richard S. Rosenbloom and William J. Spencer (eds.), *Engines of Innovation: U.S. Industrial Research at the End of an Era* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 13-85. On the metamorphoses and contending positions within US antitrust policy, see Rudolph Peritz, *Competition Policy in America, 1888-1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), chs. 2-4; Gerald Berk, "Neither Competition Nor Administration: Brandeis and the Antitrust Reforms of 1914", *Studies in American Political Development* 9 (1994), 24-59; idem, "Communities of Competitors: Open Price Associations and the American State, 1911-1929", *Social Science History* 20, 3 (1996), 375-400.

32 Matthias Kipping, "A Slow and Difficult Process: The Americanization of the French Steel Producing and Using Industries after World War II", in Zeitlin and Herrigel, *Americanization and Its Limits*.

33 Kipping, "French Steel Producing and Using Industries"; Ruggero Ranieri, "Remodelling the Italian Steel Industry: Americanization, Modernization, and Mass Production", and Duccio Bigazzi, "Mass Production or 'Organized Craftsmanship'? The Postwar Italian Automobile Industry", both in Zeitlin and Herrigel, *Americanization and Its Limits*.

34 Erker, 'German Rubber Industry'; Kenneth Lipartito, "Failure to Communicate: British Telecommunications and the American Lesson", Henrik Glimstedt, "Creative Cross-Fertilization and Uneven Americanization of Swedish Industry: Sources of Innovation in Postwar Motor Vehicles and Electrical Manufacturing", Jonathan Zeitlin, "Americanizing British Engineering? Strategic Debate, Selective Adaptation, and Hybrid Innovation in Postwar Reconstruction", and Jacqueline McGlade, "Americanization: Ideology or Process? The Case of the US Technical Assistance Program", all in Zeitlin and Herrigel, *Americanization and Its Limits*. For sectorally broader but chronologically more narrow surveys of postwar Americanization, see Lévy-Leboyer and Girault, *Le plan Marshall et le relèvement économique de l'Europe*; and Dominique Barjot, John Gillingham, and Terushi Hara (eds.), *The Productivity Missions and the Diffusion of American Economic and Technological Influence after the Second World War* (papers presented to the Caen preconference, 18-20 September 1997, forthcoming).

35 On sideshadowing, foreshadowing, and backshadowing, see Gary Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). For a fuller discussion of narrative strategies and the representation of strategic action in industrial history, see Sabel and Zeitlin, "Stories, Strategies, Structures".

36 McGlade, "US Technical Assistance and Productivity Program".

37 Gary Herrigel, "American Occupation, Market Order and Democracy: Reconfiguring the Japanese and German Steel Industries after World War II", in Zeitlin and Herrigel, *Americanization and Its Limits*.

38 Chiarella Esposito, *America's Feeble Weapon: Funding the Marshall Plan in France and Italy, 1948-1950*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994; idem, "Influencing Aid Recipients: Marshall Plan Lessons for Contemporary Aid Donors", in Eichengreen, *Europe's Postwar Recovery*, 68-90. For an unconvincing attempt to substantiate the claim that "the administrative agencies in charge of managing [the Marshall Plan]...developed powerful means of control that reached down to the country and even to the project level", see Djelic, *Exporting the American Model*, esp. ch. 7 (quotation, 275).

39 Kipping, "French Steel Producing and Using Industries"; Ranieri, "Italian Steel Industry".

40 On the use of Marshall Aid counterpart funds and the creation of the national productivity centers in Britain and Norway, see in addition to the study by Zeitlin for this project: Killick, *United States and European Reconstruction*, 101-2, 109-10, 128-9; Jim Tomlinson, "Corelli Barnett's History: The Case of Marshall Aid", *Twentieth-Century British History* 8, 2 (1997), 222-38; idem, "The Failure of the Anglo-American Council on Productivity", *Business History* 33, 1 (1991), 82-92; Gunnar Yttri, "From a Norwegian Rationalization Law to an American Productivity Institute", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 20 (1995), 231-58; Helge Pharo, "Norway, the United States and the Marshall Plan, 1947-1952", in Richard T. Griffiths, *Explorations in OEEC History* (Paris: OECD, 1997), 73-85. For the Swedish case, see Leon Dalgas Jensen, "Denmark and the Marshall Plan, 1947-8: The Decision to Participate", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 14 (1989), 73.

