The Ideal Manager in Austria and Germany:
A Comparative Analysis across Two Decades

JACOB EISENBERG
UCD SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
BELFIELD, DUBLIN 4
IRELAND
Tel: +353-17164774
e-mail: Jacob.Eisenberg@ucd.ie

Mark Gillett
Enterprise Ireland
DUBLIN
IRELAND

Catherine O'Toole
Deutsche Post World Net Inhouse Consulting
DUBLIN
IRELAND

Abstract

While globalization often contributes to homogenisation of business practices across countries, it can also lead to a further divergence of cultural values (House, 2004; Klarsfeld & Mabey, 2005). Thus, notwithstanding the globalisation of business practices, we can still find distinct managerial cultures even within Western Europe (Klarsfeld & Mabey, 2005; Communal & Senior, 1999). This study examined the relationship between national culture and management by comparatively analysing themes found in Austrian and German newspaper advertisements for managerial positions. We expand and extend Communal and Senior's study (1999), which discussed the implications of national culture on managerial values. To gain a better insight into the cultural dynamics gleaned through analysing archival data, we complemented our analysis with interviews with German and Austrian managers and local management experts.

Our findings indicated the emergence of four major themes between in 2006 ads compared to 1995: increased importance of communication skills, increased competition for talent, stronger elite preferences in regards to education, and convergence in managerial values. We conclude that the characteristics which are deemed most important for managers are influenced by the social, economic, cultural and political situation context. An increased level of globalisation and international involvement has led to the need for managers who possess the international and communication skills required to be able to lead multicultural teams. Although no uniform style of European Management can yet be identified, the data collected in this study would suggest that there is increasing evidence of directional convergence in managerial values.

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"The increasing connection among countries, and the globalization of corporations, does not mean that cultural differences are disappearing or diminishing. On the contrary, as economic borders come down, cultural barriers could go up, thus presenting new challenges and opportunities in business" (House, 2004, p. 5).

The influence of culture on the activities of an organisation and the implications of national culture on staffing policy have been widely documented by now (Segalla et al., 2001; Klarsfeld and Mabey, 2005; Communal and Senior, 1999). Globalisation, internationalisation, increased merger and acquisition activities, increased cross border trade, and the opening of new markets are all factors influencing the structure and activities of companies and these factors led to a convergence in business practices across countries. This convergence refers to business practices, but also to cultural values, consumer behaviour, and shared reference points and images (Lane, 1991).

The main aim of the present study is to examine the boundaries and parameters of socio-cultural effects on managerial practice and, specifically, the approach to selecting managers in two EU countries. Many of the studies that examined cultural effects on management have compared two or more very different cultures (e.g., they often represent 'East' and 'West'). Such comparisons are very beneficial from several perspectives but also have some drawbacks. One of the drawbacks is that the social, cultural and economic differences between the compared nations are so numerous and substantial that it is hard for both scientists and practitioners to conclude which socio-cultural factors relate or affect certain managerial practices.

We chose a somewhat different approach: our study examines the relationship between national culture and enacted managerial values in two countries belonging to the Germanic cluster. Building and expanding on the work by Communal and Senior (1999) and

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employing similar methodology, we compared wanted ads for managers in Germany and Austria in two strategically chosen time points: 1995 and 2006. This analysis allows for a more specific identification of both similarities and differences in two fairly similar cultural contexts. The following sections review HRM practices in Europe, discuss the dynamics and potential effects of the EU on labour-related practices, followed by a literature review of past research on cultural effects on managerial practices, focusing then to our study, its methodology, sample, results and findings.

Human Resource Management in Europe

Human Resource Management (HRM) and the role of people in organisations were studied early on by several organizational researchers (Dubin, 1951; Likert, 1967; and McGregor, 1960). Dubin, specifically, discussed different types of relationship between leader and bureaucracy and has identified three kinds of authority: that which is based upon rational grounds, that which is based upon traditional grounds and that which is based upon charismatic grounds.

HRM has developed in three main stages. The first stage viewed HRM as mostly a personnel function that is responsible for administrative tasks and payroll accounting. The progress in organizational science coupled with emergence of practical problems in particular areas of HRM paved the way for it to develop into a more centralised organisational function, with closer ling to organizational culture and a greater influence on the company's practices. Areas such as recruitment and selection, induction, training and development, compensation policies, leadership and motivation and personnel development received increased attention during this period. A third 'developmental' HRM stage followed where the human resource management department began to be treated as a service unit with an overall organisational perspective. This meant that the HR department was integrated into the strategic leadership of the company.

