Management Theory In A Cold War Context: The Case Of Abraham Maslow.

Stream 6: The Cold War and Management

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ABSTRACT

This paper makes the case for situating understandings of the post-War development of management ideas within a Cold War context, with specific reference to Abraham Maslow. This context has hitherto been ignored (at best) and concealed (at worst). Maslow’s work, particularly his hierarchy of needs, still recurs in standard texts on motivation. This recurrence lends Maslow a symbolic significance in more critical analyses of management; indeed it might be argued that as Taylor was to scientific management so Maslow is to human relations from a CMS perspective. Some of these critiques do try and situate Maslow within the socio-historical context of his time, sometimes in passing, (eg Linstead 2002, Cullen 1999), sometime more overtly (eg Buss 1979). However, none of these refer to the specifics of Cold War social institutions and culture in the US generally, and their impact in the academy and on Maslow. We set out these historical conditions, and link them to Maslow’s own writings and awareness of them. As a consequence, a richer understanding of Maslow, his work, and the impact of the Cold War on the development of management ideas more generally emerges. In turn this suggests a nascent case for considering the Cold War as a missing grand narrative in the history of management ideas.
MANAGEMENT THEORY IN A COLD WAR CONTEXT: THE CASE OF ABRAHAM MASLOW.

INTRODUCTION

This article presents the case for a revised understanding of the life and work of Abraham Maslow (1908 - 1970). Wren (1979) argues that “management thought forms a more coherent picture when viewed in its changing cultural milieu of economic, social, and political forces. Management is both a process in and a product of its environment”. It is precisely when Maslow is viewed in such a milieu that a more coherent picture of him and his thought emerges; and that milieu is defined, we show, by the Cold War. More, in a point we return to in our conclusion, the impact that the Cold War has on understandings of Maslow is such that it potentially provides a grand narrative within which histories of management thought more generally should be situated.

The Cold War is usually identified as beginning at some time close to the end of World War Two (WW2), and ending with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc regimes in 1987. At its most basic it can be described as an historical period when there was a state of hostility between the US (and its allies) and the Soviet Union (and its allies) manifest in economic, political conflict and subversion, and in military action involving surrogates but which stopped, just, short of “hot war” or direct military conflict between the US and the Soviet Union (Bullock & Stallybrass, 1979). Our analysis largely focuses, however, on the dimensions of the Cold War internal to the US, which sustained and were sustained by external Cold War dynamics. It will however also allude to US Cold War understandings of the nature of the broader world, and the place of the United States within it.

That our Cold War focus is relatively novel is confirmed by Mills and Hatfield’s (1999) analysis of 107 widely used North American business and management textbooks from 1959 to 1996. This found that although many of them covered social arenas in which the Cold War was played out, for example industrial relations in the 1950s and 1960s, when allegations of Communist infiltration of Unions were commonplace, no mention of the Cold War or its consequences were made. There was however an ongoing, and unquestioning conflation and advocacy of “democracy” and “free enterprise”, foundations of US Cold War identity.

With contemporary hindsight it is also evident that famous examples of management theorizing, and theorist’s careers, were in part at least a consequence of the Cold War. Much of the formative work of H. Igor Ansoff, the “Father of Strategic Management” (Bedian and Mintzberg 2002:7) was carried out at the Rand Corporation, the Cold War think tank founded by the United States Air Force, and between 1957 - 1963 at a centre of the military industrial complex, for the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. Edgar Schein’s elaboration of Lewin’s three stage model of planned attitude change (unfreeze/move/refreeze), to be found in Process Consultation Volume II (1987) and Organizational Culture and Leadership (1986) is that he used to explain attitude change
of “brainwashed” US prisoners in Korea (Schein 1961; Cooke 1999). Janis’s (1971) concept of groupthink developed as a way of explaining the Bay of Pigs fiasco, and was elaborated using the Korean war and the Cuban missile crisis as case studies. According to Richard Beckhard (1997) the NTL’s development of T-groups, a foundation of teambuilding and of organization development was as a reaction to McCarthyism. Elsewhere, others have examined the impact of the Cold War on a range of academic disciplines (Chomsky et al (1997)). Herman’s (1995) history of American psychology includes an account of its relationship with Cold War institutions and processes, and Robin (2001) shows how the emergence of behavioural science was a Cold War phenomenon.

Despite the acknowledgement of these cases here, and the very existence of Mills’ and Helms’ work, considerations of the significance of the Cold War are, where they exist at all, otherwise at the margins of accounts of the development of management. Maslow’s status in the history of management ideas is such that even though we address him alone, we are challenging this marginality; and we do also in our conclusion explore the extent to which we can generalize from his case. Working toward that conclusion our next section we review (more or less) current understandings of Maslow’s work. As our thesis is that these understandings change when Maslow is situated within the Cold War context, we then describe that context. Then we put both Maslow’s life and work, and the Cold War context together. Here we highlight his own engagements with and reflections on the institutions, politics and culture of the Cold War US.

**Current Understandings of Maslow**

Maslow is an iconic figure in the history of management ideas. Cullen (1997) rehearses the extent to which he continues to be cited in standard texts, on motivation, and continues to inform motivation theory. But the extent to which his work is revisited and discussed also suggests that he has a symbolic significance. Maslow is as important for what he represents, and what he is seen to represent as he is for the detail of his motivation theory. Our analysis will provide, inter-alia, insights into his acquisition of that status. It will also add to existing analyses of Maslow and his work.

