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ARTICLE

Pedagogies of Development, Conceptions of Efficiency: Modern Managerialism in Industrial Ahmedabad, 1950s–1960s

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This paper aims to trace the historical trajectory of management as a professional discipline in the post-independence period in India during the 1950s and 1960s. It tracks the discipline's formative interests in the management of industrial labor, the views of its major proponents, and the processes through which the discipline sought generalized relevance within the postcolonial regime. It also discusses the intersection of managerial concerns with the globally emergent discourses on development and industrial reform and follows the eventual institutionalization of the discipline as an educational concern through the setting up of management schools. In doing so, the paper examines the modes and rationales through which managerialism established its own normative vocabulary and deployed it for assessing not just the objectives of industrial capital but also the newly consolidating postcolonial state and its developmental ambitions. This circulation of management ideas is analyzed by following the experiments that were conducted in the industrial enterprises of Ahmedabad by a group of textile industrialists, UN developmental pedagogues, and Ford Foundation consultants. Even when, in most cases, such studies on management did not succeed in achieving their ascribed goals, the paper demonstrates how managerialism maintained its relevance by parallelly turning its focus onto the postcolonial state and its developmental activities. Broadly, the paper argues that management in the mid-twentieth century functioned as a solution in search of a problem. It eventually acquired prominence by tautologically reading institutions and various aspects of the society as organizations that needed the prescription of management to resolve their operations.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Managerialism, Labor, Management

Introduction

This paper aims to trace the historical trajectory of management as a professional discipline in the post-independence period in India during the 1950s 1960s. It tracks the discipline's formative interests in the management of industrial labor, the views of its major proponents,

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and the processes through which the discipline sought generalized relevance within the postcolonial regime. It also discusses the intersection of managerial concerns with the globally emergent discourses on development and industrial reform and follows the eventual institutionalization of the discipline as an educational concern through the setting up of management schools. In doing so, the paper examines the modes and rationales through which modern managerialism established its own normative vocabulary and deployed it for assessing not just the objectives of industrial capital, but also the newly consolidating postcolonial state and its developmental ambitions. Specifically, the paper focuses upon the managerial frameworks of "efficiency" and "leadership" to understand how these concepts—which were being framed to engage with the concerns of industrial capital— also came to mark a foundational moment for the arrival of the developmental state in India.

What Was Modern Managerialism in Western India?

As historians have argued, within the context of Western industrial capitalism, managerialism emerged as a self-reformatory discursive practice by which private capital had begun qualifying itself in the twentieth century—a time when a range of crises were hitting the realm of industrial production in the wake of the Great Depression. In the post–World War II era United States, questions of industrial production as conceptualized within the Taylorist and Fordist models of efficiency had to be reworked to negotiate such crises, which had eroded faith in the private capital–led system, to furnish a new paradigm of industrial governance that laid emphasis on notions of conflict mediation and social harmony.[1] In a period also marked with recurrent labor strikes around the world, modern managerialism sought to produce a systematic model of control, inspection, and supervision across the production and distribution hierarchies of industries informed by new knowledge forms like "behavioral psychology," "human relations," and the science of marketing.[2] The discourse of human relations, in particular, had become a medium through which the organizational template of managerialism made a claim of incorporating "democracy." This was aimed at founding command and productivity on an apparently non-extractive form of participatory decision making and drawing its strength from the concepts of problem-solving skills and democratic leadership involving the devolution of power across the various strata of the firm.[3]

In this paper, "management" and "managerialism" often appear interchangeably, yet it is pertinent to conceptually distinguish and historically situate their meanings. It is now fairly well established that "management" as a practice has its origins in the task of factory administration, and specifically in the act of labor control and discipline in the workshops of eighteenth-century England.[4] One can condense this rather complex and long history by

1. Gilman, "The Prophet," 109–132. Gilman discusses the writings of Peter Drucker, often considered to be the most important figure in the field of modern management studies. He also played a pivotal role in popularizing MBA degrees in the United States. Drucker's concern in post-Depression America was to legitimize the role of managerial authority by posing it as a "new science of industrial peace." See Drucker, *The Future*. For a nuanced historical analysis of managerialism's global trajectories, especially within the global South, see Offner, *Sorting Out*, 144–171.

2. Rose, "Social Psychology," 116–149.

3. Ibid.

4. Klikauer, "What Is Managerialism?,"1103–1109.

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highlighting some of the following points. Historically, the task of shop-floor supervision was performed by the overseer in the era of the "dark satanic mills."[5] Over the nineteenth century, as the factory model of production expanded in scale and capacity, the task of "overseeing" also became much more hierarchized and systemized. By the early twentieth century, management had become a specialized form of knowledge that required professional training and learning.[6] The involvement of an engineering professional such as Frederick Winslow Taylor in the development of management knowledge and the subsequent popularization of "scientific management" further provided legitimacy to "management" as a form of expertise.[7] While the task of factory supervision thus morphed into the task of "management," over the long twentieth century, management further expanded its scope and branched out from factory administration toward the administration of various other hierarchical formations. This culminated in the rise of academic fields such as organizational studies.[8]

Whereas management refers to the particular practice of managing, managerialism refers to the ideas and associated techniques that have shaped the practices of management. As noted earlier, managerialism acquired salience in the middle decades of the twentieth century as a normative vision, especially in the United States. As Thomas Klikauer has argued, managerialism—emerging from the long history of management—had by then mutated into a full-fledged ideology that sought to apply the norms of management to all areas of work and social spheres.[9] Within this framework, managerial knowledge could be used to not only manage factories, firms, and businesses but also public institutions, civil society organizations, and various other aspects of the society. Managerialism entailed an all-encompassing vision that sought to interpret the "social" itself as an organizational unit of management. As argued by some historians, this shift toward managerialism can perhaps be traced through the emergence of the human relations movement.[10] It was the human relations movement that decisively transformed management into a *social* science concern, bringing together psychology and sociology. Moreover, Human Relations was able to acquire wider legitimacy because of its engagement with the rhetoric of democracy and democratic participation. For the advocates of managerialism then, the factory and the firm could be read as templates for organizing and managing society—not just efficiently but also democratically.

Within the context of colonial India, the discourse around efficiency and industrial management perhaps emerged most pointedly in the *Indian Industrial Commission Report of 1916–1918*.[11] Composed of British bureaucrats and Indian and British business leaders, the commission sought to foreground the notion of efficiency for increasing India's contribution to the war efforts in the early twentieth century. Ravi Ahuja has drawn attention to how British

5. Ibid. Recent scholarship has also pointed out the significance of studying the history of slavery and the accompanying plantation "overseeing" and management techniques for analyzing the origins of modern management practices. See Rosenthal, "Accounting for Slavery."

6. Klikauer, "What Is Managerialism?"

7. Guillén, *Models of Management*, 40.

8. Ibid., 7–14.

9. Klikauer, "What Is Managerialism?"

10. Hoopee, "Managerialism," 7; also broadly discussed in Offner, "Management as a Universal Technique," in *Sorting Out*, 144–171.

11. Anonymous, *The Indian Industrial Commission Report 1916–1918.*

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and Indian businesses were compelled to participate alongside the state in the reform of Indian industries through a limited program of labor welfare during the interwar years.[12] Labor welfare, he argues, was identified as a precondition for generating efficiency at the shop-floor level. The new welfare regime of health-care provisions and insurance, which came into being during this time and continued to influence postcolonial policies, aimed to fundamentally quell labor unrest and slow down the lightning rate at which labor strikes had seized the industrial landscape in the early decades of the twentieth century in India. Taking this historically cultivated emphasis on efficiency as a point of departure, my paper will show how the new vocabulary of human relations began acquiring prominence in the decades following the political independence of India during the 1950s and 1960s. The first Indian Productivity Delegation's report, for instance, emphasized both efficiency as well as "industrial democracy" in relation to the running of factories and businesses of post-independence India.[13] The aim of the delegation was to find approaches that could meet the industrial production targets of the Second Five-Year Plan. It discussed human relations as a management technique that could stimulate productivity but also follow the "rules of democracy."[14]

This paper charts the circulation of such practices of management and their simultaneous managerial overtures in the industrial city of Ahmedabad during the 1950s and 1960s. The western Indian and specifically the Ahmedabad-centered chapters of this movement of managerial ideas and techniques were scripted through an interaction with a globally expanding network of expertise, science, and entrepreneurialism, specifically within the context of the Cold War. The paper studies the engagement of a prominent textile business family from Ahmedabad with experts like Rolf Lynton—a collaborator with ties to UNESCO and the Ford Foundation—and Kenneth Rice—an associate of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London. With the mediation of the Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (ATIRA), these collaborators devised a series of programs on "leadership training" that sought to work with industrial formations at both the executive and shop-floor levels and aimed to stimulate the efficiency of industrial production. The outcomes in varying ways developed sharp critical takes on the familial system of firm ownership and conduct prevalent in India. Further, these projects developed a calculus of shop-floor administration in relation to mechanized industrial work that purported to recreate a communal setup of laboring segmented under a hierarchy of "community sensitive" leaders. Such an administrative setup was also cast as an ideal routine suited to the presumed traditional moorings of the Indian laborer. Somewhat symmetrically, a proposition of reform was also posed at the highest echelons of the industrial world. I analyze how the experiment represented the compliance and collaboration of subjects at both these levels and how it derived its own model of "success." And even as early signs of participatory performance from laboring groups hardly silenced the rumblings of a more usual industrial discord, management began to morph into a more encompassing ideology of managerialism. In tracking this transformation, this paper also delves into how principles of management continued to reproduce their relevance by parallelly casting the postcolonial state and its developmental activities as a new area of focus, even as the more

12. Ahuja, "A Beveridge," 1–42.
13. Sarabhai et al., *Report of the Indian Productivity Delegation to Japan*, 67.
14. Ibid., 50.

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conventional visions and schemes of industrial management seemingly failed to yield desirable outcomes.

