A Product of ‘His’ Time?
Exploring the Construct of the Ideal Manager in the Cold War Era

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Abstract
Managers are often measured against an ideal that is treated as a tangible object which is stable across generations. It is the contention of this paper that the ideal manager is, in fact, a social construct that is a product of the political and social context within which it exists. Different periods in time create unique typifications of the construct, and the ideal manager is not independent of its environment. The socially constructed nature of the ideal manager will be illustrated through the analysis of the construct at one specific point in time, the internal Cold War in the years following the Second World War and ending in 1960. While widely studied in most disciplines, the Cold War has been largely ignored in the management literature, and therefore provides us with a unique perspective from which to assess the impact of context on the standard to which managers are held.

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Introduction

The efficient manager is an enterprise possession whose value is incalculable. He can make even poor organization structures operate effectively; his vision of objectives to be attained is often a substitute for more formal planning and control; he unerringly selects and develops competent subordinate managers; he is an inspiration to all employees; he can and does carry the weak and mediocre managers; and in the meantime he takes pains to ease his burdens by improving the quality of professional management within the firm as far as his efforts can reach. This kind of manager makes the difference between a brilliantly successful firm and a desultory enterprise about to expire (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968: 433).

As the opening quote so vividly demonstrates, the expectations placed on an individual filling a managerial role in an organization can be high. The ideal manager may be expected to possess a broad range of complex knowledge, skills, and abilities and be capable of applying them effectively in a variety of situations. Likewise, the influence of a manager on an organization's success, or lack thereof, may be deemed significant (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968). Yet, for all the acknowledged importance of the position itself, the image of the manager to which individuals aspire has been accepted as the ideal with relatively little questioning on the part of both managers and the organizations for which they work. The ideal manager is a social construct that is a product of the political and social contexts of the time in which it was developed and formalized (Kelley, Mills, & Cooke, 2006). There seems to be little awareness, however, as to this influence on the concept of the ideal manager, and a lack of understanding that our concept of the ideal manager is not universally applicable to all organizations at all times (Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998). Ignoring the historical socially constructed aspects of the role places us in danger of accepting, and expecting, characteristics whose importance and effectiveness are tied firmly to the environment in which they were originally recognized, and hold no useful, or even a detrimental, role in the context of the present and the future (Wren, 2005).

As a social construct heavily influenced by its political and social contexts, the notion of the ideal manager is continuously redefined as the context in which it exists changes. Through an analysis of the ideal manager as it existed within a particular context, and how that existence differed from an earlier context, we can reveal both its socially constructed nature and the sociopolitical influence of the context itself. For a dramatic illustration of this point, we have chosen the Cold War, a critical, yet oft-neglected, period during which we saw the formalization of management as a science and the formal definition of the managerial role (Burnham, 1941). While its influence was overarching, the effect of the Cold War had been largely ignored within the management and organizational theory literature until recently (Cooke, 1999; Cooke, Mills, & Kelley, 2005; Grant & Mills, 2006; Kelley et al., 2006; Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998; Mills, Kelley, & Cooke, 2002). This pervasive and forming influence provides us with a unique opportunity to analyze the ideal manager with a fresh perspective.
Prior to the Second World War, the sheer fact that a man, and it was always a man, had risen to a managerial position proclaimed his superiority (Bendix, 1974). Achieving the role of manager was considered a testament to a man’s endowed leadership traits (Terry, 1956) and his survival of the trials of earlier positions (Koontz & O’Donnell, 1968). Management itself was neither a science nor a discipline, and training and development specifically for managers was unheard of (Bendix, 1974; Mee, 1951; Terry, 1956). During and following the Second World War, a number of factors coincided to play integral roles in the development of management as a science (Burnham, 1941; Drucker, 1993; Robin, 2001), and as an extension the formalization of the managerial role. Some of these, such as the mass production and supply required in support of the Second World War, the Marshall Plan, and the development of post-war economies (Drucker, 1973; Koontz & O’Donnell, 1968; Wren, 2005), the rise of human relations as the answer to all of an organization’s problems with its workers (Whyte, 1959), and the gradual yet short-lived acceptance of the labour union during the years of the Great Depression (Rachleff, 1998) have been widely recognized as key contributors. An all-encompassing element of life following the Second World War (Whitaker & Hewitt, 2003), the Cold War, however, seems to have been both purposely and unconsciously ignored in the analysis of management as a discipline and the development of the manager (Cooke, 1999; Cooke et al., 2005; Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998; Mills et al., 2002).