41 On the Japanese productivity movement during the 1950s and early 60s, see Shiomi, "Postwar Revival and Americanization", particularly the essays by Takenori Saito, "Americanization and Postwar Japanese Management", esp. 21-3; Kinsaburo Sunaga, "American Technical Assistance Programs and the Productivity Movement in Japan" (quotation, 38); and Satoshi Saito, "The Emergence of the Productivity Improvement Movement in Postwar Japan and Japanese Productivity Missions Overseas", esp. 66-7.

42 On the US campaign for foreign antitrust legislation during the 1940s and its practical consequences, see in addition to the studies by Herrigel and Lipartito for this project, Helen Mercer, "The Rhetoric and Reality of Anti-Cartel Policies: Britain, Germany and Japan and the Effects of US Pressure in the 1940s", in Carlo Morelli (ed.), *Cartels and Market Management in the Post-War World* (London School of Economics: Business History Unit Occasional Paper



1997, no. 1); Matthias Kipping, "Concurrence et compétitivité. Les origines de la législation antitrust française après 1945", *Études et Documents VI* (1994), 429-55. On the British case more specifically, see Helen Mercer, *Creating a Competitive Order: The Hidden History of British Antitrust Policies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Tony Fryer, *Regulating Big Business: Antitrust in Great Britain and America 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chs. 7-8.

43 For a related typology of cross-national transfer mechanisms, which places greater emphasis on the normative institutionalization of the American model in Western Europe, see Djelic, *Exporting the American Model*, esp. 129-33.

44 Glimstedt, "Swedish Industry"; Ranieri, "Italian Steel Industry"; Erker, "German Rubber Industry".

45 On the European operations of US management consultancies and their role in the transfer of the multidivisional form, see Matthias Kipping, "The U.S. Influence on the Evolution of Management Consultancies in Britain, France, and Germany since 1945", *Business and Economic History* 25, 1 (1996), 112-23; Christopher D. McKenna, "'The American Challenge: McKinsey & Company's Role in the Transfer of Decentralization to Europe, 1957-1975'", *Academy of Management Proceedings* (1997), 226-30; Bruce Kogut and David Parkinson, "The Diffusion of American Organizing Principles to Europe", in Kogut (ed.), *Country Competitiveness: Technology and the Organization of Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 179-202; John Cable and Manfred J. Dirrheimer, "Hierarchies and Markets: An Empirical Test of the Multidivisional Hypothesis in West Germany", *International Journal of Industrial Organization* 1 (1983), 43-62; Herrigel, *Industrial Constructions*, 222, 232. In Japan, too, most leading manufacturing companies during the postwar period either rejected the multidivisional form altogether in favor of elaborated functional organizations or constrained divisional decision-making autonomy to a much greater extent than in the US model: see W. Mark Fruin, *The Japanese Enterprise System: Competitive Strategies and Cooperative Structures* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), esp. 176-8.

46 For the locus classicus of this debate, see Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *The American Challenge*, trans. Ronald Steel (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

47 The classic studies remain those of Mira Wilkins: see her *The Maturing of Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad from 1914 to 1970* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); idem and Frank E. Hill, *American Business Abroad: Ford on Six Continents* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964). On the British case, which has received closest attention, see John H. Dunning, *American Investment in British Manufacturing Industry* (1st ed., London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958; 2nd rev. ed., London: Routledge, 1998); Geoffrey Jones and Frances Bostock, "US Multinationals in British Manufacturing before 1962", *Business History Review* 70, 2 (1996): 207-56.