The paper concludes by looking at the institutions that such ideas and practices of management/managerialism promoted and engendered, at times programmatically and at times inadvertently—one offshoot being the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Ahmedabad (est. 1961). The history of management in India has often been studied by tracking the formation of management schools and the web of expertise in which they were embedded.[15] Following this framework, Arun Kumar, for instance, contends that the introduction of management education in India by American experts in the middle decades of the twentieth century contributed to the consolidation of American "soft power" within the Cold War context. Such arguments, despite indicating an important geopolitical dimension involving the rise of the United States in the twentieth century, present a somewhat singular diffusionist slant in their analyses. They do not indicate how managerial ideas and practices engaged the Indian commercial classes and their business practices. Moreover, such institutional histories of management do not focus on the specificity of managerialism as a form of knowledge and practice in terms of its relationship with histories of business and industrial reforms. Instead, the emphasis is entirely on the transnational itineraries of the experts involved and their practices of institution building. In the process, historical accounts have left underexplored the particular valence of the concepts that were deployed by the concerned experts to establish the meaning and value of managerialism.

In this paper, I chart a history of such ideas and concepts and the techniques they engendered, which came to play a foundational role in management's formative stage in postcolonial India. Further, in focusing on the ways in which business elites from Ahmedabad engaged with the terms of modern management, I show how these classes were actively pursuing their own industrial interests by forging collaborations and participating in the geopolitical bargain of expertise. In turn, the new and more general ideology of managerialism, I argue, also allowed them to reclaim their standing in the early postcolonial regime, which was showing an increasing preference for dirigisme and routine outbursts of labor activism.

Management and Development

On a broader scale, my paper is in conversation with the emerging body of scholarship on the history of post-independence India.[16] One particular strand of arguments charted by such scholarship is concerned with the early to mid-twentieth-century histories of neoliberalism. These arguments are intended to unsettle the teleological narratives associated with the conceptualization of the "Nehruvian consensus," which often assume a sharp contrast and a direct transition from the era of the developmental state to the inevitable and putative triumph of the market economy in 1991.[17] Nicole Sackley thus criticizes popular historical

15. Kumar, "From Henley," 366–400; Jammulamadaka, "A Postcolonial Critique," 23–42.

16. Such as, among others, Kudaisya, "'Reforms by Stealth'"; Menon, "Developing Histories"; Sackley, "The Road from Serfdom."

17. Sackley, "The Road from Serfdom"; Kudaisya "'Reforms by Stealth'"; Balasubramanian, "Contesting."

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and cultural narratives for the ways they cast the developmental state, inaugurated by the first prime minister of India—Jawaharlal Nehru—in 1947, as associated singularly with centralized economic planning, an overregulated private sector, an inefficient and corrupt public sector, and an inward-looking economy.[18] Meanwhile, the economic reforms mobilized in 1991 have been hailed as a moment of redemption for the Indian economy. In this teleological framing of "reforms," the developmental state is pitched in opposition to a market-friendly economy, and the gradual erosion of the former is perceived to be an indication of a universal shift toward neoliberalism.[19] Aditya Balasubramanian similarly challenges the aforementioned sweeping historical narratives by exploring in detail the history of the economic right in post-independence India, and the business and aristocracy backed political party it floated to challenge the state-led mandate of developmentalism.[20] While the party was short lived, Balasubramanian provides us with important insights on the global circulation of ideas emerging from the Mont Pelerin Society, especially within the context of the postcolonial global South. Drawing insights from such critiques, my paper is intended to challenge the binaries of the developmental and the post-reform eras. However, it does so by charting a somewhat different historical terrain. I focus on the early decades of independence and examine the modes and rationales through which the concepts and organizational techniques emerging from the world of private enterprise attempted to acquire a footing in the postcolonial project of nation building.

I thus show how these concepts simultaneously functioned as normative prescriptions for not just reforming the private firm but also the bureaucratic state. Managerialism, as Amy Offner argues, arrived in this world as a "creature of modern corporations," and by the mid-twentieth century, it was increasingly being promoted as a mode of governance that could be applied for generating efficiency in any organizational structure, from industries, to firms, to the bureaucratic state, and even to the abstract realm of society.[21] In this pursuit of organizational reforms, managerialism sought to reshape society and its institutions in the image of a private firm.[22] And it is by tracing this specific history of managerial ideas in the case of India that I wish to present a possible genealogy of binaries that have come to define the post-1990s world order, in which private enterprise represents the abstract promise of efficiency and the state, on the other hand, represents an embodiment of inefficiency.

It is important to highlight here that the colonial and the postcolonial state in India was hardly uninterested in the question of efficiency and/or productivity, given the increasing interest taken by the government in industrial production throughout the two world wars and since at least the time of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916–1918).[23] Moreover, articulations of private business interests like the "Bombay Plan" of 1944 also demanded that the state not rescind but rather serve such private interests through critical emendations of its

18. Sackley, "The Road from Serfdom."
19. Ibid.
20. Balasubramanian, "Contesting."
21. Offner makes a somewhat similar argument within the context of Colombia by showing how management was promoted as a "universal technique." Offner, *Sorting Out*, 144–171.
22. Ibid.
23. Anonymous, *The Indian Industrial Commission Report 1916–1918.*

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modes of functioning.[24] The formation of the National Productivity Council in 1958 further exemplified the Planning State's direct investments in questions of efficiency and industrial production.[25] However, it is important to note that the mid-twentieth-century managerial ideas that I discuss in this paper were nonetheless interested in maintaining the aforementioned binary plotting.

The managerial discourse's relevance was sought by presenting a less-than-optimal state bureaucracy that needed to absorb new ideas and techniques of bettering productivity and efficiency as espoused by private industrial enterprises. While engaging with the plotting of this binary, I also interrogate its claims about creating depersonalized organizational functioning through the logic of a professional manager and "leader" and the very conflicted reasonings involved in posing the realm of private industry as the more efficient counterpart of state institutions.

As noted earlier, the historical analysis of management in India has often adopted the critical lens of neocolonialism. Within this framework, the focus is primarily on the role of American experts in institution building in postcolonial India and their attempts at displacing the erstwhile British colonial influence.[26] The analyses have also sought to employ a postcolonial theoretical framework to argue that management schools in India historically began by mimicking Western models of pedagogy. Eventually, this mimicry led to the process of revivalism, which was concerned with finding "Indian" equivalents that were—not surprisingly—soaked in sweeping ahistorical cultural tropes of tradition and antiquity.[27] Building upon these conversations, recent scholarship has focused upon the tensions underlying the collaborations between the Indian elites and the American experts. The arguments rightfully challenge the top-down logic of knowledge transfer and thus reveal the contestations between postcolonial actors and the Western pedagogues.[28] This mid-twentieth-century process of knowledge transfer has been further critically analyzed by Lourens Van Haaften in his paper on the IIM in Ahmedabad.[29] He reveals how the field of management emerged as a "boundary object" in such exchanges between the Indian and American experts.[30] Management as a result could be fungible enough to adapt itself to the specific Indian political and social frameworks while still maintaining the same significations it carried within with the American context.[31] Thus, while the classroom adopted the Harvard case studies method, the cases often involved state-led projects of development, such as population control and infrastructure building. Such historical accounts help us to disaggregate the larger processes of knowledge transfer in the mid-twentieth century by highlighting important details through which management institutions established themselves, acquired legitimacy, and designed their

24. Chibber, *Locked in Place.*

25. See "Recommendations," in Sarabhai et al., *Report of the Indian Productivity Delegation to Japan*, 132. The report recommends the formation of the National Productivity Council.

26. Kumar, "From Henley."

27. Srinivas, "Mimicry and Revival." A discussion on the cultural tropes used by the revivalist ideas is found in D'Mello, "Management Education," M169–M176.

28. Haynes, "Harvard, the Case Study Method"; Haaften, "Management."

29. Haaften, "Management."

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

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curricula in India. However, by primarily anchoring their attention on the knowledge transfer question, the aforementioned arguments in some sense still continue to use "management" as a relatively underanalyzed term. They do not necessarily delve into the specific normative charge of "reform" it carried or interrogate the self-evidence of the claims to adaptability across multiple sites that allowed management to morph into managerialism.

A new addition to this engagement with the history of management education has been made by Dinyar Patel.[32] His article presents the historical case of commerce education in colonial India as an important antecedent of management education in mid-twentieth-century India. According to him, commerce education in early twentieth-century colonial India strove to create an interdisciplinary curriculum by focusing on industrial, technical, and management expertise. This reimagination of commerce education in the early twentieth century directly intersected with the *Swadeshi* sentiment of the time and, as a result, sought to cultivate "Indian" leadership for various business, commercial, and industrial enterprises. Through this account, Patel contends that business education in India never operated in a politically neutral environment; instead, it was always intrinsically tied to economic questions emerging from nationalism and its accompanying state-building aspirations. He also contextualizes the claims made by scholars of the mid-twentieth century who highlight the active participation of the IIM in the nation-building projects of post-independence India.

While taking cues from such emerging literature, my paper urges us to step away from the knowledge transfer question momentarily or even the focus on the possible nationalist/political lineages of management. In the process, I also hope to make an argument beyond the institutional and classroom accounts of management. Instead, I relocate the management problematic in relation to one of its core concerns: factory organization. Within the context of post-independence India, I thus focus on the early avatars of management in the form of human relations experiments in the factory sheds of Ahmedabad and the promises of reform and efficiency such experiments embodied. I further examine the articulation of these promises in the language of managerialism. Even when, in most cases, the experiments did not succeed in achieving their ascribed goals, managerialism continued to proliferate and reproduce its relevance in the form of experiments and institutions—often functioning as a solution in search of a problem. Here, I attempt to show how managerialism prospered in independent India by tautologically reading societies and institutions in the framework of organizations that needed the prescription of management to resolve their operations.