The main source of information about the typification (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) of the ideal manager to be studied in this paper will be fourteen management textbooks from business academics who had an influence on the field during the Cold War era. Drawing from available sources, these textbooks were written by leading management theorists, such as Peter Drucker (1954, 1973, 1977) and presidents of the Academy of Management (AoM), including Alvin Brown (1953) – AoM President, 1957; Keith Davis (1957; & Scott, 1959) – AoM President, 1964; Ralph Davis ( & Filley, 1971) - AoM President, 1948; Mike Jucius (1967) - AoM President, 1960; Harold Koontz ( & O’Donnell, 1968) – AoM President, 1963; Dalton McFarland (1964) – AoM President, 1965; John Mee (1951) – AoM President, 1952; Bill Newman ( & Summer, 1967) – AoM President, 1951; Jack Spriegel ( & Schultz, 1941) – AoM President, 1954; and George Terry (1956) – AoM President, 1961. These scholars played a leading role in the development of management education, and were part of a select group of leading business educators (Grant & Mills, 2006).

These textbooks acted as both a formal repository of the newly created social construct, and contributed to the development of the social construct itself as they assumed a fundamental role in the education of future managers (Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998). Analysis of the textbooks in conjunction with the prolific amounts of research conducted on social and political aspects of the Cold War will allow us to assess the impact of the Cold War on the social construct of the ideal manager.

The Ideal Manager

The social construct of the ideal manager holds a powerful thrall over organizations and the management profession. The particular typification being analyzed in this paper was constructed during the management boom that swept the world following the Second World War and continued into the 1960s (Drucker, 1973). During this time, the manager was gaining
prominence as playing a crucial, skilled, and complex role in the process of production, and holding a dominant position in major economic, social, and political institutions—a dominance that had previously belonged to owners. Burnham (1941) explains this movement of the manager into the dominant class by positing that those who control access to, and preferential treatment in the distribution of, an object own that object in fact, regardless of whether or not they own it in theory or words. By dint of their increasingly powerful roles within the organization, managers were gaining in their control over access, thereby also assuming ownership of corporate assets.

The image of the ideal manager that emerged from the formalization of both management as a science and the managerial role was that of an educated (Bendix, 1974) male (Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998; Runte & Mills, 2006) specially trained in a variety of complex and uncommon skills (Bendix, 1974). These skills included, but were not limited to, effective decision-making (Davis & Filley, 1971; Drucker, 1977; Terry, 1956), organizing (Drucker, 1977), planning, control, building and maintaining morale, and written and verbal communication (Terry, 1956). The ideal manager understood both the types and limits of authority, and was capable of using authority effectively to achieve great results from his subordinates (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968; Terry, 1956). Willingly accepting, indeed even desiring (Terry, 1956), the responsibility that automatically comes with authority (Drucker, 1973), the ideal manager assumed responsibility to subordinates, owners, the community, consumers, society, and the management profession (McFarland, 1964). Critical to being a successful manager was being a leader (Davis & Filley, 1971; Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968; Spriegel & Schulz, 1942; Terry, 1956) in order to bring people together for joint performance (Drucker, 2001).

A manager could be found in a number of positions within the structure of an organization, including low-level manager, or supervisor, mid-level manager, and executive. The position did have an impact on the relative importance of the various characteristics expected. All managers, however, were "responsible for the work of other people" (Drucker, 1973: 390), and were expected to "create within the enterprise the environment which will facilitate the accomplishment of its objective" (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968: 47).

The Cold War

The hazards in planning in a cold-war economy grew out of the instability and rapid rate of change in the situation. These conditions are not due entirely to the cold war. Technological progress would continue, for example, if the war ended tomorrow, but probably at a reduced rate temporarily. The fact must be faced, however, that Russia has had the advantage in the cold war to date. It is a principle of any planning anywhere that bold use of the initiative reduces the planning of the opposition to the level of expediency. The advantage of the initiative can only be overcome by taking the offensive. It is quite possible that this fact may dominate our business thinking during the years that are immediately ahead (Davis, 1952).

The Cold War was a long, complex, and overarching event, and a full discussion and analysis of its history and effects on the political and social context of the time is beyond the scope of this paper. For a basic introduction, we will use the term the Cold War as referring to the "historical period when there was a state of hostility between the United States (and its allies) and
the Soviet Union (and its allies) manifest in economic and political conflict and subversion, and in military action involving surrogates, but that stopped just short of ‘hot war’ or direct military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union” (Bullock & Stallybrass, 1979 cited in Cooke, Mills, and Kelley, 2005: 3. See also Booker, 2001; Bothwell, 1998; Gaddis, 1972).