Putting these stages into a temporal perspective, we observe that the first stage dominated up until the mid 1960s; the second stage emerged from the 1960s to the mid 1980s, to be followed by the third stage which still dominant today. However, it should be

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noted that these stages are far from being homogenously and universally applied. Even today some companies employ a mix of these three stages where they complement each other. (Mayrhofer, 1995). Also, while globalisation has gradually helped HRM practices beyond the 'West', it should be noted that these three HRM stages most accurately describe dynamics found in N American and West/Central European countries and are less relevant to describing the evolution of HRM in other regions, such as Asia and Africa.

Moreover, even within Europe, HRM evolved in different ways and meaningful differences in HRM practices still exist even within the EU. In German speaking countries, HRM has had a relatively short history; the development of HRM in Austria, in many ways, has mirrored its development in Germany. Scholars such as Guido Fischer and August Marx, influenced by Catholic social doctrine, picked up interest the area in the 1960s and Marx took the first chair in Germany for HRM at the University of Mannheim in 1961. (Weber, 1985) From then on the area of HRM in German speaking countries was developed by authors such as Mayrhofer (1994), Hentze (1991), Kailer (1995) and Mugler (1995).

Mayrhofer further developed the research of HRM in Germanic countries by conducting a study on Austria where he examined recruitment practices, the background of management and training and development. His 1995 study identified the future trends of HRM in Austria, namely the acceleration of internationalisation, the promotion of employee mobility and pressure on labour law and social legislation. Mayrhofer also predicted that there would be a stronger integration of HRM into strategic leadership, a strengthening of service orientation, a passing on personnel responsibilities to line functions and smaller HRM departments.

Management Education and Managerial Values

As HRM has developed, it has increasingly emphasised the importance of educating and training managers. Management development programmes began to come to prominence mostly after World War II. Building on the work of Dubin (1951) and others, McGregor (1960) argued that formal management education has two main objectives, namely increasing managers' ability to learn from experience as well as increasing their

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ability to help subordinates to learn from experience and to learn how to create an environment conducive to members' growth.

More recently, Winterton and Winteron (1997) stressed that management education is most effective and is most likely to improve performance when it is linked with organisational strategy. For a strategy to be effective in guiding a company it needs to be closely aligned with the organisation's values. One of the roles of managers is to transmit, translate and reinforce the values and culture of their organisation. Therefore, we turn to discuss managers' values, their acquisition and impact, with a special focus on these dynamics in Germanic nations.

In order to get an insider's view into the integrity and goals of top managers, Hofstede et al (2002) studied junior managers who were working with business leaders while pursuing a part-time MBA degree. They discovered that differences found in managers' goals were affected by age, personality, education, prosperity and experience. In this study, which was conducted in over 20 different locations in 15 countries, the sample was classified into clusters. The Germanic cluster, which included the Netherlands, was named "The Founder" since responsibility towards employees, responsibility towards society and creating something new emerged as the most prevalent goals amongst top managers. They also reported that the goals of the German cluster are more oriented towards the business empire than towards personal wealth.

Responding to calls in the field of international management, Derr (1987) attempted to develop a theoretical framework that could integrate the many diverse empirical studies in cross-cultural and international management. To that end, his model distinguished between Latin, Germanic, Anglo-Dutch and Japanese culture clusters. Two decades later, Klarsfeld and Mabey (2004) and Mabey and Ramirez (2005) further addressed this challenge by asking whether such country models could still be relevant after all the globalisation that occurred since their inception. Mabey and his colleagues concluded that while the models showed evidence of convergence, there was no trend towards ultimate convergence and that the previously presented country models were still valid and meaningful.

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The Germanic Societal Model

The 'culture free' argument, made popular in the late fifties by authors such as Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison, and Myers (1960), states that as countries become industrialised their business cultures converge with other industrial countries with actions being dictated primarily by economic and technological rationale. On the other hand, the 'culture contingent' theory, which came to prominence through scholars such as Weber (1978) suggests that the environment, in which a business operates, including culture, influences the firm's operations. The basic argument in this theory is that despite convergence due to globalisation, culture continues to affect the very essence of behaviour, and consequently, distinct national management models will persist (Communal & Senior, 1999).