If the claim that we make is for a new coherence in our understanding of Maslow, it is against a view of him in the literature that is otherwise collectively disparate, and in which individual writers also characterize Maslow in terms of tensions and/or contradiction. Here we agree with one of those writers (Buss (1979)), that this tension and contradiction is not inherently problematic. Our case is, rather, that it can be explained as consistent with aspects of the Cold War context within which Maslow lived and operated. The Cold War, in the way of grand narratives, provides a transcendent explanation. Further, although we do disagree with some aspects of existing analyses, we also affirm and build on others.

The major contemporary accounts of Maslow can be found in Linstead (2002), and Herman (1995) who refer to him as part of broader analyses; and Cullen (1997), who is concerned with Maslow himself. Cullen also draws on, and links us back to Buss (1979)
and Shaw and Collimore (1988). Linstead’s primary concern is with kitsch in organizational theorizing. He sees Maslow as an example of a realization of kitsch, in that Maslow assumes there to be an authentic, in a sense a-priori self; but that self becomes deauthenticated as it is explained and mediated by, and assimilated into a Maslovian hierarchy of needs. He also sees an element of what Montgomery identifies as a kitsch component of science, “the motive to put forth an idea for the sake of its effect...” exemplified in a quote from Maslow’s *Eupsychian Management* that homosexuals are not normal “because the mouth or the rectum or the armpit or the hand... were simply none of them as well designed for the penis as the vagina is designed” (2002: 676).

Cullen’s (1997) purpose is to foreground this biological essentialism in Maslow, and particularly the extent to which his view of society, not to mention motivation, was shaped by his early primate experiments. According to Cullen,

> Maslow...decided that the best indicators of dominance were mounting (taking the male role in sexual behavior) and bullying, while the best indicators of subordinance were cringing and flight. It was on this basis that he argued that there was a continuum of sexual behaviour, with one end being motivated by “dominance drive”, with the latter type being used” as a power weapon.”

Cullen’s point is that Maslow went on to apply the same reasoning to humans. She traces out how what came to be called self actualization had previously been called “ego level” and, initially “dominance feeling”. Explained by this, she argues, is not just the hierarchy of needs, but a Maslovian dominant/subordinate view of society in general. This accounts for, she suggests, the tension first identified by Buss (1979) in Maslow’s work between self actualization as a natural human condition, open to all (which Cullen suggests partly explains the popular attraction of his hierarchy), and the elitist premise that some are more likely to achieve self actualization than others, and that some will never do so.

Buss himself sees Maslow as a psychologistic manifestation of liberalism, a reaction to the conservatism of the time, with its stress on individual rights in a society actually dominated by a small and powerful elite. Maslow is thus in the liberal tradition of Spencer, Rousseau, and Mill. For Buss “the structure of Maslow’s psychological theory can be seen as incorporating the structure of his society. Maslow’s hierarchical or “class” theory of self actualization consists of social categories projected onto the individual...”, a point also made later on by Linstead. He continues “...the tension in Maslow’s theory of self actualization between democracy and elitism - between the non-actualized masses and the actualized few - is part of the tension which liberal theorists were experiencing and trying to resolve in the 1950s...” (1979:50). Shaw and Collimore (1988), also cited by Cullen, see, on the other hand, Maslow’s individualism as a new version of social Darwinism (which is, in passing, another form of biological essentialism) that can be used to justify a capitalist system, along with the privileges and practices of its powerful elite.

For Linstead, Maslow’s own political consciousness is not a concern, whereas Buss and Shaw and Collimore argue Maslow’s work was an unconscious reflection of the political zeitgeist, or, to use Wren’s term, milieu. Cullen disagrees, suggesting that Maslow was conscious of his socio-political implications, but, as we have seen, that those implications
were founded on primatology. This leads us in turn to Herman (1995). Her account of Maslow falls outside of her extensive consideration of the psychology and the Cold War per se, which we return to later. Unlike the others cited Herman acknowledges Maslow’s extensive, and published diaries (edited by Lowry 1979). These demonstrate unequivocally Maslow’s conscious engagement, intellectually at the very least, with the society and politics of his time. Herman also importantly points out that Maslow proposed not just a hierarchy within society but a hierarchy of societies, citing him that:

“Democracy of Western sort is OK for rich & well organized, educated society & capitalism can then work fairly well. For people with lower basic needs satisfied, higher needs emerge & we can talk about freedom for self-fulfillment, autonomy, encouragement of growth, humanitarianism, justice, democracy etc…There is now a hierarchy of societies paralleling the hierarchy of basic needs” (in Herman 1995:272).

Herman represents Maslow as “a self proclaimed patriot, a supporter of the Vietnam War… whose reaction to the political mood of the 1960s was to call his activist students and colleagues members of the “Spit-on-Daddy” club (in Herman, 1995:273), and contrasts him with contrasted with fellow humanist psychologist Carl Rogers, who “did not distance himself from liberal and left wing activists” (1995: 274). Herman suggests Maslow was puzzled by the adoption of his ideas by counter-cultural figures such as Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman who claimed that “everything Maslow wrote [was] applicable to modern revolutionary struggle in America”. Herman suggests Maslow’s response was that he could only “…grudgingly admit that he had no control over the lessons others extracted from his life work” (1995: 274).