Although precise years vary, general consensus has the Cold War enduring for more than four decades, from the end of the Second World War in 1945, to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Whitaker & Hewitt, 2003), and consisting of two key dimensions, foreign policy and internal security measures (Mills et al., 2002). The typification of the ideal manager being studied in this paper is that which was constructed during what is referred to as the internal Cold War, in the years following the Second World War and ending in 1960.

The years in question revolve mainly around the Red scare and McCarthyism, when fear of communism was built by the government into a nation-wide phenomenon. American officials were convinced of the Soviet Union’s commitment to overthrow capitalism throughout the world. Determined to avoid mistakes made following the First World War when Germany was not completely disarmed, the government was going to do whatever it took to save the American way of life (Gaddis, 1972). On the home front, citizens were expected to play their part in stopping the spread of Communism by expressing and celebrating “Americanism” through their entire way of life and informing on their friends, neighbours, and family who seemed in any way subversive (Whitfield, 1991).

This subset of years within the Cold War was chosen for analysis due to its coincidence with the formalization of the managerial role, and the fact that this particular phase of the Cold War was fought, in large part, within the United States itself. Following 1960 and the downfall of McCarthy, a new phase was entered which saw an easing of tensions and a reduction in the impact on the daily lives of Americans (Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998).

The Ideal Manager as a Product of ‘His’ Times

Today’s business manager does not necessarily contribute directly to the financial resources of the company but brings rather the trained skills and genius, if you please, needed in the organization and operation of a business concern (Girdler, 1948).

Many factors came into play in the typification of the ideal manager that was constructed during the internal Cold War years. The depression years of the 1930s were the beginning of the end for the common wisdom that successful managers were born, not made, and that executives could do no wrong. Followed immediately by the need to support the military during the Second World War, it was quickly becoming clear that effective management required specialized knowledge, skills, and training. One of the consequences of the emergence of management as a discipline was the formalization of the managerial role, and the understanding of the necessity of training future managers in the complex and uncommon skills required to be successful (Bendix, 1974).
Much of management practice and theory has come directly from the military (McFarland, 1964), and following the Second World War most management positions were staffed by ex-military officers. The military was also responsible for a substantial amount of research conducted on leadership, decision making, planning, and organization, research that was subsequently adopted by organizations in their search for answers. Thus, the roots of the more specialized and standardized managerial role can be traced back to the role of the officer in the military.

Immediately prior to the Second World War we saw the advent of the human relations school of thought, when supervisors and executives were encouraged to consider their workers as human beings, and were assured that by doing so they would resolve all the problems of conflict and misunderstanding (Whyte, 1959). Human relations made significant advances in both the theory and practice of management (McFarland, 1964), and industrial psychologists and managerial experts were hired to bring the new “knowledge” into the organizations (Bendix, 1974). Management textbooks explicitly state the importance of human relations when performing managerial duties, and many also include chapters on motivation, morale, attitudes, individuals, and human relations itself (Drucker, 1977; Jucius, 1967; Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968; McFarland, 1964; Mee, 1951; Spriegel & Schulz, 1942; Terry, 1956). This emphasis on the attitudes and feelings of employees undermined the absolute authority of managers (Bendix, 1974) and increased the complexity of the skills required to be an effective manager.

The reaction of North America and Western Europe to the Cold War evoked a widespread emphasis on masculinity (Cuordileone, 2000), fear of collectivism and communism (Schrecker, 1994), and a strong defense of capitalism and the American way (Robin, 2001). Each of these collective feelings had an impact on the way in which the ideal manager was constructed. Their impact was felt in strength on four particular characteristics of the ideal manager; gender, education, authority, and social responsibility. It is on these four characteristics that we will focus our analysis.

**Gender**

*Supervision of Women.* Perhaps the great human relations difference with women employees is that they generally seem to prefer a slightly different type of supervision. Some of the reasons are their psychological make-up, their physical differences, their lack of business background, and their interests. Women are less interested in the work itself and more interested in the quality of their supervision and good relations with their co-workers. Many women are willing to attach themselves to a pleasant work situation and not seek advancement because they do not want to risk losing their pleasant social working conditions (Davis, 1957: 409-410).