48 Steven Tolliday, "Transplanting the American Model? US Automobile Companies and the Transfer of Technology and Management to Europe after the Second World War", in Zeitlin and Herrigel, *Americanization and Its Limits*.

49 See also the recent work of David Hounshell: "Assets, Organizations, Strategies, and Traditions: Organizational Capabilities and Constraints in the Remaking of Ford Motor Company, 1946-1962", in Naomi Lamoreaux, Daniel M.G. Raff, and Peter Temin (eds.), *Learning by Doing in Markets, Firms, and Countries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 185-218; "Ford Automates: Technology and Organization in Theory and Practice", *Business and Economic History* 24, 1 (1995): 59-71; "Planning and Executing 'Automation' at Ford Motor Company, 1945-65: The Cleveland Engine Plant and Its Consequences", in Haruhito Shiomi and Kazuo Wada (eds.), *Fordism Transformed: The Development of Production Methods in the Automobile Industry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 49-86; "Automation, Transfer Machinery, and Mass Production in the U.S. Automobile Industry in the Post-World War II Era", forthcoming in *Enterprise and Society* 1 (2000).

50 Tolliday, "Transplanting the American Model?"; Zeitlin, "Americanizing British Engineering?".

51 Milward, *Reconstruction of Western Europe*, ch. 3, esp. 95-8. The picture changes somewhat in the case of Britain and Western Germany, as Killick shows, if other forms of US assistance in 1946-7 are also taken into account, while Vera Zamagni arrives at a lower figure for Marshall Aid as a proportion of Italian national income by upwardly revising the index of industrial production for the late 1940s: see Killick, *United States and European Reconstruction*, 96-7; Zamagni, "Betting on the Future. The Reconstruction of Italian Industry, 1946-1952", in Josef Becker and Franz Knipping (eds.), *Power in Europe? Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a Postwar World, 1945-1950* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986); idem, *The Economic History of Italy, 1860-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 332.

52 On prewar Japanese modification and improvement of imported products and processes as a source of confidence in domestic technological creativity and innovative capabilities, see in addition to the study by Wada and Shiba for this project: Tetsuro Nakaoka, "The Role of Domestic Technical Innovation in Foreign Technology Transfer: The Case of the Japanese Cotton Textile Industry", *Osaka City University Economic Review* 18 (1982), 45-62; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan: From the Seventeenth to the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chs. 4-6; William Mass and Andrew Robertson, "From Textiles to Automobiles: Mechanical and Organizational Innovation in the Toyota Enterprises, 1895-1933", *Business and Economic History* 25, 2 (1996), 1-37; Tolliday, "Diffusion and Transformation of Fordism", 72-3, 76. On the technological creativity and self-reliance of French engineers and managers, see also Patrick Fridenson, "L'industrie automobile française et le plan Marshall" in Girault and Lévy-Leboyer, *Le plan Marshall*, 283-9; idem, "L'industrie automobile: la primauté du marché", *Historiens & Géographes*, no. 361 (1998), 227-42.

53 These country classifications are evidently different from those of other authors operating with alternative interpretative frameworks. In particular, the contributions to this project place greater emphasis than much of the existing literature on the critical and selective reception of postwar Americanization in West Germany, Japan, and Sweden, as well as on the positive engagement with the US model in important sections of Italian industry.



54 In addition to the studies by Ranieri and Bigazzi for this project, see Segreto, "Americanizzare o modernizzare l'economia"; Zamagni, "Betting on the Future" and "Italian 'Economic Miracle' Revisited"; Sergio Chillè, "Il 'Productivity and Technical Assistance Program' per l'economia italiana (1949-1954): Accettazione e resistenze ai progetti statunitensi di rinnovamento del sistema produttivo nazionale", *Annali Fondazione G. Pastore* 22 (1993), 76-121; d'Attore, "ERP Aid and the Politics of Productivity in Italy".