In post World War II Europe this theory was often illustrated using the example of the differences between Western German and English (UK) management styles, two countries which at the time had similar economic structures and were at a similar stage of industrialisation (Child & Kieser, 1979; Child, 1970; Lawrence, and Lorsch 1967; Hartmann, 1959; Hofstede, 1980). Many researchers, including Hofstede (1978), Hartmann (1959), Heller and Wildbert (1977), Rudi and Lawrence (1970) and Haire, Ghiselli, and Porter (1966) engaged in research to understand the cultural differences in relation to managerial responsibilities and executive authority such as how a manager gains the respect of subordinates. An example of a representative cultural difference can be found in Haire, Giselli, and Porter's (1966) 14 country study in which it was noted that West-German managers found almost no difference between the concepts "to direct" and "to persuade". In contrast, English managers clearly distinguished between the two terms and their uses. It was also observed that persuasion as a managerial strategy was perceived in Western Germany as close to underhand, while it was perceived favourably in England (Child and Kieser, 1979).

Another important aspect to analyse is the role a manager plays in the larger a societal context. Writing on cultural constraints in management theory, Hofstede (1993) observed that in stark contrast to Anglo-Saxon cultures like Britain and the USA, the

manager is by no means a cultural hero in Germany. He emphasised that because German workers were in general more skilled and qualified than American and British workers, they did not look to their manager to "motivate" them, but rather looked to them to be an expert who could solve very technical problems. This study showed that Germany has a very high rate of personnel in productive roles and a relatively low rate in management and leadership positions. He also pointed to the lack of business schools in Germany saying that they are virtually unknown.

Germanic Management Style

Wever and Allen (1992) in a comparison of Germany and the United States industry argued that due to the intense involvement of trade unions and employee representatives in Germany it is not possible to compare certain aspects of the German business and management model directly with others, as the German economy and business model is intrinsically linked with society as a whole. Inspired by the German translations for the free market and employers – *Sozial Marktwirtschaft* and *Sozial Partner*– which can be translated as the social market and social partners respectively, they introduced the paradigm of the German business as an active part of German society, rather than a passive actor, as is the case in the United States. This was supported with reference to the high involvement of work councils, trade unions, and government initiatives in Germany. As a result of this constant interaction, participation and cooperation are both seen as important abilities of a manager in attaining both personal and organisational goals within Germany and Austria (Szarbo et al., 2002). Szarbo et al. argue that this is not the traditional role of the Germanic manager, which is one of a lone ranger or maverick.

Continuing the exploration into the characteristics required of a manager or leader in the Germanic countries, Klarsfeld and Mabey (2005) found that the Germanic or Functional style of management was characterised by expertise-based competition supported by a specific and technical knowledge base, a lack of elitism, functional career ladders, and little multifunctional career movement or contact. Communal and Senior (1997) also found that

the German manager was expected to have a high level of technical knowledge relative to their European counterparts. Dore et al. (2002) noted that the high level of scientific and technical reliance in German management dates back to Napoleonic times. They state that the highly specialised education received through the *Technische Hochschulen* (technical institutes) and *Ingenierschule* (Engineering institutes) from the mid nineteenth century is what gave German industry its original competitive edge in terms of the chemical, metal, electrical, and heavy machinery industries giving birth to firms such as Siemens, Krupp and Thyssen. These companies were some of the first to outgrow family control. Hierarchies of salaried managers subsequently emerged, with the technically trained rising to the highest positions (Dore et al., 2002).

Merrette (2004) examined the difference in educational background between British and German managers and attempted to offer explanations as to why over 70% of directors of Germany's top 100 companies have doctorates compared to less than 3% of their British counterparts. An interesting observation of that study is regarding the specificity of college qualifications. For example, in Britain, having a degree is seen as an intellectual benchmark which opens opportunities in a lot of fields. However, in Germany having a degree is indicative of having specific skills in a certain occupation or industry. It would be strange for example for somebody with a liberal arts degree to work in industry in Germany whereas this would not be the case in Britain.

This is further emphasised by Communal and Senior (1999) who conducted an analysis of advertisements for management positions across Britain, Germany and France and assessed the criteria employers looked for. German companies were noted as looking for specific educational qualifications for specific jobs which was in contrast to British and French advertisements in which general educational criteria such as an engineering degree or a post-graduate business degree are required. It was shown that in Germany it would be common for a manager in industry to have completed both an apprenticeship and a post doctorate degree. They also stated that in Germany an emphasis is placed on engineering

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degrees, in contrast to other European countries where finance professionals are more likely to become managers.