The management textbooks analyzed for the purposes of this paper refer to the manager exclusively as male (Drucker, 1973; Jucius, 1967; Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968; McFarland, 1964; Mee, 1951; Newman, Summer, & Warren, 1967; Spriegel & Schulz, 1942; Terry, 1956). The one
exception is Davis (1957) who, while arguing for the development of female managers, contends that women are in many ways unsuited to managerial positions (see above quote). Likewise, a selection of articles about managers in management journals from the same timeframe describe their subjects solely as men (Cheit, 1964; Crotty, 1971; Hay & Gray, 1974; Katz, 1955). In their analysis of 37 texts written by Academy of Management presidents, Grant and Mills (2006) found women to be either completely ignored or discussed only in terms of limited workplace roles, and Mills and Helms Hatfield (1998) found that the overwhelming majority of 107 management texts had little or nothing to say about women or gender. Koontz and O’Donnell (1968) even refer to the practice that some organizations used at the time of interviewing the wife of a managerial candidate, thereby reaffirming the fact that the candidate himself would be a man.

The fact that the ideal manager was assumed to be a man may seem obvious to some, considering the fact that prior to the Second World War few women held positions of authority within organizations (Granatstein & Morton, 2003). The Second World War was, however, an expansive period for women’s employment, as women successfully filled the jobs that their husbands, boyfriends, fathers, brothers, and sons had left behind. At the end of the war, they were left with cautious optimism that they had gained a more powerful place in the economy (Horowitz, 1998), and the notion of a female manager should not have been absurd. Their successes as employees combined with their positions in the labour unions had started them on the path to greater responsibility within organizations. A combination of the post-war struggles of men attempting to reintegrate themselves into society, the masculinity crisis of the Cold War (Cuordileone, 2000), and the view of women’s activism as subversive, however, resulted in women being entrenched more firmly than ever into their role as homemaker (Runte & Mills, 2006).

The return home of the men from fighting in the Second World War was a difficult time for both the men who had fought and the women to whom they returned. Men found it difficult to reintegrate themselves into post-war life, and were told that their success depended on their wives becoming submissive to their needs (Rosenberg, 1994). Memories of the depression of the 1930s were still fresh, and the fear that there were not enough jobs for everyone had government exhorting women to return home in order to ensure enough jobs for the men (Booker, 2001). Women were told that the work they had so successfully carried out during the war had been but a temporary extension of their domestic duties, as the ‘real work’ and the men had moved to the warfront, and that they were now to return to their domestic duties of raising their children and keeping their home (Runte & Mills, 2006).

At the same time, gender ideals began to play a role in the war against communism, as the picture of the stereotypical communist painted for the average North American citizen was that of a weak, sissified liberal wanting to be subjugated. Parents lived in fear that a son would become a “sissie” (Whitfield, 1991), and even as the visibility of homosexuals increased, so did acts of bigotry and discrimination against them, especially in employment (Cuordileone, 2000). In response to the supposed devious and weak feminine attributes of the communist, and to solve

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1 Davis (1957: 409) is clearly aware that there are “20 million employed women” in the United States in the 1950s and does lament that they “meet considerable employment discrimination”.

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the problems of post-war integration, it was argued that North American men needed to be strong in their masculinity, autonomy, and authority (Rosenberg, 1994). Cold War battles, protecting democracy by ensuring the continuation of capitalism, were fought in the boardroom, and there was no place for women in the battle (Runte & Mills, 2006). The women were expected to provide selfless support for their men, through which they would become the “bedrock of the new American family” (Runte & Mills, 2006: 704), create social stability (Rosenberg, 1994), and “restore value, integrity, and wholeness to American life” (Horowitz, 1998: 124).

During the Second World War, labour unions had started implementing policies in favour of women, and women's activism had become strong and had seen some successes. Women's activism was dealt two blows during the early Cold War years. The economic prosperity following the war increased the number of middle-class families, with the husband's salary enough for a house in the suburbs and no financial need for the wife to work. The middle-class women, who had the education and access to financial resources, were physically removed from the fight as they left the cities (Runte & Mills, 2006), leaving behind only those women who needed their jobs to survive, and therefore could take less risks in fighting their employers.

McCarthyism also raised great fear of any type of activism, particularly that which was attempting to change such deep-rooted ideologies as the roles of men and women (Runte & Mills, 2006; Whitfield, 1991). Part of the communist ideology was the equality of both men and women, which led individuals involved in women's activism to be accused of either being communists or having communist sympathies. Labour unions, already in a precarious position due to the high number of communists holding positions of office, turned against women's activism, as well as other progressive causes. At the same time, as women became aware of the chauvinism of the communist men, the majority of whom did not practice what they preached in regards to gender equality, radicalism lost some of its appeal (Horowitz, 1998).

The final result of the confluence of forces fighting to keep women at home saw it became part of the discourse that men would assume the burdens of responsibility and leadership (Rosenberg, 1994), and that the workplace was masculine (Runte & Mills, 2006). These debates around gender formed a powerful discourse that contributed to the context in which the formal managerial role was solidified as being male.