Business in Ahmedabad

In order to understand the historical conditions that shaped the development of managerial ideas and institutions in Ahmedabad, it is important to take into account the historical role that business has played in shaping the socioeconomic, political, and cultural makeup of the city. To sum up a rather complex history, Ahmedabad has been home to business families and networks that have operated since the early modern period. In late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century colonial India, these family-run enterprises transitioned from banking and mercantile operations to textile industries, and the city developed the reputation for being

32. Patel, "Making Swadeshi Managers."

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a thriving textile hub, earning itself the title "Manchester of India."[33] Ahmedabad also remained central to the nationalist churnings of the early twentieth century and ended up being the adopted home of M. K. Gandhi. While these business houses and their patriarchs often supported the colonial state, eventually, due to Gandhi's explicit patronage of big business coupled with interwar colonial tax policies, they shifted their alliance to the Indian nationalist movement.[34] Over the twentieth century, Ahmedabad had thus fostered a generation of business actors who actively adopted a distinctly public-facing reformist role in the political upheavals and institution-building practices of western India.

Yet, with the coming of the postcolonial state in 1947 and Nehruvian dirigiste proclivities, business entities were compelled to confront a series of regulations and restrictions. The Nehruvian state was part of the larger global trend of the time, which envisioned a strong state at the center and advocated state-led interventions and public ownership of heavy industries for mobilizing development.[35] While the state was not explicitly socialist in its framework, it did aspire to control the "commanding heights" of the economy. As historians and political scientists have argued, some business sectors flourished under this regime, especially because of personal favors, whereas others struggled and felt embittered. This bitterness especially acquired momentum in the late 1960s to 1970s, during the prime ministerial rule of Indira Gandhi, an era infamously remembered as the "Permit Raj" or "License Raj."[36] Overall, however, the developmental state's distinctions between the public and private sectors generated a distinct vocabulary of accountability.

While steel, iron, and large-scale infrastructure-oriented industries were identified as falling within the public sector, the commodity industries were placed within the private sector frame. The textile industry, which thrived during the colonial period and the subsequent global boom caused by the two world wars, had to constantly regulate its production in the post-independence period. Reports and speeches delivered at the Chamber of Merchants and Commerce in Ahmedabad and Bombay in the decade after independence reveal how the textile industrial community felt it was being reprimanded, attacked, and scrutinized by the new state.[37] Limits were placed upon the amount any particular industry could produce and the number and size of the machines it could use. Excerpts from various speeches given at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) annual meetings or discussions held at the Indian Merchants' Chamber indicate a deep sense of anxiety regarding the future of the private sector. In 1949, the chamber's annual meeting began on an ominous note: "The commodity markets are in a parlous condition. the cotton trade, which has a traditional place of honor, is in complete doldrums."[38] The FICCI annual meeting notes for that year

33. Spodek, *Ahmedabad.*

34. Markovits, *Indian Business.*

35. Jaffrelot, Kohli, Murali, "Introduction," in *Business*, 4–12.

36. Ibid.

37. "Economic Situation in the Country," A speech by the president of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, 1949, Indian Merchants' Chamber (1949–1960), Institutional Collections, S.No.199, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (hereafter NMML); see also Anonymous, *Gujarat Vepari Mahamandal: Gujarati and English Annual Report.*

38. "Economic Situation in the Country," A speech by the president of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, 1949, Indian Merchants' Chamber (1949–1960), Institutional Collections, S.No.199, NMML.

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expressed similar concerns. In all these discussions, the advocates of private capital were consistently attempting to situate the private sector at the center of debates on national development, productivity, poverty upliftment, industrialization, and economic prosperity.[39]

Within such a milieu, the commodity-oriented textile merchants-turned-industrialists of Ahmedabad were compelled to redesign their industrial practices. Diversification into chemicals and dyeing industries was one option. Another was to look toward new managerial ideas that came with the promise of reforming business practices, quelling labor unrest, and stimulating the overall productivity of the industrial firm. Moreover, managerialism allowed an imagination of governance, which opened up the possibility for the private sector to lay a normative claim over distinctly public concerns and policies during this era, at least on a discursive level.

It is within this unfolding context that we find male business heirs of Ahmedabad, appearing on the forefront of the managerial discourse in postcolonial western India. They straddled the spheres of both private business and state administrative offices, and in a postcolonial world fraught with Cold War politics, they attempted to seek the approval of American funding agencies and institutions.[40] As David Engerman argues, politics of aid in postcolonial India, despite its non-aligned commitments, were based on strategic alliances. Advocates of the public sector often reached out to the Soviet Union, and those championing the cause of private capital found financial support in North American organizations.[41] Management, with its then-recent history in the corporate organizations of the United States and its putative promises of efficiency and optimization, was identified as a new organizational norm for establishing modern capitalist democracies.[42] Funding institutions such as the Ford Foundation sought to actively promote the discipline of management in the newly decolonized nation-states, offering it as a model upon which democratic structures could be built across various scales. As the papers of the foundation suggest, this enthusiastic promotion of management was even carried forward by the American experts in Eastern Europe. For instance, in their proposals for establishing management expertise in Hungary and Yugoslavia during the 1960s and1970s, foundation experts explicitly identified management as an all-encompassing solution that could resolve quandaries related to economic decentralization, profits, labor productivity, and automation.[43] Consequently, they also claimed that management education provided "the best opportunities for more extensive and intensive contact between East and West in the private sector."[44]

In the following sections, I will study the claims upon which management and its managerialist extensions were developed in postcolonial India. I will highlight the larger

39. FICCI annual meeting speeches, 1949, filed in Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay (1949–1960), Institutional Collection, S.No. 199, NMML.

40. Engerman, *The Price.*

41. Ibid.

42. Gilman, "The Prophet," 109–132; Offner, "Management," in *Sorting Out*, 144–171.

43. "New York University–Karl Marx University: Management Game Program" and "International Teachers Program 1970-1971," Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (06200479), 1962 September–1971 September, Ford Foundation records, grants H-K, FA732D, reel 2634, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter RAC).

44. "International Teachers Program 1970–1971," Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (06200479), 1962 September–1971 September, Ford Foundation records, grants H-K, FA732D, reel 2634, RAC.

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transnational circuits within which these ideas were circulated and their use by certain prominent public figures associated with the textile industrial world of Ahmedabad. I will first lay out the context within which experts from the Ford Foundation engaged with issues of development in post-independence India and the intersections of such concerns with managerialism. This section will provide a glimpse into the ways in which certain management ideas had found their way into the larger discourse of development used by the Ford Foundation in the middle decades of the twentieth century. It will specifically underline the concept of leadership as articulated by the foundation officials and how it was deployed in their activities. The next section will then historically ground this concept of leadership within the human relations movement, which had gained significance primarily as a shop-floor management practice in the United States during the interwar years and had eventually acquired wider legitimacy as an industrial organizational approach during the post–World War II era. These two sections set the stage for the main arguments of my paper. They aim to provide an overview of how ideas with origins in factory supervision and industrial organization were eventually being used for addressing wide-ranging social and institutional issues. The third section then zooms in to examine a human relations experiment conducted in 1953 in the textile mills of Ahmedabad. This will be followed by a focus on the active role played by the commercial elites of Ahmedabad in promoting these management ideas. Finally, I will explore the dispersal of certain management ideas across various spheres of activities and, specifically, the way in which the proponents of such ideas gradually begun assuming the bureaucratic and developmental character of the postcolonial Indian state as a preferred problem to focus upon.

Management and the Concept of Leadership

The leading institutions of management in India were established during the 1960s with the guidance, expertise, and funding provided by an American philanthropic organization, the Ford Foundation. The foundation's activities in the rural community development programs of postcolonial India have been well documented.[45] What remains relatively understudied is how the debate and concerns regarding leadership and managerialism emerged simultaneously during this time, often leading to cross-fertilization between the managerial discourse of leadership and the rural development programs.

Douglas Ensminger, a rural sociologist by training, was the head of the Ford programs in India between 1951 and 1970. As one begins parsing his visions, one finds the concept of leadership at the core of his articulation of development. In the late 1960s, toward the end of his career in India, Ensminger retrospectively claimed that "most of the Foundation's activities in India are concerned with developing India's leadership, and many of our grants are specifically designed to produce better leaders. In attacking the leadership problem, we were typically responding to a situation in which a clear shortage of a specific capability could be identified."[46] Ensminger further elaborated upon this stance by stating that "a society changes

45. Such as Immerwahr, *Thinking Small.*
46. "Leadership in India," 1967, Ford Foundation records, reports 017708, MI 61-67, RAC.

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or remains static, develops or decays, progresses or retrogresses based on the orientation and the mass acceptance of its leadership."[47] However, according to him, the Five-Year Plan model had created a slow and heavily centralized state machinery that had thwarted the process of change.[48] In his account, the Indian Administrative Service, modeled after the colonial administrative body called the Indian Civil Service, was incapable of offering any competent leadership.[49] In the light of such observations, the incapacity of the business community also emerged as an important concern during both the Nehruvian decades and the Indira Gandhi–led era of the 1960s.

> The Congress Party's "Ten Points Toward Socialism," the proposed "Monopolies Bill" and the projected expansion of the public sector, all serve to create an atmosphere in which the businessman is increasingly on the defensive and is depicted as an anti-social figure. Within this kind of climate, business leaders have become cautious, embittered, resentful and more and more alienated from the policies advocated by the Congress Party and by the Central government.[50]

Such discontents with the official administrative machinery and the failure of business organizations had been expressed earlier by many of Ensminger's colleagues who traversed the postcolonial geographies of development. One of the most prolific writers on leadership during this period was Rolf Lynton, who could be understood to have in many ways prefigured Ensminger's concerns and emphasis on leadership. He worked with various organizations and institutions, including the Ford Foundation, during the 1950s and 1960s, and conducted extensive studies on leadership models in industries, shop-floor management, and rural development projects.[51] With help from UNESCO, Lynton had established an experimental institute called the Aloka during the 1950s to train individuals hailing from various regions of Asia and Africa. The institution was first set up in Sri Lanka, and eventually moved its premises to India.[52] The main goals of the institute were to teach participants the skills of efficient management—how to lead large technological projects or social/developmental organizations in both rural and urban areas of the global South in a "democratic fashion." According to Lynton, the main purpose for the experiment was to not replicate the top-down mandate of authority as exemplified by the Planning State and its bureaucratic machinery. The experiments instead prescribed an approach that allowed the participants to deploy technological projects by creating an "amenable" and "democratic" environment of leadership. Lynton was an advocate of what he called "sensitive leadership training."[53] The Aloka

47. Ibid.

48. "Importance of Understanding the Time and Process for Significant Change to Take Place," May 23, 1972, Douglas Ensminger oral history, Ford Foundation records, FA 744, box 1, folder A 21, RAC.