Summarizing these accounts in very broad terms (recognizing difficulty in so doing), Linstead’s analysis of Maslow as kitsch is unique, and consequently stands apart from the others, but not his recognition of biological essentialism, which for Cullen alone is founded in primatology. All recognize, though, that Maslow’s hierarchy is a social hierarchy, and see contradiction or tension in that not all can be self-actualized, yet so being is supposed to be a natural human condition. Cullen, Buss, Shaw and Collimore, and Herman all stress the importance of historically situating Maslow. Only Cullen and Herman suggest that Maslow had a social and political consciousness, however, and Herman alone recognizes, but only begins to explore, Maslow’s diaries as evidence of this. Buss’s identification of Maslow as a liberal is disputed explicitly by Herman and implicitly by Shaw and Collimore. The claiming of Maslow by Abbie Hoffman for the left are, other than Herman not acknowledged; and explicitly (in Herman) or tacitly (in the rest) rebutted; for, liberal or otherwise, Maslow is depicted as a defender and supporter of the status quo.

THE COLD WAR CONTEXT

As we have said, these differences, contradictions and tensions in the analyses of Maslow thus far are not necessarily intrinsically problematic. We do nonetheless claim to add coherence to understandings of Maslow. This apparent paradox is resolved via a
demonstration of the extent to which his work was a product of a time characterized by particular contradictions and tensions in culture and society more generally. These contradictions and tensions were transcended and subordinated, more or less, in and to the Cold War cause.

The Contradictions in US Cold War Culture

(Un) Americanism, individualism and conformity

The most famous, not to say infamous, aspect of US Cold War culture was the idealization of Americanism, and the converse demonization of `un-Americanism'. What was taken as evidence of un-Americanism varied at different stages of the Cold War. The foundations were however laid early on under McCarthy, and indeed his predecessors, and included expressing less than hyper-patriotic sentiments; being associated with one of a number of organizations or activities deemed “un-American” by various arms of the US state and/or other organizations such as the American Legion; the refusal to sign a loyalty oath, to inform on friends and associates, or to admit to and/or renounce membership of any organization deemed to be subversive. Indicators of UnAmericanism also extended into perceptions of sexuality, notably behaving in a non-heterosexual manner; having no discernible commitment to a recognized religion; and having a `foreign-sounding’ name or background. Activities (either current or previous) that were deemed `suspect’ included any kind of support for peace movements, anti-racism campaigns, civil liberties, trade unionism, or people defending their rights before HUAC, government and other loyalty boards (Caute, 1979; Goldstein, 1978; Whitfield, 1996, Patterson 1996).

Cold War ethnocentrism was reinforced by a stress on the `the American way of life’ and an increasing suspicion of the `foreign’. There were numerous contrasts between the `good’ aspects of Americanism with the `bad’ aspects of other national characteristics. American individualism was contrasted positively with critiques of Soviet social conformity, which also facilitated the implication that that certain forms of collective activity – for example trades union activism, civil rights activism – were subversive. The paradox was, of course, that the requirements of the idealized “American” were highly conformist. This didn’t go unrecognized at the time, and Cold War scholars (see William F. Whyte’s The Organization Man’s critique (1956) of the conformity of corporate life, and its call for a rediscovery of the US virtues of individualism and entrepreneurialism as exemplifying this.

One symbolic significance 1960’s counterculturalism was that, not least in the physical appearance and behavior of its adherents, it challenged the conformity of 1950s Cold War culture. But, Cavallo (1999) argues, this individualism is evidence of how much the counterculture was still particularly American, being constructed from the same American mythologies, including those around liberty and democracy, as well as individualism, that had previously prevailed. Moreover, it was a counterculture, that is counter to a prevailing and dominating orthodoxy: as Patterson points out, in the 1960s “while McCarthyite excesses ebbed, a virulent anti-Communism still flourished at most
levels American politics and culture” (1996:455). Having said all this, it is also important to acknowledge that the efforts of 1960s activists also led to permanent (thus far) changes to the status of women and African-Americans in the United States, even if racism and sexism were not eradicated (again, Cavallo 1999).

**Spirituality, secular materialism, and modernization**

Americanism was also reinforced by contrasting Communist atheist materialism and American spiritualism. "We are idealists, they are materialists," said a former ambassador to the Soviet Union (Whitfield, 1991: 73), and having no discernible commitment to any recognized religion was another indicator of un-Americanism: The rising tide of McCarthyism had strengthened the religious right, which set out to embed the belief that “religion [was] virtually synonymous with American nationalism” (Whitfield 1991: 87). The Reverend Billy Graham assured Americans that Christianity and capitalism were inextricably linked; and the Catholic Church was also in the vanguard of anti-Communism, seeking to distance itself from claims that its followers owed allegiance to a foreign power (meaning the Pope, not God), and also confront the ideological threat Communism posed in the US and beyond (Whitfield 1991, Patterson 1996).

However, pulling in the other direction, US the aims of the founding fathers for a secular state and constitution held up, (Kranmick and Moore 1997); and a strong part of the American tradition was still its anti-metaphysical nature, its pragmatism, and the fact that actions were dictated by “deals not ideals” (Whitfield, 1991:87). Moreover, the American dream espoused and supported by organized religion was a highly materialist vision of individual wealth and success. Large-scale mass production in the U.S., which had been perfected during World War II, required large-scale consumption (Locke 1996). The "ideal of prosperity for all in a classless society" was Vice President Nixon's description of American life at the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959 (Whitfield 1991).