Education

If the science of organization did not have its beginnings in military enterprise, that enterprise did, at least, assist at its birth. It is ironic to see a godfather neglecting such a child. It is tragic that so much of the Nation's weakness should be due to that neglect.

These anxieties should justify this inquiry [into effective management skills], as they should justify inquiry by any man who has a stake in the future of the Nation (Brown, 1953: vii-viii).

While many of the management textbooks analyzed emphasize the extreme importance of the training and development of managers and executives (Drucker, 1954; Jucius, 1967; Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968; McFarland, 1964; Mee, 1951; Terry, 1956), the simple fact that the management textbooks exist speak to the importance of education to the social construct of the
ideal manager. The ensuing popularity and broad influence of the textbooks provides even greater affirmation. This emphasis on the training and development of managers was driven in large part by the magnitude and complexity of the management and logistics required for the production and supply of goods to support the military during the Second World War. In response, scholars began attempting to determine how managers could successfully meet their new responsibilities, and it quickly becoming clear that effective management required specialized knowledge, skills, and training (Bendix, 1974). Leaving behind the common wisdom that a good leader is born, it became accepted that “a leader is both born and made” (Bendix, 1974: 299), and this acceptance led to a sharp increase in business school enrolment following the Second World War, with business becoming the most popular undergraduate major by 1955 (Cheit, 1985).

While the impetus for the education of managers came from events other than the Cold War, the influence of the Cold War on the academic institutions of the time had a strong impact on the type of education the future managers received. The knowledge and skills that the management students attained during their education, which had an extensive impact on the formalization of the managerial role, were largely prescribed by the academic institutions that housed the business schools. The effect of the Cold War on American academic institutions was profound, and while only beginning to be addressed in the management literature (Grant & Mills, 2006; Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998), the fact that the formative years of management education occurred during the early years of the Cold War had an impact on the resulting curriculum. This curriculum, through both what was taught and the fact that it was being taught, led the students, as future managers, to a particular image towards which they needed to strive in order to become the ideal manager. Some of the management textbooks which were written at the time became foundational texts for decades (Grant & Mills, 2006), thereby deeply enforcing over time the newly created social construct of the ideal manager.

The military had a significant impact on the development of training programs for future managers, both in aftereffects from the Second World War, and from the ongoing preparation for battles to be fought in the Cold War. Much research had been carried out during the course of the Second World War by behaviouralists specifically for the military in shaping the morale and motivation of recruits. This research continued throughout the Cold War, controlled by an elite group of academics who would approve government funding for those research projects that advanced their own cause, thereby restricting the growth of knowledge to a singular paradigm (Robin, 2001). The behaviouralist knowledge was quickly adopted by organizations, and became part of business school curriculum through the faculty, who were often retired military officers and business executives (Cotton, McKenna, Van Auken, & Meuter, 2001) or, if holding doctorates, came from the behaviouralist schools (Grant & Mills, 2006).

The effect of the communist witch hunts were felt on university campuses as early as 1948, when a handful of faculty members at the University of Washington were questioned regarding alleged un-American activities after being required to sign a loyalty oath. The years 1952 to 1954 saw the bulk of the academic purges, after more glamorous targets such as politicians and celebrities had been pursued. Although dismissal was not an automatic result of a congressional hearing, academic hearings usually followed. Close to a hundred academics lost their jobs due to McCarthyism, and it is suspected that several hundred more were eased out. Fear for their careers led professors away from anything that might be construed as controversial (Schrecker, 1994), which in turn gave the Cold War a direct role in determining the legitimacy of
the universities (Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998). In some cases, the government used direct influence to rid the universities of communists and subversives, in others the universities themselves undertook the process in an attempt to demonstrate their educational legitimacy (Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998).

The Cold War also played a role in the narrowly defined legitimacy of management curriculum. As the internal Cold War revolved around the defense of capitalism and the American way, free enterprise, business, and organizational power and control were not to be questioned (Mills & Helms Hatfield, 1998). The management curriculum became strictly tied to a managerialist perspective (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and was narrowed to that deemed by the faculty as safe in an attempt to avoid accusations of communism (Schrecker, 1994). This generally involved practical applications of the behaviouralist research being conducted for the government, and anything that could be obviously tied to managing a successful capitalist organization. Graduating students were managerialist and functionalist, characteristics which to a large part remain in the current typification of the ideal manager.