49. "The Problem Involved on India's Side in Assigning Creative People to Give Leadership to New and Innovative Programmes," May 23, 1972, Douglas Ensminger oral history, Ford Foundation records, FA 744, box 1, folder A 22, RAC.

50. "Leadership in Developing Society," 1967, Ford Foundation records, reports 017665, MI 65-9, RAC.

51. Lynton, *The Tide.*

52. Ibid.

53. "Developing Leadership Skill Through Sensitivity Training," Ford Foundation records, reports 017668, MI 65-12, 1965, RAC.

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programs aimed to train individuals to become leaders who were capable of being "sensitive to the needs and feelings of others," while also not veering into becoming "local demagogues."[54] According to Lynton, "Asia and Africa are, as it were, maps dotted with pools of resources that are not flowing."[55] The problem, he continued, was not with "under-developed nations, but under-developed people."[56] In his view, it was because of people who lacked leadership skills in both government and business organizations that resources had failed to reach the development projects. Moreover, Aloka diagnosed that the problem among the people in charge of the developmental projects was that they often resorted to submissive or rebellious behavior when it came to negotiating hierarchies. The institution instead claimed to cultivate among its participants the skills of cooperation. Lynton argued that modern societies and their complex socioeconomic worlds demanded a specialized form of knowledge that was explicitly concerned with the cultivation of leadership, and the field of management studies addressed this concern.[57]

Andrew Towl of the Harvard Business School, another Ford consultant and a pioneer of management education in the United States, also posed the framework of effective leadership within the vocabularies of management and democracy.[58] In a public speech at Ahmedabad in 1960, Towl declared that management was both a concept and a class.[59] As a concept, he considered management to be an essential norm for modern societies, and he claimed that "every man needed to understand management in order to become a man."[60] He elaborated upon this sweeping contention by stating that management as a concept encompassed the two most important tenets of modern societies: "specialization" and "democracy."[61] Meanwhile, the elemental milieu of democracy in this imagination was described as "the basic requirement of a living and vibrant democracy is a well-developed individual, who will decide matters not by authority or tradition handed down to him but by exercising his own intelligence and judgement."[62] Managerial training was important for generating leadership that was able to instill the growth of such democratic necessities and sustain the supposed modern culture of specialization. Towl's real concern, however, was to find a pedagogical method through which such leaders were created in developing nations at the level of both modern industries and administrative offices and thus to also create a managerial class. In fact, he claimed that once managerial leaders were established at the industrial and administrative levels, the society at large would inexorably benefit from their skills and democratic wisdom. Management, in such imaginations, became a specialized concept and logic through which contours of effective leadership for organizing the modern society were determined.

54. Lynton, *The Tide,* 9.
55. Ibid., 33
56. Ibid.
57. Lynton and Udai, *Training.*
58. "Management: Development of a Concept or a Class, Draft for a Speech at the ATIRA Conference, 1960," Ford Foundation records, reports 009221, RAC.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.

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The Group, the Leader, and the Field of Human Relations Management

The task for the leader in Lynton-style leadership training camps was to divide the assigned communities into groups, examine the behavioral patterns of each group, and coordinate and steer them in a particular way to achieve the desired ends. If the leader had to be cultivated pedagogically, the group too emerged in tandem, as a category through which the leaders gained their acceptance. However, words such as "groups" and "leaders" were not just self-explanatory terms used by the Ford Foundation consultants to describe their activities and interests. Instead, as Matthew Hull has argued, the vocabulary used by the foundation was embedded in a deeper genealogy that could be found in the processes that reorganized social sciences around the discipline of social and behavioral psychology in the twentieth-century United States.[63]

The group as a unit of psychological analysis first emerged out of studies that were conducted in the factory sheds to manage laborers and their work patterns.[64] The psychological evaluations of the workforce gave rise to the new field of human relations, which sought to create harmony and cooperation at various strata of the industry by classifying workers into systematic groups and cultivating leaders who could manage these groups in a democratic fashion. As is well documented, on a broader historical scale, human relations as a field has moorings within practices and ideas concerned with the organization of industrial spaces and labor efficiency in Europe and America. The theory of scientific management proposed by the American engineer Frederick Taylor set the most well known precedent for such discourses/practices on generating labor efficiency.[65] Through time and motion studies, Taylor specifically analyzed the laboring body and aimed to recalibrate the body in such a way that it functioned in the most optimal and productive manner.

The modern field of human relations management, with its specific focus on behavioral psychology, however, entailed a shift from the body to the mind of the laborer, and was consolidated as a management concern during the global upheavals and warfare of the twentieth century.[66] In the United States, the Hawthorne experiments, which bestowed Elton Mayo with the paternal originary title of the "founding father" of the discipline, were conducted at Western Electric's factory at Hawthorne, a suburb of Chicago in the early 1930s. To keep up the momentum of industrial production after World War I, the Hawthorne experiments aimed to develop a psychologically informed management practice.[67] These experiments attempted to understand the motivations, expectations, and group dynamics through which workers functioned in the production units of the industries, and the kind of leadership to which they responded.

The "group" and the "leader" as units of social analysis continued to acquire further momentum in the following decades. In the aftermath of World War II, the fear of an irrational

63. Hull, "Democratic Technologies," 257–282.

64. Rose, "Social Psychology," 116–149.

65. For further discussion, with a specific mooring within Marxist analysis, see the classic: Braverman, *Labour.* Also briefly discussed in Cowen, *The Deadly Life*, 91–129.

66. Rose, "Social Psychology," 116–149.

67. Dickson and Roethlisberger, *Management.*

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leader swaying the impulses of an irrational crowd had left social scientists perplexed. Emerging human relations scholars once again deployed the conceptual handles of the "group" and the "leader" to understand the social, arguing that the lessons learned from the factory shed also had the potential for reorganizing larger society. In this reconstruction, the behavior of groups and leaders could be studied, classified into patterns, predicted, and most importantly, corrected.[68] Such prescriptive behavioral models made it possible to tame the unpredictable behavior of the crowd into quantifiable groups that could be organized and supervised by a rational and democratic leader.[69]

As expected, the global experts who advocated leadership training (of various kinds) as a major intervention essential to strengthening the developmental trajectory of India were also deeply invested in the field of human relations, including Rolf Lynton, who worked at the Human Relations Department at the Harvard Business School. However, before the more general deployment of the human relations and leadership framework to the evaluation and prescribed redirection of the Indian postcolonial regime, the framework was already being tested in its more natural habitat, the industrial workplace.

In the following section, I will therefore focus upon an experiment on labor efficiency and human relations management that was conducted in the textile industries of Ahmedabad. I will then show how these experiments formed the palimpsest for the establishment of management as a professional discourse and a form of expertise in post-independence India.

The Alienated Family and the Intimate Laborer: Industrial Management in Ahmedabad

Some of the first experiments with modern forms of managerialism in postcolonial western India were conducted under the supervision of the London-based nonprofit organization, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in Ahmedabad. It is important to note that the presence of Tavistock in Ahmedabad did not necessarily suggest the continuing presence of an imperial agenda. Instead, the British organization at that time was also eager to be in the good books of the American funding agencies. This can be gleaned from correspondence between two Tavistock officials who were working in Ahmedabad in 1954.

> The overriding point we should like you to keep in mind is that the Tavistock's reputation will be decisively affected by the ultimate outcome in India, especially as our activities there will inevitably become widely known in America … As you know, the Ford Foundation has taken a major interest in the development of community projects in India, and there is no doubt at all that our chance of general money from them will be advantageously affected by the fact that we are doing industrial development work in the subcontinent.[70]

68. See for instance, Lewin, *Resolving.*

69. Ibid.

70. Eric Trist to Kenneth Rice, correspondences, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/B/2/4/1/3, Wellcome Library.

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The Tavistock Institute worked in collaboration with Human Relations scholars from the United States, and by the end of World War II, it emerged as one of the key institutions that offered management consultancy to business firms and industrial organizations. However, the early history of Tavistock was not explicitly concerned with industrial productivity. Instead, the institution was interested in regulating military personnel and their productive capacities. During World War II, the institute functioned as a psychiatric clinic for shell-shocked soldiers.[71] Tavistock incorporated the group studies method to map the behavioral pattern of fatigued soldiers and boost their morale, both during and after the war. The institution officially began functioning as an Institute of Human Relations in 1947 and shifted its focus from soldiers to laborers by experimenting with labor psychology in the coal-mining industry of Britain. In 1947, Tavistock also launched the journal *Human Relations* in collaboration with the University of Michigan's Research Center for Group Dynamics.[72] The journal primarily studied industrial and organizational concerns regarding workplace management from the perspective of applied psychology. Eventually, the institute began looking for more opportunities to expand its expertise and reputation, and the first, as Eric Trist—one of the founders of the institute—recalled, came not only from another industry, but also another "culture."[73] The Ahmedabad experiments at the textile mills, Calico Mills, launched Tavistock's trajectory within the global field of developmentalism. Trist asserted that the experiment aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of democratic organizations, wherein workers would themselves participate in decision making, take initiatives, and form small groups out of volition.[74]

Kenneth Rice, a group studies specialist from Tavistock, visited Ahmedabad in 1953 upon the request of Gautam Sarabhai—the chairman of Calico Mills and one of the heirs of the Ambalal Sarabhai textile empire—to study the working conditions in the family's nineteenth-century textile mills. Gautam Sarabhai described the immediate problem facing his company in the language of organizational and leadership failure. He lamented that the introduction of modern machinery in the mill had generated social and psychological problems for both managerial leadership and the workers.[75] The chairman of the Calico Mills was hopeful that a study of the management structure and behavior, accompanied by a study of workers and work organization, would create an amenable environment in the industry and stimulate the slacking production.