Wever (1995) furthered the concept of the social partnership model of German human resource management. Findings indicated that differences in HRM policies within German and Austrian markets could be accounted for by the nature of government involvement in the market, the institutional security of organised labour, and the degree of centralisation and cohesion. Due to a high level of centralisation and cohesion, along with the institutional security of organised work ensured by aforementioned work councils and other trade union bodies, the Germanic system is characterised as a negotiated style, where costs of labour are relatively inflexible, and employers must compete at a value added level, including training and development for employees. It is noted however that this must be combined with low employee turnover to ensure that it is a viable practice.

This also concurs with Lawrence's (1992) conceptualisation of the German HRM market as being characterised by laws and rules, rather than expectation, custom, and best practice. This situation is explained as having arisen from the grafting of the HRM concept, originally Anglo-Saxon, into continental Europe, rather than an organic development of the practice in countries such as Germany. An example would be that the German personnel manager does not negotiate wages, a significant contrast with Britain or the United States, as in Germany and Austria this is achieved through a drawn out process of agreements and negotiations.

Tempel, Wachter, and Walgenbach (2005) present an overview of the German interpretation of international HRM. In doing this they analysed the personnel strategies of foreign companies working in Germany, and also in foreign subsidiaries of German companies. They found that foreign organisations, particularly American, were reluctant to adapt their personnel strategies. However due to the strong trade union power in Germany they were usually forced to adapt, particularly in terms of remuneration. They also found that German companies implement different strategies overseas than in their home country, since the same institutional setting is not in place.

Interdependence of the Austrian and German Economic Systems

The strong economic ties between Austria and Germany have had a significant influence on the development of the Austrian management culture. Germany accounts for approximately 42% of Austrian imports, and 35% of their exports (Szabo et al., 2002). Long before the European Union, the Austrian and German governments established a strong economic link. By the 1930's commercial law was nearly identical in the two countries, and prior to the introduction of the Euro, the Austrian Schilling had a stable exchange rate with the German Deutschmark (Szabo et al., 2002). However, due to two major changes, Austria's dependence and its need to conform to the economy of its larger neighbour has been significantly reduced. Following the opening up of Eastern Europe in the late nineties, Austria was well positioned to become an important economic player. It was also able to take advantage of cheap labour and was used as a hub for an Eastern European base by many multinationals (Szabo et al., 2002). Combined with joining the EU in 1995 this allowed Austria to prosper in a time when Germany was struggling with the economic effects of reunification.

By the early nineties many industry spectators and academics spoke of a convergence of cultures within Europe, specifically between Germany, France, and Britain due to both the influence of globalisation and the European Economic Community (now European Union) (Lane, 1990). There are various factors which could result in a convergence in the requirements of managers on both a global and a European scale. The free movement of labour allowed by the Maastricht treaty resulted in a market where managers were free to work in any country within the European Union (EU), and has also led to the requirement of a higher standard in the skill set of managers working in this environment, including improved language skills, higher performance, and recognised training (Segalla et al., 2001).

This convergence is further compounded by the high levels of cross border Merger and Acquisition (M&A) activity occurring within Europe's free market. In 2006, Germany and Switzerland alone were responsible for over US$200 billion worth of M&A activity,

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accounting for almost one fifth of the approximately US$1.6 trillion which took place in Europe last year (Economist, 2007). This trend can be expected to continue with further cross border mergers and acquisitions, and more countries entering the European Union.

The European Union affects the subject of this study in another way. Membership entails the implementation of laws which restrict the right to openly include a preference for many personal characteristics of employees such as gender, age, and marital status (Directive 2000/78). This affects what can be observed through public print media in terms of employer preferences (European Foundation for the improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007).

The Present Study

Communal and Senior's (1995) study, entitled "National Culture and Management: Messages conveyed by British, French and German advertisements for managerial appointments", examined the relationship between national culture and management by examining the messages conveyed by national newspapers' advertisements for management positions. Authors concluded that national culture influenced the characteristics deemed necessary for a manager.

The present study replicates this research eleven years later in Germany and extends the sample to Austrian advertisements for two similar time periods. We have reviewed above the nature and causes for the similarity between Austrian and German human resource management practices and how Austria's fate has been greatly influenced by its larger neighbour. However, we argue that the changing political and economic environment in the past twenty years affected the two countries in very different ways (Ritter, 1992). These countries entered the European Union at different stages: while Germany was a founding member of the then European Economic Community (EEC), Austria joined nearly 30 years later in 1995.