**Authority**

Many employees find themselves more comfortable in the presence of strong and definite authority than in the absence of it. Acceptance by individuals of prescribed authority in an organization conserves their time, energy, and efforts. If they respond readily to the wishes of authority, they need not think, plan, or worry unduly about the reasons for the action. Some individuals may even derive a sense of security from the presence of an authority by which questions are answered and decisions are made.” (McFarland, 1964: 290).

In terms of authority, the notion of the manager underwent several changes from the end of World War I (Taylorism and Scientific Management), through the interwar period (the Hawthorne Studies and the beginning of human relations), to the progress of the Cold War (the development and growth of the Human Relations School). At the onset of management theory the manager was viewed as a figure of authority, virtually indistinguishable from the role he (sic) occupied. The authority of the manager was beyond question; the manager was the authority. The only issue was how that authority was to be exercised (e.g., through job design, as in Taylor’s approach). Challenges to that authority were seen as illegitimate. Unions were viewed as anything from radical intrusions (Braverman, 1974; Bendix, 1974) through to unnecessary aberrations (Taylor, 1911) in the workplace.

Prior to the advent of the human relations school of thought, organizations held a common assumption that managers wielded absolute authority over their subordinates purely through their position in the organizational hierarchy (McGregor, 1960). The Hawthorne Studies of the 1920s and 1930s, however, introduced the concept that a worker is a human being even when he or she is at work (Daya, 1959). With this, the seeds of a “human relations” approach to management began, and it was believed that “if only this message could be brought home to supervisors and executives in industry, the problems of conflict and misunderstanding could be resolved” (Whyte, 1959: 3). The consideration of employees as individuals, with unique attitudes, feelings, and motivators, led managers to question the basis of their own authority (Bendix, 1974). This re-evaluation of the manager’s role was also influenced by the rapid growth of the
professional manager across industrial nations, including the Soviet Union (Burnham, 1941), and the changing character of trade unions in the United States.

The latter stages of the Hawthorne Studies took place against the political background of the New Deal era, which saw crucial changes in the growth, development, and legal standing of trade unions. While labour unions had been in existence in North America since the late 18th century, they were not able to gain significant momentum until the Great Depression and the New Deal changed their favour in the eyes of the federal government. The 1930s saw the passing of a series of acts, including the Norris-La Guardia Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act, and the National Labor Relations Act, which gave employees the right to organize and required employers to bargain collectively with employee representatives (Jucius, 1967). These realities encouraged thoughts of a new co-operative style of management based more on leadership and interpersonal skills than on the simple exercise of authority, and the basis for that argument was being laid by the work of Kurt Lewin and his colleagues (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939) at the approach of the Second World War.

Despite the military atmosphere of the times, the onset of the Second World War continued the encouragement of research into more cooperative and leadership styles of managing, the fruits of which began to show in the early post-war era with calls for managers to develop and exercise leadership (Girdler, 1948; Stogdill, 1948) and participatory skills (Coch & French, 1948). As the Cold War developed and progressed, the notion of the manager was recast as someone who led through a combination of leadership skills, authority position, and the needs (and shortcomings) of subordinates - characteristics that are exemplified in the section's opening quote by McFarland (1964).

In the textbooks of the time the notion of the manager as someone responsible for other people was never far from the surface. This responsibility was often viewed as part of a broader responsibility to act as an organic leader (Gramsci, 1978) in the struggle against communism: elements of this approach can be seen in the quote by Brown (1953) above, but also in the various writings and speeches of leading management theorists of the day (see Grant and Mills, 2006).

Thus, if we define a manager as one who is responsible for other people, a commonly accepted definition of the 1950s, the implicit importance of authority becomes clear when considering Drucker's comment, "Whoever claims authority thereby assumes responsibility. But whoever assumes responsibility thereby claims authority" (1973: 347). Authority and responsibility go hand in hand, and the ability of a manager to act authoritatively was widely viewed as an important, if not the most important (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968), characteristic of the ideal manager by the management textbooks (Davis & Filley, 1971; Drucker, 1973; McFarland, 1964; Newman et al., 1967; Terry, 1956). When an individual assumes a leadership role within an organization through a promotion into a management position, authority is conferred onto him by his superiors (Wren, 2005). In the words of Newman (1967 et al: 43): "Man has always resorted to power to support authority. By selectively granting rewards or inflicting penalties, he has maintained obedience. This time-honored practice continues to be pervasive in our society – in homes, schools, government, and in business enterprises. A manager should, therefore, understand both the use and limitation of power."
The early years of the Cold War returned some of the absolute authority to managers that had been lost during the 1930s and 1940s. The Cold War was a battle between capitalism and communism, and the strongest proof of capitalist superiority was prosperity and consumption (Whitfield, 1991). Corporations wielded a significant amount of power in this battle, in terms of control of economic resources and the role they played in the 'military-industrial complex' (Boyle, 1995). Authority, leadership, and strength were stressed as the first line of defense (Whitfield, 1991). While Americans were expected to be self-reliant individualists in order to do their part in defeating the communists, they were expected to do so within the framework of corporate leadership (Grant & Mills, 2006).