Kenneth Rice thus spent several months in 1953 in Ahmedabad conducting observations on the relationship between machines, laborers, and the managerial body. This collaboration eventually led to a report titled *Productivity and Social Organisation: The Ahmedabad Experiment, Technical Innovation, Work Organisation, and Management.*[76] In the Ahmedabad experiment report, Rice discussed how his primary goal was to organize the working sheds in the textile mills of Ahmedabad according to the then-new findings regarding the industrial

71. The history of the institution is discussed in Trist, Murray, and Trist, *The Social Engagement.* Also briefly discussed in Rose, "Social Psychology," 142.

72. Guillén, *Models of Management*, 238.

73. Trist, Murray, and Trist, *The Social Engagement*, 47.

74. Ibid.

75. Mentioned in Rice, *Productivity and Social Organisation*, 10.

76. Rice, *Productivity and Social Organisation.*

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space being a "socio-technical unit."[77] As the report suggested, the term referred to the field of study concerned with the interrelations of the technical and sociopsychological organizations of industrial production systems.[78] It rested upon the assumption that the increasing mechanization of industries and societies at large require *more*, rather than less, attention to the social dimensions of production system. Rice contended that if the psychosocial demands of the workforce were not adequately addressed, the workers' attitudes to task performance would deteriorate and eventually inhibit the "full realization of the technological potential."[79]

However, the moment Kenneth Rice set foot in Ahmedabad, he realized his task was a challenging one. He confessed in his field diary that he had completely underestimated the scale at which labor unrest had captured the city. There were thirty court cases mounted by the acting labor union against Calico, and not one had yet been resolved. Because of the closure of certain workshops that the new labor-saving machines had caused, the secretary of the union, in Rice's words, had "declared an open war" against management.[80] Gautam Sarabhai also had been adamant in his refusal of arbitration. The voluminous field notes that Rice made during his stay described the chaos that had overtaken the textile industries. As he observed, textile trade was in a complete slump—and by giving notice, mill owners could close whole shifts or whole sections.[81] Rice was notably shocked when he learned that the president of the most powerful labor union of Ahmedabad, the Gandhi-inspired Textile Labour Association (TLA), was the sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, Anasuya Sarabhai, who lived in a "multimillionaire's mansion."[82] Despite this imbroglio of kinship webs, Calico ended up being one of the few mills in postcolonial Ahmedabad that had refused to follow the terms of arbitration set by TLA. The managerial classes—at all levels, from the senior-most to the intermediaries—were ill-equipped, rife with internal conflicts and familial suspicion, and had more interest in "fighting with the union, than producing textiles."[83]

The Tavistock consultant attempted to process and sketch in his diary the almost hyperbolic state of conflicts that the textile world of Ahmedabad encapsulated, especially in the industries run by the Sarabhai family. "They all need the dead Gandhiji. The violent contrast in poverty and luxury, in Ambalal the tycoon, and his wife, the gentle and spiritual regressive, in the presidential aunt Anasuya and the luxury estate, air-conditioned managerial offices and the hot and sticky typist offices … The brother as the leader of the oppressive employers, the sister as the champion of workers."[84] Rice narrated these impressions to his stenographer in an apartment located in the mill compound—provided by the Sarabhai family and fully staffed

77. Ibid., 1–5.

78. Ibid., 3.

79. Ibid., 4.

80. "Field Note No.7, 27th October 1953," 1953, A. K. Rice's personal papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/C/1/10, Wellcome Library.

81. Ibid. For a detailed scholarly account and historical analysis of the relationship between the labor unions and the textile industries of Ahmedabad during this period, see Breman, *The Making.*

82. "Field Note No.7, 27th October 1953," 1953, A. K. Rice's personal papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/C/1/10, Wellcome Library

83. "Field Notes, 12th March 1953," 1953, A. K. Rice's personal papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/C/1/10, Wellcome Library.

84. Ibid.

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with an entourage of servants and cooks. His narration described the multiple paradoxes that he found himself confronted with in the industrial city.

The promise of modern managerialism was expected to disentangle such knots of contradictions—its cultivation of democratic leadership and effective group mobilization through the study of human relations was perceived to be a process through which the textile industries of Ahmedabad could redeem themselves. Rice, along with his colleague Eric Trist, spent several months in Ahmedabad, reorganizing labor work shifts, recalculating wages, restructuring shop-floor infrastructure, lighting, and seating arrangements, reshuffling managerial duties, and arbitrating between employers and union leaders. The logic of productivity and efficiency was emphasized by reconstituting the contours of both labor and existing management, and along with new professional managers and intermediaries, marketing and advertising departments were set up.[85] Rice and Trist sat through the Sarabhai family battles and meetings, documented their exasperation, and along with the textile industrialists of Ahmedabad, experimented with the principles of modern managerialism. As Rice described it, Gautam Sarabhai perceived Tavistock's visit as an "essential part of his education."[86] Both of them, according to Rice's field notes, spent hours discussing the semantics of leadership, the exercise of authority, the differences between democratic and autocratic positions, and the responsibility of making decisions, maintaining efficiency, and handling the manifestations of hostility in hierarchical and subordinate situations. While tension continued to brew underneath such seamless representations of collaboration and pedagogy, both the Tavistock representatives and Indian industrial elites continued to assert the significance of "solving" the industrial crisis in Ahmedabad through managerial experiments.

The goal for these experiments was to strengthen the executive command by reducing the multiple intermediary authorities that crowded the industrial strata and to develop a chain of trust across the newly designed hierarchies. In this imagination, the workers formed the starting point for Rice. He believed that if the workers were able to develop a sense of trust for their supervisors, eventually, the sociality of trust would expand to include the managing agent as well. The task for the Tavistock consultants during their time in Ahmedabad was to study the psychology of the workers and the managers and find democratic solutions that could instill trust and a sense of belonging across all the sections of the industry.[87]

The question of caste was broached as well and dissected through the organizational lens of efficiency. Rice observed that in many departments, workers belonging to different castes were assigned tasks that demanded them to work in proximity. For instance, management lamented that the quality of work produced in the winding and warping section had deteriorated significantly, hindering production at the preparatory stage itself. Tavistock investigated the complaint and found out that all the winders belonged to the oppressed caste. The warpers on the other hand belonged to the upper castes and had no respect for the winders. Meanwhile, the oilers, whose task was to oil the machines and supervise the winders and warpers, were

85. As a result, Tavistock was also interested in reorganizing the Sarabhai-run ad agency, Shilpi, established in 1946, with textile mills and chemical industries being its primary clientele.

86. "Field Notes, 18th March 1953", 1953, A. K. Rice's personal papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/C/1/10, Wellcome Library.

87. Most of the work at the shop-floor level was done through a local intermediary and a translator. The workers were provided with the incentive of extra money for talking to Kenneth Rice and his translator.

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also dalits. Caste resentment and tension within the winding and warping department, according to Rice, contributed to inefficiency. For him, the solution to stimulate efficiency was simple: regroup the workers in a way that such caste antagonisms on the shop floor were avoided and retrain the workers if the regrouping demanded different task assignments. However, Rice continued, the winders, in particular, were extremely anxious—they often complained about constantly being marked absent because of the assumption that their work would always be below the expected standard. This generated chronic insecurity on the shop floor, making it nearly impossible to work with the winding–warping department and thus undermining the desired simplicity of the organizational "solution" at hand.[88]

However, the Tavistock consultants considered the organizational observations they carried out in the weaving shed of the Calico Mills as their most successful intervention in Ahmedabad. To test their observations, they first organized an experimental weaving shed. Their immediate task was to make the weavers' shed their identity associated with the craft—as, according to Rice, the weaver in a mechanized factory, was no longer a weaver. It was the machine, instead, which performed the role of the weaver. In the experimental shed, new tasks were assigned to the erstwhile weaving laborers. They were regrouped according to these new tasks, and old titles were abandoned by assigning each group a letter of the alphabet (*A*, *B*, *C*, etc.). The alphabetical order in turn determined the hierarchical locations of the groups. Moreover, in this shed, new working hours were introduced intermittently, and workers, largely belonging to the upper castes, were made to work under different forms of supervision and timekeeping methods. A problem that hindered the logic of productivity, according to Rice's observations, was idle labor. Casual and uncontrolled time-out sessions, according to the Tavistock observers, were not compatible with the new automation and the precise control the machines demanded. However, Rice observed that workers in Ahmedabad expressed satisfaction and avoided taking breaks when they were made to work in small groups, as opposed to being structured in big groups or no groups at all. This conclusion was based on a claim that the workers were marked by a deep psychological loss, which began manifesting while they were making the transition from the village to the city. The observation further delineated this condition by citing that most of the workers in the textile mills of Ahmedabad had migrated from small villages to the city in search of jobs and were not used to living in the hyper-atomized and dispersed urban settings. According to the Tavistock official, the workers, as a corollary, exhibited well-being when they were made to function in small, intimate, and close-knit groups. These observations led to the conclusion that working in small groups cultivated the feeling of self-discipline among the workers, as they felt accountable to their groups.

> The traditional Indian village is divided into communities, which are basically task determined into families which undertake traditional tasks.… The family provides the individual with an important source of security and protection deriving from the membership of small

88. "Winding and Warping, Field Notes XI, December 20, 1953," "Working Notes VIII: Winding and Warping, January 28, 1954," A. K. Rice's personal papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/C/1/10, Wellcome Library; Also briefly suggested in Rice, *Productivity and Social Organisation*, 232. For an analysis of caste and its relationship with industrial labor in Ahmedabad, see Breman, *The Making*.