Robin (2001), describing the emergence of behavioral science, argues that underpinning this vision of material progress, and also positing a Cold War explanation of the material standing of the US vis-à-vis the rest of the World, was modernization theory. Modernization theory turned apparent truisms about progress into theoretical frameworks of stages of transition, from traditional, rural and peasant to technologized and industrialized economomies; “from authoritarian political systems to participant oriented systems; from religious beliefs to secular, scientific values” (2001:30). While modernization theory is global in definition, the USA is the aspirational ideal type, modernization’s culmination. In many sources (including Herman (1995), also Rist (1997) but, oddly, not Robin) Rostow’s 1960 *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* is the epitome of Cold War modernization theory. To Rostow, all societies otherwise were in one of five stages in relation to modernity: the traditional society, the preconditions for take off, the take off, the drive to maturity, and the age of mass consumption (Rostow 1960:4).
Differentiation from Marxism was important to Rostow; thus he argued, inter-alia, that Communism (taken for granted as Marx in practice) was a disease that would prevent modernization; and that there was more to human behavior than what he saw as Marx’s economic determinism (Rist 1997). Yet, as Rist, and other so called “post-development” theorists point out (eg Shanin 1997) its US version was not the only version of modernization theory on offer; Marxism too was a narrative of progress from the primitive to an idealized state; and the Cold War thus, inter-alia, a war between versions of modernization.

Liberalism and the left

Given the debate surrounding Maslow’s status as a liberal, and anticipating some of what follows from Maslow himself, we supplement our general account of Cold War culture to look specifically at liberalism. We begin by noting that it would be wrong to represent the Cold War US as in the grip of an anti-left and/or anti-liberal conservatism. Liberals were attacked by conservatives (and vice-versa); but they too participated in assaults on un-Americanism. This was not (necessarily) out of self preservation, but reflected a genuine opposition to Communism. Schlesinger’s *Vital Centre*, a “liberal manifesto” (Patterson 1996: 181), epitomized Cold War homophobia and heterosexism by arguing that while liberals showed “virility”, Leftists and rightists showed “political sterility”. Communism he said was “something secret, sweaty and furtive, like nothing so much, in the phrase of one wise observer of modern Russia, as homosexuals in a boys school” (Schlesinger 1949:41).

This opposition to Communism and the left did not inevitably mean direct collusion with McCarthyism per se in the 1950s; indeed some liberals saw McCarthy in the 1950s and the New Left of the 1960s as posing a similar threat. Katzenelson (in Chomsky et al, 1997) describes how the liberal political scientist David Truman justified his decision to call the police to end, with force, a student sit-in at Columbia University in 1968 by drawing a parallel between McCarthyism’s assaults on liberal institutions, including universities, and the aggressive stance of the late 1960’s New Left. At stake, Truman argued, “was the fragile texture of assumptions and institutions that fortify liberal regimes against totalitarian depredations” (Chomsky et al 1997: 234), reflecting a more general concern on the part of liberal political scientists for “the stability and capacity of liberal democracy in the United States.” (1997: 235)

Other liberals, though, had been willing to do McCarthy’s job for him. In 1950 Sidney Hook condemned “the racists, the professional patrioteer, and those … who would freeze the existing inequalities of opportunity and economic power by choking off criticism”. But this was a more than a pretextual establishing of liberal bona-fides; it was the duty, he argued, of liberals in particular, to lead, a purge of Communist sympathizers, particularly in universities. Liberals who believe in the free exchange of ideas should be comfortable with the expression of “heresy;” but Communism was not just heresy, it was a “conspiracy”, which exploited the values of a liberal society to bring about its overthrow, and replace it with one where free exchange of ideas was not allowed. Hook particularly criticized “ritualistic liberals”, dupes and accomplices of who ignored this
conspiracy in their objection to anti-Communism and its manifestations. “Realistic liberals”, however, who “recognize that to survive we must solve many hard problems…” were prepared to act against Communism. Purging academic Communists, he argued, should not be the responsibility of university funders and administrators; but only because university teachers themselves should take it upon themselves to maintain standards as a matter of “ethical hygiene” (in Schrecker 1994:236-7).

Psychologists and Psychology in the Cold War Academy

This bring us, then, to the institutional impact of the Cold War, where our focus is particularly on Universities, and academic psychology. Maslow spent most of his working life as an academic. Although he socialized extensively with scholars on the borders of psychology and management, and approved of the less narrow methodologies of managerial psychology (Lowry 1979:191), he thought the impact he might have on management ideas was the greater precisely because he was a psychologist outsider (Lowry 1979: 630).

As our consideration of Hook indicates, US universities were a Cold War battleground; but the “big truth” claimed by the biologist and political activist R.C. Lewontin is that “…[a]lthough it is a severe blow to their sense of moral righteousness and self-esteem, academics must face the fact that the Via Dolorosa along which many of their colleagues were dragged to their crucifixions was also the high road to professional prosperity to many.” (1997:2). This combination of persecution and material benefit willingly given and accepted was as true of psychology as it was any other field.

Psychology’s Via Dolorosa

Generally, Schrecker (1986) sees the malign effect of the Cold War on Universities in three related strands. First, there were the overt and public anti-leftist interventions by university administrators, with the support of some faculty members. Second, there were the less public punishment of politically incorrect academics, through failures to promote or grant tenure, and rescinding of job offers. Third, there were the formal inquisitions into the Higher Education sector. These were initiated through state legislatures, and HUAC; but also through Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) surveillance and blacklisting, which identified the politically unacceptable, and intervened with administrators and faculty to obstruct appointment and promotion. Much of the information the FBI used in these processes were sourced from within the academy; that is academics and administrators informed on their colleagues (Diamond 1992: 283).

These activities inevitably impacted on academic psychology. In one early example in 1948, three faculty members were fired by the University of Washington, not for proven CP membership, but for failing to prove otherwise, and for having “been to the kinds of meetings that Communist party members went to” (Schrecker 1986:101). Among them was the eminent social psychologist Ralph Gundlach, identified by his University President as “at the very least” being “one of that special group of party workers who
deliberately do not become Party members so that they better serve the purposes of the Party.” (Schrecker 1986: 103). Despite positive evaluations of his work by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Society of Psychologists for the study of social issue (SPSSI) he was unable to find academic work, and went into private psychotherapy practice.