The anticommunist fears of the McCarthy years dealt a huge blow to the labour unions. Seeing an opportunity to regain some of their power over their employees, employers used the communist associations and left-leanings of many of the unions to depict them as subversive and on the side of the enemy (Booker, 2001; Mercier, 1999; Whitaker & Hewitt, 2003). The United States Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 which severely curtailed union activities and power, and attempted to eliminate communists from leadership positions by requiring signed official statements that they were not members of the communist party (Schrecker, 1994). Conflict, sometimes violent, between unions arose as noncommunist affiliated brotherhoods were encouraged, and sometimes even explicitly formed, to oust the communists (Fones-Wolf & Fones-Wolf, 2003; Mercier, 1999; Whitaker & Hewitt, 2003). Internal strife occurred as well, as communist officials and left-leaning groups were expelled by the unions themselves, in an effort to appease the government (Boyle, 1998).

Employers collaborated with the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) to punish, and legitimize the punishment of, the victims, with a rough estimate of ten thousand people losing their jobs. In several high profile cases a number of radical activists, including the leadership of the Communist Party, were jailed (Caute, 1978; Fast, 1990; Horowitz, 1998; Schrecker, 1994; Whitfield, 1991), as were high profile writers (Hellman, 1976) and movie professionals (McGilligan & Buhle, 1997). For companies who did not willingly participate, the government threatened to withdraw lucrative defense contracts (Schrecker, 1994). Once again, workers were at the mercy of their employers, with managers assuming an almost militaristic authority (Whitfield, 1991) under the mantle of defending their country from the invidious advances of the communists.

The progression of the ideal manager from an absolute authoritarian to a skilled leader of his employees was halted by the Cold War. Managers reassumed a strict authority, leaving behind many of the efforts at greater co-operation and democracy heralded by the human relations movement and labour union successes. Some influence did remain, however, with the ideal manager expected to understand that different situations and different subordinates require different applications of authority in order to be effective. In this vein, management textbooks addressed the issue of leadership, its importance in easing the difficulty of a manager's job, and the fact that for many it is a skill that needs to be learned (Davis & Filley, 1971; Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968; Spriegel & Schulz, 1942; Terry, 1956). These textbooks addressed changes in management style with discussions of the limitations of authority (Newman et al., 1967), the various types of authority (McFarland, 1964) and the situations in which each type is preferred (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968), and human relations issues such as motivation, morale, individual differences, and communication (Jucius, 1967; Mee, 1951).
By the late 1950s and early 1960s the excitement surrounding human relations as the answer to all management problems was starting to wane as the promised perfect work environment failed to materialize (Cooper, 1959; McFarland, 1964; Mee, 1951; Pfiffner & Presthus, 1959; Whyte, 1959). It had become deeply enough embedded in both management curriculum and the social construct of the ideal manager, however, that the concept of authority as a skill requiring intelligence, finesse, and subtlety remained. In other words, the Cold War typification of the ideal manager retained those aspects of the human relations school that allowed them to wield authority more effectively. The notions of democracy and individualism were, paradoxically considering their position in the Western ideology, set aside in order to legitimize managers’ authority in a context of Cold War threat and anxieties.

Social Responsibility

The need for competence in the management and operation of business affairs is becoming increasingly recognized as an essential for the survival of our system. Under a free enterprise system the power for harm held by the business community is fully as great as the power for good. The social risk presented by the possible range of competence in business leadership is great. Society must have an interest in taking active steps to make sure that the competency be at least adequate for the responsibility held by each individual (Fiske, 1948).