55 In addition to the studies for this project by Kipping and Zeitlin, see Kipping, "'Operation Impact': Converting European Employers to the American Creed", in idem and Bjarnar, *Americanisation of European Business*, 55-73; Vincent Guigueno, "L'éclipse de l'atelier. Les missions françaises de productivité aux Etats-Unis dans les années 1950" (unpublished mémoire de Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies, Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées - Université de Marne-La-Vallée, 1994); Kuisel, "Marshall Plan in Action" and *Seducing the French*, ch. 4; Tiratsoo and Tomlinson, *Industrial Efficiency and State Intervention*, chs. 4-7. According to an official of the US International Cooperation Agency (ICA), "The Germans had resisted the sending of teams to the US since they believed that German technology was more advanced than American technology. Nevertheless, the Germans finally agreed to send teams, and upon doing so, they also learned about these attitudes which contribute in the United States to higher productivity." Richard Goodrich to Frank Turner of the ICA Japan Mission, 15/4/1955, quoted in Sunagawa, "American Technical Assistance Programs and the Productivity Movement in Japan". 31. Cf. also Henry Wend, "'But the German Manufacturer Doesn't Want Our Advice': The Limits of American Technical Assistance in West Germany, 1950-1954", unpublished paper, Boston University, April 1999.

56 In addition to the studies by Kipping and Herrigel for this project and the references cited therein, see Mercer, "Rhetoric and Reality of Antitrust Policies". In *Constructing a Competitive Order*, Mercer argues that the FBI played a positive role in the drafting of the 1956 Restrictive Trade Practices Act, but her own evidence shows that the primary concern of organized British business in this struggle was to eliminate the independent investigatory authority of the Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Commission rather than to pave the way for the sweeping legal assault on cartel arrangements which followed its passage.

57 In addition to the studies for this project by Zeitlin, Herrigel, and Glimstedt, see Romero, *United States and the European Trade Union Movement*; Carew, *Labour under the Marshall Plan*; Kuisel, "Marshall Plan in Action" and *Seducing the French*, ch. 4; Andrew Gordon, *The Wages of Affluence: Labor and Management in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

58 For an extended discussion of the problem of national models which argues that these should be understood as complex and contingent historical constructions whose unity and coherence vary empirically depending on their institutional characteristics, see Steven Tolliday and Jonathan Zeitlin, "National Models and International Variations in Labour Management and Employer Organization", in idem (eds.), *The Power to Manage? Employers and Industrial Relations in Comparative-Historical Perspective* (London: Routledge, 1991), esp. 273-9.

59 Another significant dimension of subnational variation, which receives relatively little direct attention in this project, is that between regions. Thus responses to postwar Americanization and engagements with US technology and management could be very different in regions dominated by large, hierarchical companies and in those characterized by more diffused networks of small and medium-sized enterprises, such as the Norwegian counties of Møre and Romsdal or the industrial districts of the "Third Italy". In addition to the brief discussion in McGlade's study for this project, see Amdam and Bjarnar, "Regional Dissemination of US Productivity Models in Norway"; idem, "Regional Business Networks and the Diffusion of American Management and Organisational Models to Norway, 1945-65", *Business History* 39, 1 (1997), 72-90; Segreto, "Americanizzare o modernizzare l'economia?"; David Ellwood, "The Limits of Americanisation and the Emergence of an Alternative Model: The Marshall Plan in Emilia Romagna", in Kipping and Bjarnar, *Americanization of European Business*, 149-68.

60 In France, too, as Patrick Fridenson observes in an unpublished paper presented to the June 1998 Madison workshop, the "American model" meant very different things to automobile and electronics manufacturers during the postwar reconstruction era: standardization, automation, market research, after-sales service, job evaluation, and other systematic management tools to the former; centralized, science-based corporate research and development to the latter.

61 Ranieri, "Italian Steel Industry"; Kipping, "French Steel Producing and Using Industries"; Bigazzi, "Italian Automobile Industry".

62 Zeitlin, "Americanizing British Engineering?"; Erker, "German Rubber Industry"; Kazuo Wada and Takao Shiba, "The Evolution of the 'Japanese Production System': Indigenous Influences and American Impact", in Zeitlin and Herrigel, *Americanization and Its Limits*.