The repercussions of the fall of the communist regimes across Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980's and beginning of the 1990's were very different for Germany and Austria. Germany was forced to focus on domestic problems, such as the reintegration

of the former DDR (Deutsche Demokratische Republik – East Germany) following the fall of the Berlin wall, and the major economic burden which proceeded. At the same time Austria was able to position itself to business as the new gateway to the East and Vienna has attracted many of the world's largest multinationals as a base for their Eastern European operations. The timing of these changes created an opportunity for a longitudinal study, which could provide insights into drivers for changes in management values in these two countries. In the present study we aim to:

- Identify similarities and differences in the set of attributes, skills and educational background is expected of Austrian and German manager;
- To examine both intra- and inter-country differences in wanted ads trends between 1995 and 2006;
- To ascertain the degree to which managerial practices in these two countries undergone cultural convergence.

Method

This study uses a similar methodology to that of Communal and Senior (1999) and further develops it in several ways. Firstly, the sample was chosen in a more deliberate qualitative way for the 2006 samples, as opposed to the random sampling used in the Communal and Senior's original study (1999), which was also employed for the 1995 sample in this paper. All potentially relevant advertisements were examined and we chose among them the most relevant ones, based on the study's objectives. We also increased the sample size corresponding to the increased volume and diversity in advertisements found in 2006 as compared with 1995. Finally, we supplemented the archival method with expert interviews, which helped us gain a broader insight into the issues along with explanations for some of our findings.

Sample

<u>Print Media</u>

Media framing is a particularly effective way of gaining competitive intelligence in regards to competitor's organisational culture and management style, talent pool activities, and changes in organisation and job advertisements are usually rich in qualitative data (Cullen, 2003). The use of newspaper advertisements also allowed for a direct comparison with the earlier work of Communal and Senior (1999) who claimed that "advertisements for managers can be assumed to reflect the spontaneous expectations and demands made upon managers in a particular culture." As print media is acquired from the public domain it is exempt from any legal or ethical issues often associated with obtaining documentation for research.

Theoretical sampling was used for both selecting advertisements from the print media and interview candidates. Advertisements and candidates selected were those which were expected to contribute most to the development of emerging theories. In keeping with this method, theoretical saturation was used to determine sample size. This meant that when it was found that further advertisements and interviews were not adding new information to the study and similar data was recurring, this line of research was deemed to be saturated, and research of this form was concluded (Seale, 2004). The original sample used by Communal and Senior was of 10 randomly selected advertisements. For the 1995 comparison between Austria and Germany we kept a similar sample size in order for the comparison to be accurate and representative.

Due to the greater number and more diverse range of advertisements available in 2006, a greater number of advertisements were needed to reach data saturation and therefore we increased the 2006 Austrian and German samples. In the 1995 sample, 10 Der Standard advertisements were chosen from a total of 12, while for the 2006 sample 20 advertisements were chosen from a total of 61 for Der Standard, and from 50 in the FAZ.

<u>Selection of Newspapers</u>

"Der Standard" was selected as the Austrian newspaper as it was seen as most comparable to "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", "L'Express" and "The Sunday Telegraph", which were used Communal and Senior's 1999 study. One of their key selection criteria was that the paper should be available nationwide so as to avoid regional biases. It was also important to choose a newspaper that had a similar readership in terms of demographics, education and social issues to the ones previously used and "Der Standard" best fit the criteria sought. With a market share of 396,000 (4.4%), it is not the most popular newspaper nationwide in Austria but it is the most popular newspaper amongst business people in Austria with 60% of managers reading the paper daily (Der Standard Online, 2007). In the mid-nineties Der Standard had a market share of approximately 4.4% and had established itself as having an above average young readership with a high disposable income (Der Standard Online, 2007).

The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), which was used in Communal and Senior's original study, has a readership of approximately 1,165,000 (weekend edition) and is often used as the reference point for the German business world. It is a leading German newspaper available throughout the Germanic countries, and was therefore used again for the newer sample (FAZ, 2006, Translation, 2007).

The advertisements chosen were based upon the title of the job. To ensure that all advertisements in the sample were for management positions, only advertisements that had either "Manager" or "Geschäftsführer" (both mean manager in German) in the title were selected.