The reputation of managers suffered during the 1930s as a result of the depression, and while their successes during the war years reaffirmed their prestigious place in American life, the postwar years saw managers taking on the task of filling “an ideological gap between business and society” (Cheit, 1964: 4) in a further attempt to repair the damage. In a letter to Keith Davis, Cheit - the Vice-Chancellor of the University of California (Berkley) - expressed the view that the “greatest deficiency which I saw at the [Academy of Management] conference was the lack of concern by our speakers with government as a source of injustice towards business and its participants” (Cheit, 1966). Evidence of the growing importance being placed on the social responsibility of a manager is clear from the opening quote of this section. Twenty years later the exact same point was being hammered home by Koontz and O’Donnell (1966: 761): “Businessmen have an obligation to all others in society to use scarce resources efficiently and, in so doing, to make certain that every decision stands firmly upon the applicable moral customs and any generally accepted ethical principles.” Koontz and O’Donnell (1968) go on to discuss the growing expectation that businesses themselves become better citizens through support of their employees, their consumers, and their community. In a similar vein, Terry (1956) states that executives have responsibilities to five distinct groups, two of which are society and the community. He believes that in assuming power over a large amount of society’s economic and social resources, executives also need to accept the responsibility the power entails. Accepting this responsibility allows the executives to sustain the environment in which their organization will succeed.

As expectations concerning the social responsibility of managers grew, so too did the expectation for all citizens to enlist in the Cold War and defend their country against the evils of communism (Whitfield, 1991). The responsibilities of the civilian warriors included proudly living the American dream, avoiding political and activist causes (Schrecker, 1994), informing on
Managers combined their newfound social responsibility with their Cold War defense by undertaking a campaign to convince the public that the American dream was a result of the free enterprise system, and that the result of their support of collectivism, in the form of labour unions, would be state socialism. Energy and money began to be spent on political efforts, including fringe groups of the ultra-right (Cheit, 1964). Managers also assumed the role of punishing victims of McCarthyism through firings and blacklistings, as the formal authorities were unable to take legal measures against the alleged communists (Whitfield, 1991). Some of the businesses that participated in the firings were coerced by the government through the threat of the withdrawal of lucrative defense contracts (Schrecker, 1994), others cooperated willingly. The Cold War ideology included the belief that communists deserved to be fired (Schrecker, 1994), and the actions of the government in condemning supposed communists, and the corporations in firing them, met with popular approval (Whitfield, 1991).

While it is difficult to draw a direct connection between the social responsibility of an individual in his role as a manager, and his responsibility to his country as a citizen, the fact that they were both strongly reinforced within the same political and social context speaks to potential impact on each other. Spector (2006) recently conducted a qualitative analysis of articles published by the Harvard Business Review between the years 1945 and 1960. He found that approximately ten percent of the articles discussed issues relating to the practice of business within the world context. The dean of the Harvard Business School, Wallace B. Donham, regularly wrote of the importance of businessmen accepting social responsibility as part of their role in the war on communism. Landau’s (2006) analysis of the Harvard Business Review shows management positioning itself as freedom’s guardian in the Cold War fight against communism. Terry (1956) draws his readers’ attention to the fact that the characteristics of society are reflected within a business by the organizational members, and that the values a manager espouses outside of work, such as honesty and democracy, also have useful effects within the act of managing. In their instructions to the would-be ideal manager, Koontz and O’Donnell (1968) oblige decisions to be made within the predominant societal values of the day and exhort managers to “support all values whether they approve of them or not” (1968: 748).

Conclusion

The role of the manager was formalized during a period of overarching events, including the Great Depression, the Second World War, the human relations movement, and the Cold War. The social construct of the ideal manager was continuously changing throughout this period as it reacted to the influences and impacts of the political and social context of each event. Although mostly overlooked or ignored in the management and organizational theory literature to date, we contend that the early years of the internal Cold War created a particular typification of the social construct of the ideal manager unique to the time.

The analysis of the management textbooks undertaken for this paper is an initial step in creating awareness of the effect of the Cold War on the social construction of the ideal manager.
that existed at that time. This leads us to an understanding of the depths of the influence of political and social context on the ideal manager, a social construct that few people seem to analyze below its surface appearance. With the awareness developed through this paper, we can begin to question our acceptance of the current typification of the ideal manager, particularly in the political and social context resulting from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. If the Cold War ideal manager was a man because men were needed in the workplace to fight the battle against communism, what underlying and unseen influences are contributing to the majority of high-level management positions being held by men today? If the effects of McCarthyism reached into academia and affected faculty and curriculum, will we see a similar effect from the current terrorism fear on today’s management education programs and students? If the impact of the Cold War was strong enough to halt the progression of managers from authoritarians to facilitators should we be looking for similar backward trajectories today? If a manager’s sense of social responsibility could be utilized in the punishment of suspected communists, are we asking managers to operate in ethically challenged ways today? Only by first understanding that context has an influence on the expectations placed on ideal managers can we begin to answer these questions. In answering these questions, future research for which this paper provides a foundation, we may find that strands of the typification created during the Cold War can be followed through time to be found in today’s typification of the ideal manager.

References


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