63 Ranieri, "Italian Steel Industry"; Glimstedt, "Swedish Industry".

64 On the automobile industry, see also Fridenson, "L'industrie automobile française" and "L'industrie automobile".

65 For a selective introduction to prewar European and Japanese debates over and experiments with Fordism, Taylorism, and American mass production, see Steven Tolliday and Jonathan Zeitlin (eds.), *Between Fordism and Flexibility: The Automobile Industry and Its Workers* (2nd ed., Oxford: Berg, 1992; orig. 1986); Jonathan Zeitlin, "Between Flexibility and Mass Production: Strategic Debate and Selective Adaptation in British Engineering, 1830-1914", in Sabel and Zeitlin, *World of Possibilities*, 241-72; Patrick Fridenson, "Un Tourmant taylorien de la société française (1904-1918)", *Annales ESC* (1987) no. 5, 1031-1060; Aimée Moutet, *Les Logiques de l'entreprise: La rationalisation dans l'industrie française de l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1997); Heidrun Homburg, "Anfänge des Taylorsystems in Deutschland vor dem ersten Weltkrieg", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 4, 2 (1978), 170-94; Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Tolliday, "Diffusion and Transformation of Fordism".



66 Ranieri, "Italian Steel Industry"; Zeitlin, "Americanizing British Engineering?"; Wada and Shiba, "Japanese Production System".

67 Patrick Fridenson, "Who is Responsible for the French Economic Miracle (1945-1960)?", in Michael Adcock, Emily Chester, and Jeremy Whiteman (eds.), *Revolution, Society, and the Politics of Memory* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 1997), 309. Both the British and Italians, as Zeitlin and Bigazzi remark in their studies for this project, paid tribute to Switzerland, with its smaller firms, more skilled workforce, and specialized higher-value products as a attractive alternative model of industrial prosperity more applicable to European conditions than that of the United States, though there is little evidence of direct attempts in either country to borrow from this example.

68 Lipartito, "British Telecommunications". Cf. also Tolliday's observations on the pervasive contrasts between GM and Ford's pre- and postwar approaches to product strategy, production, and organization, together with the resulting ambiguities of "Americanization" for European automotive manufacturing in "Transplanting the American Model?".

69 On the Japanese case, see in addition to the study for this project by Wada and Shiba, Tolliday, "Diffusion and Transformation of Fordism"; Shimokawa, "From the Ford System to the Just-in-Time Production System"; Cusumano, *Japanese Automobile Industry*; Satoshi Sasaki, "The Development and Results of Japan's Productivity Improvement Movement: Observation Tours by Participants in the Electrical Equipment Industry", paper presented to the Caen Preconference on "The Productivity Missions and the Diffusion of American Economic and Technological Influence after the Second World War", 18-20 September 1997.

70 For the case of Volkswagen, see Volker Wellhöner, *Wirtschaftswunder-Weltmarkt Westdeutscher Fordismus. Der Fall Volkswagen* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1996); Steven Tolliday, "Enterprise and State in the German Wirtschaftswunder: Volkswagen and the Automobile Industry, 1939-1962", *Business History Review* 69 (1995), 273-350.

71 Wada and Shiba, "Japanese Production System"; Ranieri, "Italian Steel Industry"; Kipping, "French Steel Using and Producing Industries".

72 The Austin/BMC modular transfer machinery drew on earlier unit construction designs developed by Renault during and immediately after the war: see Jonathan Zeitlin, "Reconciling Automation and Flexibility? Technology and Production in the Postwar British Motor Vehicle Industry", forthcoming in *Enterprise and Society* 1 (2000); Jean-Pierre Poitou, *Le cerveau de l'usine: Histoire des bureaux d'études Renault de l'origine à 1980* (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1988); Fridenson, "L'industrie automobile française" and "L'industrie automobile".