We obtained archived newspapers from the same week (Week of June 21st 1995) as in Communal and Senior (1999) and replicated their analysis criteria. Subsequently, copies of "Der Standard" and "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" were obtained from the same period in 2006 in order to make a comparison with the 1995 sample.

<u>Interviews</u>

Interviewees were selected through the authors' personal networks in Germany and Austria, using snowball or network sampling. The eight interviewees consisted of six German or Austrian nationals working as managers or management consultants for German or Austrian companies in Germany or Austria and of two university professors with experience in both countries. Most practitioners were personally involved in recruiting.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a private place where they could not be overheard and each interview lasted approximately 35 – 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded onto laptops, transcribed, and the transcripts examined by both researchers for themes. After completion of the paper all recordings and transcripts were destroyed. This professional and ethical interview process helped to develop a rapport with the candidates, which facilitated a frank and open dialogue.

Data Analysis

We followed Communal and Senior's (1999) content analysis method to analyse the advertisements following state of the art practices (e.g., Leiss et al, 1990; Seale, 2004). We used similar headings to those chosen by Communal and Senior: "Role and Personal Attributes", "Educational Requirements", "Experience Required", "Package", "Method of Responding to an Advertisement" and "Other".

The existing model was used as a framework upon which new subcategories could be developed. Following analysis of the advertisements, subcategories were developed. The trends and themes which had emerged from independent examination were then combined and compared. The authors of the present study clustered the characteristics which appeared into broader groupings. For example characteristics such as "determination", "enthusiasm" and "initiative" were grouped into a "Motivation" cluster. The characteristics mentioned in the advertisements were grouped together or coded to reflect the emerging themes and sub-themes. An example of this is the category "Role and Personal Attributes".

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Other subcategories of this category which were developed included motivation, team work and co-operation, creativity etc. (detailed examples are available from the authors).

Even though advertisements give a guideline of the criteria that the ideal management candidate should possess, there are important characteristics which companies look for in a manager that may have not been implicitly mentioned in newspaper advertisements. We explored this in the interviews. Interviewees also offered their opinion regarding the sample chosen. Important words and phrases, and at times concepts, were grouped into themes and compared. Interviewees were again contacted to ensure that the meaning of their statements had been interpreted correctly by the researchers.

Language

The majority of advertisements chosen were in German. The authors having studied German extensively for a number of years were able to translate the content accurately and sought advice from German native speakers with a management background regarding colloquialisms. When language problems were encountered, the difficulty was noted and a vocabulary and phrase list was made which was examined later with a German native speaker. An example of this problem was the translation of the work *Durchsetzungsvermögen*. This word can be translated as being assertive or authoritative. As the authors did not feel that this was an accurate translation they discussed the interpreted meaning with German speaking colleagues. Responses included references to managerial ability, the ability to win an argument, the ability to influence decisions, the ability to convince, the ability to assert oneself in a team setting, and the ability to get things done or see things through, to have a certain clout, strength of character, and competitive edge (leo.org, canoo.net, 2007). These problems were referenced in the spreadsheet and when the language problem was clarified with the native speaker, the authors returned to the spreadsheet and made the relevant corrections. What was understood by the interviewees regarding some of the definitions which arose in the management articles was also addressed in the interviews.

Findings

Table 1: Salient Criteria of Firms for Managers in 1995

Characteristic	German Sample	Austrian Sample
Roles and Personal Attributes	Emphasis on the willingness and ability to fit and work within a team	Emphasis on enthusiasm/personal engagement, communication and assertiveness; 7 advertisements out of 10 mention at least one of these characteristics. Approx. 2 – 4 characteristics are listed per advertisement.
Educational Requirements	The educational requirements tend to be very specific and very dependent on the job offer. For instance, for the position of product development manager, the educational requirements are: a chemist, mineralogist, or engineer with a similar speciality	Half (5) of the advertisements are very specific in their educational requirements. This refers to either the type of institution (e.g., WU, TU, etc.) or the type of course (Business, Engineering etc.) Speciality/Major of the course only mentioned once
Experience	Experience requirements correspond to the post advertised; 3 advertisements give some specific indication as to the preferred age of the suitable candidate	Specific industry or role experience required in 9 of 10 advertisements. 4 of all advertisements give specific indication as to the preferred age of the suitable candidate
Package	A package is only mentioned in 3 of the 10 advertisements	4 out of 10 refer to remuneration. Actual salary is never mentioned. Phrases like "remuneration attractive" or "interesting remuneration" used. Development opportunities are also mentioned in 4 advertisements.
Responding	Nothing specific is mentioned for responding apart from, in two cases, a request for the applicant's salary ambitions	7 of 10 advertisements were conducted through a recruitment agency. Information regarding the employer is not usually provided. Apart from one request for a photograph, no application guidelines were given.
Other	2 advertisements require an applicant speaking 3 or 4 languages	Fluent English was required for half (5) of all advertised positions. Actual name of the company only mentioned 3 times. None of the advertisements required a foreign language other than English. Role descriptions were absent or minimal.