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> face to face internally structured home and work groups. Working and social life provide a consistent pattern of status and authority that gives everybody a place, a task, and a defined role. Industrialization and urbanization divides communities and families and thus destroy a part … of protection and security. It seems fair to conclude that the creation in the automatic shed of internally structured, internally led, relatively autonomous small work groups replaced something of what had been lost—that it was this replacement that the workers welcomed so spontaneously and worked so hard to retain.[89]

Rice qualified his conclusion by stating that the efficiency that such group reorganization generated provided pleasure to the workers and made it easier for them to adjust to their new task performances. We have no way of knowing exactly how the Tavistock expert arrived at this conclusion, as no reference to interviews or methodologies demonstrating the workers' response to the experiments was included in Rice's documentation.

Concern regarding such kinship affinities continued to percolate through all the organizational prescriptions. While in the case of the workers, familial bonds become a register for an organizational order, for the creation of managerial leadership, such kinship networks were thought to be an impediment. Rice criticized the managing agency system, which had come of age in colonial India to govern and finance Indian business companies and continued to exist in the early years of post-independence. This system of management, according to Rice, was embedded within an extensive web of family, and as a result, the relationships within the business organizations tended to be governed more by personal than by task considerations.[90] If group studies formed the palimpsest upon which organizational and leadership prescriptions were made, the unit of the family became one such group entity that invoked scrutiny and analysis. One of the fundamental questions that troubled Rice while contemplating families was "Why cannot a family change."[91] He further elaborated upon this query and outlined certain features: "The family acts as gangsters, offering each other mutual protection, against each other's violence…. The highest ethic of the familial nexus is reciprocal concern. Each person is concerned about what the other thinks, feels, does."[92] Despite such reservations, he observed that some Ahmedabad families had been at the forefront of economic transitions in the region, animating the processes of modernization. Such commercial families, in his narrative, had set in motion the first stages of transition from village crafts to urban mechanization. However, he continued, the changes in technological, economic, and social conditions that had taken place in the past years called for specialized and exclusive forms of knowledge and experience, and only those with training could undertake the new functions of management.[93]

> Unless highly trained specialists happen to be available among the members of a family, greater responsibility and authority have to be delegated to others…. Just as the machine has

89. Rice, *Productivity and Social Organisation*, 123.
90. Ibid., 129.
91. "Resistance to Change in Families: Praxis and Process," A. K. Rice's Calico Mills papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/B/2/4/1/2, Wellcome Library.
92. Ibid.
93. Rice, *Productivity and Social Organisation*, 130.

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> become the producer, and has limited the workers' freedom of action, so the demand for specific mechanisms for control and services has limited the manager's individual idiosyncrasy.[94]

This new phase of specialization was identified as the dawn of development, which endemically required the cultivation of what the Ahmedabad report called a "machine culture."[95] Management was construed as an organizational framework for maintaining this machine culture —ownership, a largely familial concern, and management, a professional form of expertise, had to be separated. "Ownership," a Tavistock essay argued, "is concerned with providing general means and conditions for the production of goods and services, management on the other hand, is concerned with the specific use of these means and conditions by a group of managers with different skills and responsibilities."[96] Most importantly, the essay continued, managerial skill involved "the capacity to take the stress of continuous working relations with a group of subordinates."[97] Such observations, it must be pointed out, were not articulated in an orientalist framework—which identified postcolonial India as some reservoir of traditional-familial ethic. Instead, the studies were distinctly cast in the twentieth-century parlance of modernist development, governed by stage theory, wherein the global pattern of capitalism had already set in motion similar changes in other regions. As Eric Trist stated, in Great Britain, too, families had often been the mainspring of industrial development. However, for him, there came a point in history, when capital grew beyond the capacity of one family.[98] In a discussion in London in 1956, with some of the acting members of the Sarabhai family present, Trist, however, ironically declared that the primary task for the Tavistock consultants in Ahmedabad had always been the protection of the commercial family and its interests—to equip them with the tools required to navigate the changing winds of capital in postcolonial India. Furthermore, he argued, one of the main findings of the Tavistock Institute through the experimental shed at Calico Mills was that families, despite their rigidities, constituted the potential for a restructuring of boundaries. Inefficiency, in such analyses, could be resolved not by identifying some flaw in a particular individual in a group, but by reorganizing the entire group to create productive psychological conditions.[99] Against a backdrop of growing resentment, tension, and resistance from the Sarabhai family, we find Trist continually asserting that managerialist interventions never aspired to completely disrupt the commercial familial institution. Instead, he makes the assurance that the focus on managerial expertise—and the separation between ownership and management it entailed—aimed to "improve the quality of family-life" and "secure its capital," not dissolve it.[100]

94. Ibid., 247.
95. Ibid., 240 247.
96. "Resistance to Change in Families: Praxis and Process," A. K. Rice's Calico Mills papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/B/2/4/1/2, Wellcome Library.
97. Ibid.
98. "Working Notes: Factors Influencing the Possible Future Organizations of the Sarabhai Concerns," E. J. Miller's Calico Mills papers, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations Collection, SA/TIH/B/2/4/2/3, Wellcome Library.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.

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Eric Trist continued to intermittently visit Ahmedabad to follow up on the institute's activities in the city. In 1973, almost two decades after the Calico experiments, the Human Relations pedagogue was disappointed to see that the institute's findings and prescriptions had not been able to mobilize long-term changes. While the TLA as an acting union had offered cooperation, the left-leaning unions had begun challenging the hegemonic status of the TLA and had developed a substantial objection to the Ahmedabad experiments. Trist finally declared in exasperation that it was not only the laborers, the managers too were unwilling to let go of their powers and familial bonds.[101] But importantly, such declared failures did not necessarily disrupt the normative charge upon which managerialism had acquired legitimacy. Instead, the discourse continually sought out new subjects and institutions to establish its validity and promise of efficiency.

Management and Its Interlocutors

The Ahmedabad experiment happened within a conducive environment where similar studies were being conducted by Indian interlocutors of the new management sciences. Foremost among them in the Ahmedabad context was Kamla Chowdhry.[102] Trained in psychology at the University of Michigan, she headed the Psychology Division, which eventually became ATIRA's Human Relations Division.[103] Established in 1947 with support from the new government, ATIRA sought to encourage cooperation among various private textile mills in Ahmedabad to promote industrial research. From its inception, ATIRA was invested in organizing studies on applied social sciences that were emerging within the field of industrial and organizational management. For example, when the idea of ATIRA was being discussed among the mill owners of Ahmedabad, Ambalal Sarabhai—the textile baron and the patriarch of the Ahmedabad-based Sarabhai commercial dynasty—stated rather explicitly that his group of mills (Calico Mills and Jubilee Mills) would be willing to participate in the new initiative only "if the scope of work included not just scientific and technological research but also work relating to the human factor and the introduction of social change."[104] Kamla Chowdhry's account of ATIRA further delineated the association's investment in the socio-technical approach toward management (like the Tavistock experiments that we have already discussed).[105] ATIRA, as a result, hosted many programs for engaging with the field of management, including some of Chowdhry's own organizational studies conducted in the 1950s in the factory sheds of Ahmedabad.

101. Trist, Murray, and Trist, *The Social Engagement*, 47.

102. Tumbe, "Kamla"; Francombe, "Propagating and Practicing."

103. Ibid. The University of Michigan—where Chowdhry completed her doctoral studies in 1949—was also home to Kurt Lewin's Research Center for Group Dynamics. The center, as noted earlier, played a key role in launching the *Human Relations* journal with Tavistock in 1947. One can speculate that Chowdhry would have been influenced by these activities while pursuing her studies. She also mentions in the introduction to her book that Norman Maier (another significant human relations scholar of the time) was her teacher at Michigan.

104. Chowdhry, *Change-in-Organisations*, 136.

105. Ibid., 137. Discussion on management programmes undertaken by ATIRA in the 1950s can also be found in the association's conference proceedings; see, for instance, ATIRA, *Proceedings.*

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However, as in the case of the Tavistock experiment, Chowdhry's own evaluation of her endeavors was very clear: "The experiments had ended in 'failure.'"[106] As she recalled, her initial experiments were exclusively concerned with shop-floor management. The experiments sought to map and adjust the "fatigue curves" of production workers and evaluate the role of rest pauses in increasing efficiency by creating a psychologically amenable environment. She noted exasperatedly that these endeavors were ineffective, as it was impossible to separate workers in distinct groups and ensure that these groups functioned as experimental units in themselves. She provided another example of how in one instance, the "experimental group" that was given a cup of tea during their rest period inevitably ended up sharing the tea with the so-called "normal" group, which did not have the scheduled rest period.[107] Such interactions among workers across the groups made it impossible to measure and optimize efficiency in coordination with the scheduling of rest periods.

In another instance, she explicitly deployed a human relations framework to discuss the organizational structure of two mills across various levels of middle management and supervisory staff.[108] According to her, the mill that only focused on the "technical" aspects of industrial organization did not perform well. However, the mill that was able to combine "close human association" with the technical aspects was able to maintain efficient production. Her essay reiterated the socio-technical approach of being attentive to social relations in a hierarchical-industrial enterprise.[109] Without providing any clear prescriptions for reorganizing work relations, the essay ended on a somewhat tautological note, claiming that efficient reorganization can be achieved by paying "greater attention to problems of organization and organizational practices."[110]

Chowdhry explained her failure and inconclusiveness in these earlier experiments by observing that there was an unreflective application of concepts from American organizational theories to very different Indian realities.[111] In a quest to gain a better understanding of organizational matters, she left ATIRA in 1961 and joined the Harvard Business School to work under Fritz Roethlisberger, a professor of human relations.[112] She claimed to have returned to India from Harvard with a "greater understanding" of organizational matters.[113] But it is unclear to us whether any of this new understanding was reapplied to the same industrial context and factory sheds in which she had developed her initial observations. Instead, what one can discern from the contents of her publications is that the new management techniques of group studies and leadership were now being used to assess new objects of management. In the 1960s, as she moved on to become the program coordinator of the IIM in Ahmedabad (established in 1961), we find her writing less about industrial matters and more about issues concerning organizational management in public administration and public institutions of India. For example, in one of her essays, she studied experiences of

106. Chowdhry, *Change-in-Organisations*, vi.
107. Ibid., v–vii.
108. Chowdhry and Pal, "Production Planning."
109. Ibid., 15–16.
110. Ibid., 16.
111. Chowdhry, *Change-in-Organisations*, vi, viii.
112. Ibid., vii.
113. Ibid.