Psychologists also made the Cold War a subject of their research. A 1951 study by Marie Jahoda and Stuart Cook (the then President of the SPSSI) of a range of professional employees claimed that most of those interviewed regarded the loyalty-security program as part of a much larger interrelated complex of formal and informal pressures. . . The universal aim was to avoid the process of investigation. . . Caution was intense’ (quoted in Caute, 1979: 275-6). Most of the interviewed had consciously changed their reading habits to avoid being seen with suspect periodicals. Certain topics had become taboo for discussion, including “admitting Red China to the UN, atomic energy, religion, equal rights for Negroes” (Caute, 1979: 276).

Four years later a study by Paul Lazarsfeld and Wagner Thielens found that many of the 2,451, “mostly liberal”, professors that they interviewed reported to be scared. One in four of those interviewed reported that “political self-censorship, either in their professional activities or their private lives” (Schrecker, 1986: 309). Many professors altered their syllabi and avoided controversial topics. The study noted that the “widespread apprehension among . . . social science teachers [had placed a] notable damper on the activities and opinions of a sizeable minority”. More than one third reported that ‘their colleagues were less willing to express unpopular views in the community’. Indeed, some professors ‘omitted certain topics from classroom discussions, and others slanted their presentations away from their real convictions’. (Caute, 1979: 429).

*The Cold War as Friend of Psychology*

The evidence marshaled by Schrecker demonstrates that it is very hard to overstate the extent to which academic careers, including those of psychologists were blighted, manipulated and destroyed for ideological reasons during the Cold War. Even when some tried to move to jobs outside the US in the 1950s, the McCarran act, which restricted travel of alleged subversives into and out of the US, was used - with “zeal” (Schrecker 1986:296), to withhold passports. But , nonetheless, pace Lewontin, it would be mistaken to depict US psychology of this era as either a cowed and passive Cold War victim, or the seat of resistance to it.

Herman demonstrates how academic psychology benefited through its evident contribution to the Cold War effort. Factors which enabled this contribution included “psychology’s institutional niche in the military…”; which derived from the close involvement of a number of leading psychologists in the WW2 effort, not least those who had previously been politically active through the SPSSI; and “its theoretical explanations of Third World revolution and development, and the contours of Cold War ideology in general [which] contributed to securing the reputation of psychological expertise in the policy making process.” (Herman 1995:126). Thus “between1946 and the
mid-1960s, the US military was by far the country’s major institutional sponsor of psychological research \(2\); and in 1956 the APA held an elaborate banquet to celebrate the 10\(^{th}\) anniversary of the Office of Naval Research (ONR), “in recognition of the work of the Office of Naval Research to the development of American Psychology and other sciences basic to national welfare” (Herman 1995:129).

Research that the ONR funded included Schein’s work on brainwashing in which he first specified his development of the Lewin three-stage change model mentioned in the introduction, and published as Coercive Persuasion. The CIA in particular became interested in the use of psychological techniques for “mind control”, and what Herman calls “ideological conversion” \(3\) (Herman 1995:129). But psychology did not just potentially offer techniques – weapons – for everyday use in the Cold War confrontation. Both Herman and Robin see psychologists as engaging at a higher level, in their contributions to Cold War modernization theory; and both identify the motivation theorist, David McClelland as exemplifying this. McClelland applied his work at the level of nations, arguing on the basis of his empirical research that his N.Ach. (need for achievement), was a determinant of national economic success, and was in turn determined by mothers’ relationships with their sons \(4\).

**THE COLD WAR MASLOW**

While it might be possible to see where we are heading on Maslow and Cold War modernization, we interrupt our progress to that point for a more detailed consideration of Maslow’s relationship to Cold War culture and institutions. We do so in two stages. First we point to aspects of Maslow’s life which problematize representations of him as an anti-left/anti-liberal defender of the status quo. Second we look at the relationship between his work and those aspects of Cold War culture we have already highlighted, paying particular attention to Maslow’s own thoughts on this contained within his diaries. As a consequence, it becomes clear that the relationship between Maslow and his work, and the zeitgeist of the time was more nuanced and complex, but also stronger, than has been recognized so far.

**Aspects of Maslow’s Cold War Life**

Herman is correct that Maslow was a supporter of Johnson on Vietnam, and disliked the New Left. Herbert Marcuse, who had been a colleague, and initially a friend at Brandeis University, was held in particular contempt. Brandeis refused to renew Marcuse’s contract when he reached retirement age in 1965, in what was widely seen as a political act. Other faculty left Brandeis in protest, including Maslow’s close friend Frank Manuel, but Maslow stayed on. Maslow retained, however, his (not uncritical) admiration for psychologists influenced by Marxism like Horney and Fromm with whom he had worked closely at different stages in his life. At individual and inter-personal level, Maslow was far from conventional. A keen T-group participant, he was also an advocate of therapeutic massage and nude T-groups (Maslow 1965:160). He was a friend of Timothy Leary, the psychologist advocate of LSD, and prepared to defend him when the APA threatened to remove his accreditation. With a tantalizing ambiguity in the use of
the word “take” Maslow’s diary hints he might have been an LSD user himself: “…I
take LSD seriously & Frank [Manuel] would never dream of taking it….When I
suggested it he rejected it violently. No tampering with his consciousness” [Lowry 1979:
522].