73 On the Cleveland engine plant, the "horsepower race", and the evolution of transfer equipment design in the US automobile industry, see Hounshell, "Planning and Executing 'Automation'"; idem, "Automation, Transfer Machinery, and Mass Production".

74 For overviews of the voluminous literature on the diffusion of Japanese manufacturing practices, see Boyer et al., *Between Imitation and Innovation*; Tony Elger and Chris Smith (eds.),

Global Japanization? The Transnational Transformation of the Labour Process (London: Routledge, 1994); Thomas A. Kochan, Russell D. Lansbury, and John Paul Macduffie (eds.), *After Lean Production: Evolving Employment Practices in the World Auto Industry* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1997); Jeffrey Liker, Mark Fruin, and Paul Adler (eds.), *Remade in America: Transplanting and Transforming Japanese Production Systems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

75 For an ambitious and well-developed but ultimately unconvincing attempt to contrast 'backward' and 'forward' adaptations of Fordism in the British and Japanese automobile industries respectively on the basis of a product life-cycle model, see Takahiro Fujimoto and Joseph Tidd, "The UK and Japanese Auto Industry: Adoption and Adaptation of Fordism", paper presented to the conference on "Entrepreneurial Activities and Corporate Systems", University of Tokyo, 29-31 January 1993; Tidd and Fujimoto, 'Work Organization, Production Technology and Product Strategy of the Japanese and British Automobile Industries', *Current Politics and Economics of Japan* 4, 4 (1995). Cf. also the alternative interpretation in Tolliday, "Diffusion and Transformation of Fordism".

76 For the example of modular product architecture, see Karl Ulrich, "The Role of Product Architecture in the Manufacturing Firm", *Research Policy* 24 (1995), 419-40.

77 Robert Boyer et al, "Conclusion: Transplants, Hybridization, and Globalization: What Lessons for the Future?", in *idem*, *Between Imitation and Innovation*.

78 Giuliana Gemelli (ed.), *The Ford Foundation and Europe (1950's-1970's): Cross-Fertilization of Learning in Social Science and Management* (Brussels: European Interuniversity Press, 1998); Paul Lillrank, "The Transfer of Management Innovations from Japan", *Organization Studies* 16, 6 (1995), 988. Both Gemelli and Lillrank, however, also couch their analyses in terms of "translation" and "transmission" of organizational models and innovations from one context to another respectively.

79 For the original formulations of the emergence and subsequent decay of "embedded liberalism", see John G. Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order", in Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 195-231; Robert O. Keohane, "The World Political Economy and the Crisis of Embedded Liberalism", in John H. Goldthorpe (ed.), *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism: Studies in the Political Economy of Western European Nations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 15-38; Ruggie, "At Home Abroad, Abroad at Home: International Liberalisation and Domestic Stability in the New World Order", *Millennium* 24, 3 (1994), 507-26. For a persuasive argument that 'embedded liberalism' was a contested outcome of the postwar bargaining processes and shifting US priorities discussed in the previous section rather than an immediate product of the wartime Bretton Woods agreements, see Milward, *Reconstruction of Western Europe and European Rescue of the Nation-State*; and for an incisive analysis of the intrinsic instability of the gold-dollar exchange system which underpinned this international economic regime, see Barry Eichengreen, *Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), ch. 4.



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81 See, respectively, James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos, *The Machine That Changed the World* (New York: Rawson Associates, 1990); Martin Kenny and Richard Florida, *Beyond Mass Production: The Japanese System and Its Transfer to the U.S.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

82 For representative statements of the second view, see Steve Babson (ed.), *Lean Work: Empowerment and Exploitation in the Global Auto Industry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995).

83 For a discussion of these polarities in the debate, see Robert Boyer, "Hybridization and Models of Production: Geography, History, and Theory", in idem et al., *Between Imitation and Innovation*, esp. 23-32.

84 Womack et al, *Machine That Changed the World*, 9; Kenny and Florida, *Beyond Mass Production*, 8; cf. Tolliday et al., "Introduction", in Boyer et al., *Between Imitation and Innovation*, 4-5.

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