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management in private industrial enterprises of the United States and India to understand the management concerns of public universities in India.[114] In the article, she specifically proposed the need to transfer management insights from the industrial world to the administrative world of public institutes. In another essay, she analyzed the management structures of textile factories in Ahmedabad, along with ATIRA's management practices, and presented them as templates for working out an efficient model of institution building and organizational management in post-independence India.[115] Many of these articles were also being published in the *Indian Journal of Public Administration*.[116] Broadly, what one can find from these publications is that her writings repeatedly discussed the need for creating better and more efficient public administrators by using insights and examples from cases relating to executive business leadership and/or larger organizational concerns of industrial enterprises.

This snippet of Chowdhry's career when read together with our account of the Ahmedabad experiment evinces one probable trajectory. While management, especially its human relations–oriented knowledge and practices, remained largely ineffective in bettering Ahmedabad's factory and industrial environment, the relevance of such knowledge and practices was nonetheless being replotted around and through other fields, specifically, public administration.

This becomes even clearer when we look at the career of Vikram Sarabhai—the brother of Gautam Sarabhai and a key collaborator of Kamla Chowdhry who went on to become India's most celebrated technocrat. In the early 1950s, Sarabhai was closely following the workshops and camps that were being conducted on democratic leadership and organizational management across India. The Aloka experiment run by Lynton had caught his attention. He noted enthusiastically, "the Aloka experiment is of great significance to all those who were interested in the problem of change in industry, agriculture, public administration, and education."[117] In 1956, Sarabhai invited Rolf Lynton to ATIRA to hold classes on leadership training and human relations. The participants were drawn from local industries and comprised professionals who had spent several years in "managerial jobs and were to now occupy leadership in their organizations."[118] However, in the foreword that Sarabhai wrote for Lynton's book, he very openly stated that Lynton's courses in ATIRA had largely been ineffective, as they failed to invoke a positive response from the participants.[119] Yet, rather paradoxically, this did not dampen Sarabhai's enthusiasm for the promise of such management education.

Vikram Sarabhai—who later was one of the founders of the IIM in Ahmedabad—was one of the most vocal admirers of management and its leadership pedagogies within the Ahmedabad circle of commercial elites. In his public lectures, he often recounted his biographical trajectory and explained how it seemed to have led him directly to the world of management. While trained as a scientist, upon his return from Cambridge in the United Kingdom—where he pursued his PhD in physics—Sarabhai found himself immediately in charge of the multiple

114. Chowdhry, "Organisational Innovation in Universities."

115. Chowdhry, "Institution Building."

116. Such as Chowdhry, "Developing Administrators for Tomorrow"; Chowdhry, "Union Public Service Commission", in *Change-in-Organisations*, 14–28 (originally published in the *Indian Journal of Public Administration*); Chowdhry, "Institution Building."

117. Sarabhai, "Foreword," in Lynton, *The Tide of Learning*, ix–x.

118. Ibid., ix.

119. Ibid., ix–x.

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chemical and textile industries owned by his family. According to his biographical reflections, the turning point in his professional career came during his time in ATIRA. As the director of the institute, he began developing "a deep sense of concern" regarding questions of administration.[120] According to him, one of the main problems restricting the growth of industries was the pervasive sense of animosity toward the arrival of new machines—among both the laborers and the technicians. He noticed that despite the installation of modern technologies in the mills of Ahmedabad, there was reluctance in using these machines. He recalled that while the machines were present in the factory, all the automatic controls had been disconnected and "two new corks" were being consistently manipulated.[121] This realization piqued his curiosity, and upon further investigation, he arrived at the conclusion that "the biggest obstacles did not arise from the lack of financial resources or technical knowhow, but from social factors inhibiting the introduction of these things."[122] Echoing Chowdhry's views, Sarabhai stated that such observations led him to acknowledge the defining role of human behavior and psychology in organizations.

By the early 1950s, Vikram Sarabhai and Kamla Chowdhry had therefore become crucial exponents of management ideas. In fact, in 1957, Sarabhai and Chowdhry headed the official Indian delegation to Japan to study new management techniques that were being used to stimulate production in Japan's industrial enterprises.[123] For the Indian delegates, management and organizational reforms as practiced in Japan could help industries in India to increase their productivity and achieve the national goals set by the Planning State.[124] The report summarized lectures, talks, and meetings with leading business figures of Japan and discussed their engagements with the question of industrial productivity.[125] As the *Report of the Indian Productivity Delegation to Japan* suggested, human relations continued to be an integral component in this transnational circulation of management knowledge. In the report, Taizo Ishizaka, a leading industrialist of Japan—associated with the Tokyo Shibaura Electric Co. Ltd. (now Toshiba Corporation)—highlighted some of the key features of the "new management philosophy" of the era.[126] According to him, "the first one is human relations, the second is the public nature of business, the third is exchange and cooperation."[127] In such iterations, human relations as a field continued to be enthusiastically presented as a method that could harmonize the interests of workers and capital and "democratize" organizational hierarchies.[128] Simultaneously, management was presented as a public-minded profession

120. Sarabhai, *Control and Management*, 1.

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid.

123. See the official 1957 Indian government report: Sarabhai et al., *Report of the Indian Productivity Delegation to Japan.*

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid. According to the report, these new ideas, debates, and discussions on the issue of industrial productivity had acquired momentum in Japan under the broad rubric of a movement that identified itself as the "Productivity Movement." This movement also led to the establishment of various regional productivity centers in Japan.

126. Ibid., 40–47.

127. Ibid., 41.

128. Offner presents a similar framework for analyzing human relations in the United States. Offner, *Sorting Out*, 149.

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that could have a much larger social, political, and even national role to play in society beyond the industrial enterprise.[129]

Importantly, in such official Indian government reports, we find figures such as Vikram Sarabhai and Kamla Chowdhry navigating the world of private businesses/industries and the world of public policy with remarkable dexterity. They became interlocutors through which ideas emerging from the transnational circuits of private industries were being translated in the language of public policy, public administration, and nation building. Here, of course, the irony cannot be overlooked that both Sarabhai and Chowdhry had not long before been witness to the apparent shortcomings of the various organizational experiments that sought to remodel the textile industry's concerns in Ahmedabad through the new knowledge and practice of human relations.

Across the 1960s, Vikram Sarabhai's public lectures continued to assert the need for managerial expertise in India. As discussed earlier, his own professional trajectories and experiences often framed the arc of his lectures. According to Sarabhai, when he was invited to serve the government by taking over the chairmanship of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1966, he was once again confronted with administrative challenges. However, this time around, as opposed to his administrative role in ATIRA, he found himself in charge of a colossal organization controlled entirely by the Indian government. Here we find him specifically reflecting upon the need for management expertise to not only engage with issues of private industrial enterprises but also with the public sector and state administration. Through the dissemination of managerial pedagogy, one of his desires, he claimed, was to make the government perform the role of an entrepreneur.[130] In this framework, the public sector had to ensure that financial profit continued to be the orienting logic for its operations, a goal that was often compromised, according to him, in bureaucratic settings. Managerial reforms, for him, involved the emphasis on assigning leadership roles to professionals who had specialized training in their fields, an overall decentralization of power and democratization of hierarchies, and the introduction of principles of competition.[131]

The logic of the family meanwhile continued to be a leitmotif around which narratives of managerial reform were articulated. While not directly alluding to his own position as the son of an affluent mercantile family of Ahmedabad, Vikram Sarabhai argued how business enterprises have for generations been owned by kinship networks.[132] In his vision of managerialism, family became an overbearing encumbrance, an excess that needed to be contained within the private realm of the domestic household, with all its passions and affects. In an almost oedipal move, Sarabhai's speech declared the demise of the patriarch—his authority being displaced by the arrival of the modern managerial expert. Concomitantly, to ensure that the state does not reproduce the mistakes of the commercial dynasties, Sarabhai asserted that the state-run public enterprises also must learn from the failures of the private sector, that is, ownership and management must be separated. In doing so, he metaphorically identified the

129. Ibid.
130. Sarabhai, *Control and Management*, 6.
131. Sarabhai, *Science Policy*, 3-8.
132. Sarabhai, *Control and Management,* 10.

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state as a family who owned businesses and had bred sons, in the form of bureaucrats, who were eventually appointed to manage the public enterprises.[133]

Managerial Solutions and Bureaucratic Discontents

We can discern from the professional trajectories of Sarabhai and Chowdhry that the normative rationale of management was gradually radiating out of the realm of private industries to other more public concerns. As Sarabhai's lectures and Chowdhry's writings reveal, attempts were being made to translate management's promise of efficiency in the public realm of administration as well. Management was often posited as an answer to the disenchantment associated with bureaucracy. For instance, a 1953 issue of the All India Congress Committee's (AICC) *Economic Review* called the Indian administrative machinery "a jungle" that was inherited from the "foreign rulers."[134] The essay remarked that according to Paul Appleby (the Ford Foundation consultant for India on administrative reforms), the Indian administration "has too much feudalistic heritage" and "too little human relations orientation."[135] A different *Economic Review* issue from the same year contended that democratic governments must develop a standard of efficiency and leadership to which the public can hold the governing machinery accountable. The essay further stated that while experiments on efficiency and leadership were being tested in private textile industries, the government had been slow to learn from its mistakes.[136] Such concerns about administration in both the public and private sectors thus generated a matrix of institutions and activities that were explicitly concerned with the training and dispersal of human relations studies, leadership programs, executive decision making, and the accompanying managerial reforms. One offshoot of the circuit of such ideas and practices was the development of the IIM. In the late 1950s, while the Tavistock consultants were working in Ahmedabad, Douglas Ensminger from Ford was busy campaigning and gathering funds for the establishment of management institutions in India.[137]

In April 1949, the All India Council for Technical Education had already appointed a committee to examine the question of education and training in industrial administration and business management.[138] Initially, the Indian government looked to the British administrative staff college at Henley-on-Thames in England for inspiration. The Henley staff college was built toward the end of World War II for training government servants and equipping them with leadership skills. Under the chairmanship of T. T. Krishnamachari, then the Indian minister of commerce and industry, a proposal was made to establish a similar administrative staff college in Hyderabad. The purpose of the college was to bring together "men and women

133. Ibid., 11.

134. Anonymous, "Clearing the Administrative Jungle," in *AICC Economic Review,* 4.

135. Ibid.

136. Anonymous, "Efficiency and Its Measure," in *AICC Economic Review,* p. 5.

137. "The Ford Foundation and Management Education in India," 1972, Douglas Ensminger oral history, Ford Foundation records, FA 744, box 2, folder B 7, RAC.