There was even an FBI file on Maslow. It is relatively short, compared to those of
Marcuse and Fromm; but that it even exists is of some significance. It shows how
extensive an inquiry into Maslow, and individuals generally, the FBI was prepared to
conduct; that Maslow was prepared to take a public stand during McCarthyism which
drew him to the FBI’s attention; and the kind of things that caused suspicion in 1950s
America. Most of the file documents an investigation into Maslow’s subversiveness
following his signing of an open letter in calling for the repeal of the McCarran act in
1952. In the course of the investigation, colleagues, administrators, landlords, neighbors
and potential creditors during his time at City College New York (student in 1925, staff
member 1935 -1951), Cornell (1926), University of Wisconsin (1928 - 1935), and fully
fledged academic at Columbia, City College New York (1935 – 1951), and Brandeis
University Boston (1951 onwards) were interviewed.

A Boston neighbor informs that “large numbers, including many from out of state, have
parked their cars in front of his residence late in the evening”. One of those at the Maslow
home may have been Abbie Hoffman, whose autobiography notes of his Brandeis
professors in the mid-1950s “most of all… I loved Abe Maslow. I took every class he
gave and spent long evenings with him and his family” (in Hoffman 1988:219). He was
however yet to become a political activist; and checks on license numbers provided by
the neighbor were “unproductive”. Anonymized Wisconsin, New York and Boston
Communist Party informants are recorded as having no knowledge of Maslow, apart
from one, “of known reliability related on March 12 1953 that Abraham H Maslow… had
been mentioned as a Communist “suspect”. Brooklyn Borough election records list a
preference with the Liberal Party in 1949 and 1950. The file also claims that Maslow had
been on the mailing list of the New York Conference for Inalienable Rights, named by
HUAC as a Communist front. There is no evidence of any action having been taken as a
consequence of this investigation; but the last four pages of the file comprise a White
House correspondence, in which Maslow is listed as one of a number potentially
attending the Medal of Science presentation in 1968 (when the medal was awarded to BF
Skinner), which reports the 1952-5 FBI investigation.

This was while Maslow was President of the APA, and his very achievement of that post
is indicative of his membership of the psychological establishment. Yet the FBI file
suggest he was ambivalently so; and we also have Maslow’s word for it. Frank Manuel
reports that, on receiving news of the Presidency, Maslow:

“kept asking morosely, what had become of him, when it was possible for those
positivistic piddlers to choose him. He must have taken a wrong turn – betrayal of
his ideal in some respect- if they could select him. I sat consoling him one
afternoon assuring him that that they were only trying to seize the instruments of
utopia, that the power elite always operated in that fashion, and that he would be untouched by them. And so he was.” (Manuel 1972:5).

Unlike many of his colleagues, there is no record of Maslow gaining or seeking US state funds for psychological research related for the Cold War effort; and his major involvement in organized psychology within the APA was with the relatively radical and campaigning SPSSI (Cooke 1999), serving on its council in the later 1940s and 1950s, and as its representative to the APA in the early 1960s.

This account of Maslow has been brief, and partial. It does nonetheless suggest that accounts of his life, certainly as they have appeared or are assumed in the management literature are one dimensional. In particular, describing him explicitly as, or tacitly implying he was, establishment figure with establishment politics, underplays the extent to which he claimed to oppose convention, with some justification. As with Cavallo’s argument with the counterculture generally, though, his was a particularly American unconventionalism. This becomes clearer as we move to the second stage of our situating of Maslow in the Cold War context, by looking at his and his work’s relationship to the Cold War culture we have previously described, and, in so doing, drawing heavily (but not solely) on Maslow’s own views on this.

**Maslow on Cold War Culture**

On Un/Americanism, Maslow wrote, as one chapter of Euspsychian Management had it of “enlightened management as a form of patriotism”, albeit a patriotism reclaimed from “the DAR or American Legion, John Birchers or whatever…” (1965:61). He claimed to have more concern for fellow US citizens than those of, for example, Bulgaria or Italy, was critical of the Europeanism of people like Manuel, who in vacations chose to travel in Europe rather than within the US. “This is because I am pro-American & Frank is anti-US (perhaps many intellectuals are; maybe even most are)”. This was harsh, given that one of Frank’s excursions to Europe had been as a US soldier in WW2 fighting anti-semitic Fascism, whereas Maslow only ever left the US to holiday in Mexico, and did not even work on the WW2 effort from within the US. Elsewhere, in a telling comparison, Maslow records challenging the critic of T-groups, Abraham Zaleznick to choose between experiencing a T-group or a trip to Rome. Zaleznick choses “Rome of course”, which to Maslow means “he doesn’t want to learn”, rather than he would learn more from Rome (Lowry 1979:1085).

But if Maslow was a deliberately parochial pro-American, this does not mean, as we have seen, that he was necessarily conservative. In an entry critical of student radicalism and the New Left, Maslow rehearses arguments about different versions of liberalism from the previous decade, but in particularly Maslovian terms:

“The real liberal is strong, enduring, fighting (but with good humour, non-neurotically) & is himself a people-lover and a nice man. . . .The true liberals are postambivalent about strength, winning, authority, responsibility, fatherhood,
leadership, achievement, decisions – in a word good cops, good ships captains, good generals & bosses, good administrators of justice, good superiors

The more usual “liberal” (put it in quotes because its phony & not real) is ambivalent to power, authority, responsibility etc….He must be perpetually out of power because of his unconscious fear of being in power, a father, a decider, unpopular, saying “No”, punishing, giving orders…Lots of psychoanalytic stuff available on the adult who secretly feels uneasy among the men & suddenly feels like a boy among them…like a child or a youth he will identify with the weak, the young, the losers, the small, powerless, the prey!...he must logically (though unconsciously) be against or hate or fear the opposite number….