138. "Administrative Staff College," 1954–59, Kasturbhai Lalbhai papers, file no. K182A, National Archives of India.

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from different walks of life such as private industry, commerce, and public service—facilitate the maximum interchange of ideas and experiences, and enrich the personalities of the participants leading to greater administrative efficiency in individual enterprises and higher productivity at the national level."[139] The planning committee of the institution was composed of members such as Ambalal Sarabhai and G. D. Birla, who also happened to be the primary funding source for the college. The curriculum sought to introduce the new principles of group dynamics to an already established team of administrators and generate pedagogical discussions around the complex interrelations of trade unions, industries, and local and central governments and how they impacted the execution of managerial authority. Moreover, new specialized managerial branches on marketing and finance were added to the course work. After almost a decade of planning, the administrative staff college was built in 1957 and identified itself as an "all India centre for management development."[140]

The institution followed the British staff college structure in its entirety—and even ensured that the first administrator of the college was a retired army chief, like its counterpart in England. The pool of students it attracted came from various institutions, including the civil services, armed forces, education, local government, and trade unions. Simultaneously, many small and big industrial houses across India sent their managers and business heirs to the new college. In its early years, the Ford Foundation offered assistance to the institution. However, the foundation soon became vocal in expressing its criticism of the staff college. Ensminger found the staff college model to be ineffective and outdated.[141] According to him, the college continued to reproduce bureaucratic logic, as the institution was primarily concerned with training an already established team of public servants. The Ford Foundation instead began asserting the need to develop a separate institution that followed the American model of expertise, wherein younger generations from the beginning of their higher education years were trained in the language of leadership and decision-making skills. Ensminger further argued, with some frustration, that the staff college's interest in private enterprises had become marginal over the years, and instead it ended up focusing primarily on training civil servants. As a result, it left the private offices devoid of efficient administrators. Management was presented in such articulations as a field that enabled generation of new ideas and allowed the development of democratic values, while ensuring that the quest for efficiency was not compromised. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, represented for Ensminger a structure shackled by rules, nepotism, and colonialism.[142] The criticism pitched an antagonism between an apparently outdated British model of modernism that had failed to keep up with its promise of rational governance, and an American model of corporate efficiency that could potentially replace the inept structures of (Weberian) bureaucracy.

The IIM emerged out of such debates on efficiency, leadership, and bureaucracy and sought to address the limitations of the staff college. The first IIMs in India were established in Calcutta and Ahmedabad in 1961. Kamla Chowdhry and Vikram Sarabhai played a central role in setting up the institute in Ahmedabad and helming it during its initial stage in various

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid.

141. "The Ford Foundation and Management Education in India," 1972, Douglas Ensminger oral history, Ford Foundation records, FA 744, folder B 7, box 2, RAC.

142. Ibid.

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capacities. The focus for the IIMs was not on the private sector alone. Instead, as an IIM Ahmedabad grant report suggested, one of the primary goals for the new institution, along with training managerial experts for the private sector, was "to assist in the application of modern management principles in all sectors of the economy."[143] This claim was reiterated a decade later by Ravi Matthai, who was invited by Vikram Sarabhai to be the director of the IIM Ahmedabad in 1965. Matthai specifically defined management as an applied form of knowledge that "integrates hierarchical levels of activity in a system to achieve the system's objective."[144] Importantly, according to him, "these ideas can be applied to any sector of organised activity to change and improve performance."[145] Matthai elaborated upon this definition by underlining the role of managerial leadership and the importance of its problem-solving approach in various fields, spanning across rural development, agricultural development and policy making, public administration, the banking sector, and so on.[146] In this explanation, we find a clear inclination toward a universalization of management in the form of managerialism, wherein certain notions of efficiency, leadership, and specialization—fundamentally concerned with business and industrial enterprises—present themselves as universal techniques for organizing various aspects of the society.

Meanwhile, by the time these new institutions of management were established, the textile mills of Ahmedabad had lost their standing in the imagination of the developmental economy. The rise of the power-loom sector had significantly altered the fate of the textile industries—generating a steady decline in the composite textile mills since the 1960s and eventually culminating in mill closures in the 1980s.[147] While the textile industrialists of the city continued to play a role in the administration and funding of these new institutions, the programs for studying efficiency and productivity that were being introduced in IIM at the time were gradually shifting focus to address very different objects—whether it was the infrastructural realm or, more importantly, the agricultural realm, which had come into the spotlight during the 1960s owing to the "Green Revolution." With funding from USAID, new agro-business and rural cooperative management training programs were introduced to conduct research on managerial issues generated by the processes of "farm mechanization."[148] Simultaneously, a rural analogue of managerialism was being designed to address the issues of agricultural productivity and efficiency in the rural economy. These activities eventually culminated in the formation of the Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) in 1979, in the neighboring agrarian and dairy-producing region of Anand.[149] In 1980, Michael Halse, who had helped set

143. "Brief Grant History," Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (06200479) 1962 September–1971 September, Ford Foundation records, grants H-K, FA732D, reel 2634, RAC.

144. Ravi Matthai, "Management and a Nation's Need," 4, occasional speeches and writings, Ravi J. Matthai Collection, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad Archives.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid.

147. Roy, "Development or Distortion?," 897–911.

148. "Brief Grant History," Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (06200479) 1962 September–1971 September, Ford Foundation records, grants H-K, FA732D, reel 2634, RAC. Also, mentioned in Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, *Ninth Annual Report*.

149. Many case studies for the new rural management institution were designed under the consultancy of Rolf Lynton (mentioned in the IRMA textbook titled *Cases in Rural Management 4: Village Development Initiated by Outsiders*, Anand: IRMA, 1990).

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up the Agriculture and Cooperatives group at IIM Ahmedabad in the 1960s, hailed "rural management" as a new developmental discipline. According to him, this new discipline sought to promote efficiency, productivity, and professional leadership in rural economies by merging the collective ethic of cooperatives with the operational culture of private business enterprises.[150]

The institutionalization of management education also opened a new trajectory of elite middle-class professional ambitions in postcolonial India. The aspirational value associated with specialization in industrial and managerial expertise was encapsulated by Gulzarilal Nanda—who went on to become the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission—in a speech at a conference on textile industries in Ahmedabad in 1951, a decade before the formation of the IIMs. "The government when it desires can steal the wealth of the capitalist, but this cannot be said of knowledge."[151] According to him, the technician and the manager were the embodiment of this knowledge, upon which the future of national productivity depended. He added, "There was no place for class struggle in this country … there are only two classes in the country, one working for the nation, and the other which did not do anything."[152] In this hypernationalistic rhetoric, the new intermediary class of (industrial) experts was presented as ideal citizens.

Conclusion

An obituary dedicated to Vikram Sarabhai in 1972 stated, "One of the most outstanding contributions of Dr. Sarabhai is the fact that he introduced the operating culture of the world of private businesses and industries into many areas of governmental and public activity."[153] By doing so, the eulogy continued, "he did not reject his (commercial) inheritance. Rather he assimilated it and sublimated it."[154]

In this essay, I hoped to illustrate how in the formative years of the new independent state, private capital and its familial and industrial sites of production attempted to redefine themselves through the framework of management and managerialism. In the process, I have shown how they concomitantly circulated new rationalities of leadership and democratic governance, even as such rationalities stopped well short of producing desired outcomes. I have further demonstrated how the discursive charge of articulating managerialism in postcolonial India gradually moved toward the construction of extant bureaucratic organizations as non-democratic and inefficient state-run institutions.

Finally, this history of management ideas—and their eventual articulation as a universal technique that could be used for "organizing" various aspects of both the state and

150. Halse, "A New Institute of Rural Management." Michael Halse was a Harvard Business School graduate and worked closely with Ford Foundation during the early years of IIM in Ahmedabad. He also worked with the National Dairy Development Board in Anand as a FAO advisor.

151. Anonymous, "The Eighth All India Textile Conference," 514.

152. Ibid.

153. Krishan Sondhi, "Dr. Vikram Sarabhai," 17.

154. Ibid.

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society—opens up a possible trajectory for historians to study the ways in which certain notions underlining the claims of contemporary neoliberal forms of governance gained prominence over the second half of the twentieth century, especially the contested distinctions that have been drawn between the state, which is imagined to be inefficient, and the private sector, which is considered to be efficient.[155] My paper has shown how one can trace the early formations of this binary in mid-twentieth-century India by examining the conflicted rationales posed by ideas emerging from the field of management.

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155. As scholarship has shown, the larger process of neoliberalism does not necessarily entail the rolling back of the state but rather rolling out of a particular kind of a state. Within the context of this paper, it would mean that the "efficient–inefficient" binary between private and public sectors would push (normatively) the state to behave more like a private enterprise. For example, the Indian state has recently proposed the policy of "lateral entry," which seeks to promote the appointment of professionals from the private sector within the bureaucratic institutions of the state.

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