But then this goes with the whole business of identification with the aggressor… On the one hand this involves the whole covert unconscious homosexual – the tendency to present to the dominant one, the dreams and the fantasies that go with offering yourself up to the strong one, who deserves to be the fucker & the penetrator & the mounter (it is suitable, fitting & proper, just & right, apposite, appropriate). Like my monkeys, the Gaze determines instantaneously who presents and who mounts. This secret sexual life of the ambivalent “liberal” might go over into overt behavior? Good research project (Lowry 1979:904).

One obvious parallel here is with Hook’s distinction between “realistic” and “ritualistic” liberals; later on he also talks of reading an article by Hook on student violence, which he puts in file on evil (Lowry 1979:957). In this entry, though, on McCarthyism, Maslow suggests he is closer to Truman’s liberalism, as he goes on to argue that “in the McCarthy era the weak “liberals” and “radicals” ran like rabbits, the real ones didn’t”(Lowry 1979:907).

This entry also confirm Buss’s general view on Maslow as a liberal, but situates him within its Cold War variations rather than in the greater tradition of Mill et al. It also apparently confirms Cullen on his primate informed biological essentialism, and Linstead on Maslow’s willingness to make sexualized statements for effect. Our understanding of that effect, and of Cullen’s analysis is however extended as we recognize its consistencies and resonances with Cold War culture. The other obvious parallel, in the general Cold War context, and in the specifics of the role of liberalism, is with Schlesinger’s linking of heterosexism and masculinity with liberal political correctness.

**Maslow as secular religion**

Maslow himself acknowledged how important his monkey work was to his worldview; but also its limits. Thus, early in the published diaries (Lowry 1979:19) he talks of the “old two-fold-nature-of-man-business-again: the animal and the animal transcender.” Much later he cites primate research as the one of transcendent events in his life: “...the great moment of discovery – insight, peak experience at Vilas Park Zoo, when there clicked into my head into a single vision my great moment of discovery and insight...” (Lowry 1979:972). Peak experiences are summarized by Hoffman (1988:340) as a brief,
transient moment of “bliss, rapture, great happiness, ecstasy or joy”, when we feel emotions “such as awe, reverence, and wonder” but also “more alive, integrated, “here and now” yet in touch with the transcendent and the sacred”.

Here Maslow simultaneously acknowledges and goes beyond the primate in his work. Peak experiences are particularly human (Maslow was after all a founder of humanist psychology) but also transcendent; and Maslow was clear that there was a relationship between religion and peak experiences (particularly in Maslow (1964)). His diaries repeatedly assert his opposition to organized religion and the supernatural; but Maslow’s was an unusual secularism, which did not reject religion entirely, and indeed had a positive view of some aspects of religious experience (eg in Maslow 1965). Maslow engaged in Unitarian T-groups, and with Jewish humanists, and while he was against “church religion” he supported “humanistic religion”, his Faith not in God, “but in the empirical reality of humans. There was a need to “separate the stupid religious answers, resting on supernatural from the sound honest deep religious questions”, such as “[w]hat is the good life?”, “how shall I believe?”, “What can I believe in? What is my relation to Nature? To other people? To myself? What can I hope for? What must I do? What is the right thing to do? What is justice? Truth? Good? Evil? How shall I have a good death? How shall I be happy, serene, content? …”and so on.

Maslow is therefore a bridge between religion and rationalism in Cold War America, as even the FBI recognised, citing humanist philosopher Corliss Lamont in its file on Erich Fromm:

“Lamont says that Maslow and Fromm provide churches a way to “save face” by stating that religious experiences are possible in a naturalized and humanized setting and that eventually the churches, which have battled humanism so fiercely, may try to say that Fromm and Maslow’s ideas where what they meant all the time”. (FBIb: 1969:9).

Peak experiences were however closely associated with self-actualization, and the self actualized were more likely to experience them. This aspiration for psychic nirvana was not inconsistent with the materialism of the Cold War. Patterson, without naming Maslow implies it was a culmination of Cold War consumerism:

“[a]s…expectations expanded, millions of Americans began to anticipate ever-greater social and technological progress, but also to believe they had “rights” to all sorts of blessings, including profound psychological satisfaction. They imagined, often narcissistically that they could achieve great personal “growth” and “self-actualization” (1996:452)

*From materialism to modernization*

Further, as Manuel has already pointed out for us, also a central part of Maslow’s theorizing was his vision of a utopia – for which he coined the term “euspsychia” – to which, he argued society should aspire. Maslow was aware that talking about the
“[u]topian, do-good, moral, ethical, purposive” distanced him from his business school friends like Bennis and McGregor (Lowry 1979:630); and as if to confirm this, when his Eupsychian Management (1965) was reprinted in 1998, with a new foreword from Bennis, and meta-commentaries by others throughout the original text, it was renamed, post-mortem, Maslow on Management. Where Maslow did belong, therefore, according to Manuel, the historian of ideas, was in the tradition of modern utopians, including Marx, who see society progressing to an ideal state of near perfection (Manuel 1971).

From here it in turn is clearly already possible to see in Maslow’s work another version of Cold War modernization theory, a narrative of human progress from the need to meet basic physiological needs, through to an ideal social state, in which people are able to realize their full potential. For Maslow, again, as his diaries make clear, this ideal social state was represented by the US. When Maslow saw his hierarchy as one of societies he simultaneously saw it as a hierarchy of countries, for some of whom authoritarian socialism is appropriate (eg Cuba, the Congo). In Western capitalism, in the line which immediately follows those cited by Herman (above), he adds “[t]he Marxian theory is then transcended, especially where labor unions are strong” (Lowry 1979:51).

Maslow’s ambivalent relation to Marxism reveals more of him as a modernization theorist. He is in the main disparaging: “I said I could never understand Marx. But I never really tried. Every taste of it repelled me.” (Lowry 1979: 521). But speaking of Fromm, Horney and Marcuse he also claims that “so many of them can be seen as trying to put Freud and Marx together….[b]ut in a way that’s what I’m doing too…from the start I was both the biologist – Freudian-instinct-chimpanzee scholar – and also the first psychologist to write about personality and culture, and to be really impressed with cultural determinism. And I still am” (Lowry 1979: 446); however he is also clear, that notwithstanding cultural determinism there are also pre-existing human essentials.

More to the point on modernization, he recognized that “my motivation theory crudely parallels the Marxian scheme – that living conditions & the level of societal development determine values, ideologies, Utopias. Need level determines ideology level (Weltanschauung level)”. Maslow himself, then, signals pretty clearly, that his hierarchy is also a version of Cold War modernization theory; and both Frank Manuel, and Maslow himself anticipate post-development theorists like Rist (1997) and Shanin (1997) in identifying similarities, at this broad level at least between US modernization theory (at least Maslow’s version thereof) as narrative of progress, and Marx. Maslow was unlike McClelland, though, in what he additionally offered was a vision (Utopian/ Eupsychian) of an ideal society, but one, which, based in human psychology neither overtly contradicted or competed with Marxist/left utopias. This was posited at a time when, as he himself correctly noted, the left was trying to bridge a perceived gap between psychology and Marx. When we put this together with Abbie Hoffman’s own personal goodwill towards Maslow, and Maslow’s own counterculturalism on personal development, then the affinity for Maslow’s work felt by Hoffman et al can be seen more as an unsought appropriation.

CONCLUSION
In this paper we have tried to set out a new understanding of Maslow, by situating his work explicitly in the Cold War context of his time. Maslow’s life and work do not emerge as any less complex or contradictory as a consequence of our account. But what does happen is that that complexity can be understood as emerging, not apropos of nothing, but a reflection of the Cold War society and culture in which Maslow lived and worked. Maslow described himself ‘as a bridge between the 2 worlds of radicals & conservatives [I] lived in both of them & could get along with both of them “(Lowry 1979:1115), and this was evident in his work as much as certain of his personal relationships. Maslow clearly was both an establishment and a countercultural figure; but, as Cavallo argues of the counterculture more generally, even his radicalism was of an American form, and underpinning everything was Maslow’s Americanism. On top of this though, was not just Maslow as Cold War contradiction and tension personified – modernizer without Marx, spiritual with the material, religion without God, and so on. What Maslow offered, using Cold War tropes and themes – modernization, the relation of the secular and the religious, the material and the spiritual, the role of liberals in society was a relatively populist set of ideas, indeed a language – a discourse – through which such tensions could be addressed, eased and even logically resolved.

Now, this last point points to the special status of Maslow alone, and raises the question about the extent to which we can generalize from Maslow as a case. We would argue, that alongside our analysis which addresses Maslow per se is much which can, and should, inform our understanding of the development of management ideas per se; if Maslow is unique in other ways, he is nonetheless an exemplar in this respect. Maslow’s diaries himself make clear that he moved in the same world as many leading management theorists; and it must be assumed that the whole mix of positive and negative Cold War institutional experiences, and influences of Cold War cultures applied to them as much as it did to Maslow. Those experiences and influences, however they worked through, were, we would argue inescapable. Yet, as our introduction argues, they are acknowledged hardly at all. Given their pervasiveness and strength, detailed by historians elsewhere (as we have seen, in Schrecker 1984, Herman 1995, and more generally by Patterson 1996), we would argue, unfashionably perhaps, that not only should we take the Cold War into account as a context in the post-War development of management ideas; but rather it should be considered as the context, as a grand narrative, or at the least one of a few grand narratives within accounts of management should be situated.

We have one coda to this final point. Much of our analysis has drawn on Maslow’s diaries, which explore, more than we have been able to suggest, the extent of Maslow’s reflexivity, and thinking about his work and the society in which it was conducted. They are the most substantial of his publications, and although published post-mortem, he indicates while writing them his hope that they might be published. For Maslow scholars, then, they are an important work. But, more generally, they have a significance which we believe has yet to be recognized, for the social history of management, as detailed, almost daily account of life in the mid-late 20th century of a US management scholar. Maslow, perhaps has one more incarnation to come, as our Pepys of his age.
FBIa (Federal Bureau of Investigation) (1954 - ) File on Abraham H. Maslow, Washington DC
FBIb (Federal Bureau of Investigation) (1969) Report on Sequoia Seminars
Maslow A (1964) Religions, Values and Peak Experiences. Cleveland: Ohio State University Press

Herman points out though, that “[t]he military spent staggering sums on many things during these years, and psychology, in relative terms at least was dirt cheap” (126).

A term first used in this context by Schein (1961) in his ONR research, who also described those bringing the conversation about as “change agents” (Cooke 1999).

Never mind, as Herman points out, that in many economies girls and women were and are important economic actors in their own right.

So and so describes the famous debates between Zaleznick and Argyris on this issue.

There is also an element of life imitating art here. The Catholic novelist Flannery O’Connor’s Wise Blood has its (anti)hero preaching for “”; and a charlatan competitor trying to steal his pitch.