Source: Based on Communal and Senior (1999)

Table 2: Salient Criteria of Firms for Managers in 2006

Characteristic	German Sample	Austrian Sample
Roles and Personal Attributes	Most advertisements look for 7 – 10 criteria. Communication and co-operation skills are mentioned as being important in 14 of 20 advertisements. International aptitude is mentioned 10 times. Being a team player, displaying leadership and creativity are all asked for 7 times. Having business acumen and the ability to see things through is mentioned in 8 advertisements.	Most advertisements look for 8-10 criteria from potential candidates. Communication skills are dominant and requested in the 15 of 20 advertisements. Leadership skills and business acumen are also mentioned 6 and 13 times respectively. International aptitude and organisational skills while less prominent were each mentioned 6 times.
Educational Requirements	11 advertisements mention a specific field of study; however few (3) seek a specific institution. 5 of these looked for a very specific qualification and grade results	The field of study was mentioned for 10 of the posts. The majority of these were for business degrees, and specific technical degrees rarely surfaced. 12 of the posts required a degree. Almost all advertisements which refer to a degree refer to a specific type of university (Business University, Technical University).
Experience	14 looked for significant industry or role related experience or knowledge. A specific amount of experience required, ideal age of the candidate, and preferred previous employers are all occasionally referred to.	All advertisements asked for industry or role related experience, with 9 stipulating a specific time frame.
Package	The majority do not mention any package at all. Remuneration, benefits, and development opportunities were rarely mentioned, 3 times each.	Opportunities for career or personal development and further qualifications are mentioned in 10 of the advertisements. Remuneration is rarely mentioned (3).
Responding	7 of 20 advertisements ask the candidate to specify salary expectations. Some requested that the application be in English. Many request online application and provide link for more information.	7 of 20 advertisements were conducted through agencies. In these instances the name of the employer is often also provided.
Other	Some advertisements were in English. IT Skills are required for 5 one quarter of roles. Languages were noted as preferable for few companies. English was required for 9 roles. Role description is frequently included.	14 advertisements required fluency in English. 3 request a second foreign language. IT Skills are required for 5 of the roles. Role description is frequently included.

Source: Data Analysis

Table 3: Salient Criteria for Managers in Austria in 1995 and 2006

Characteristic	1995 (10 Advertisements)	2006 Sample (20 advertisements)
Roles and Personal Attributes	Emphasis on enthusiasm/personal engagement, communication and assertiveness; 7 advertisements out of 10 mention at least one of these characteristics. Approx. 2 – 4 characteristics are listed per advertisement.	Emphasis on enthusiasm/personal engagement, communication and assertiveness; 7 advertisements out of 10 mention at least one of these characteristics. Approx. 2 – 4 characteristics are listed per advertisement.
Educational Requirements	Half (5) of the advertisements are very specific in their educational requirements. This refers to either the type of institution (e.g., WU, TU, etc.) or the type of course (Business, Engineering etc.) Speciality/Major of the course only mentioned once	Half (5) of the advertisements are very specific in their educational requirements. This refers to either the type of institution (e.g., WU, TU, etc.) or the type of course (Business, Engineering etc.) Speciality/Major of the course only mentioned once
Experience	Specific industry or role experience required in 9 of 10 advertisements. 4 of all advertisements give specific indication as to the preferred age of the suitable candidate	Specific industry or role experience required in 9 of 10 advertisements. 4 of all advertisements give specific indication as to the preferred age of the suitable candidate
Package	4 out of 10 refer to remuneration. Actual salary is never mentioned. Phrases like "remuneration attractive" or "interesting remuneration" used. Development opportunities are also mentioned in 4 advertisements.	4 out of 10 refer to remuneration. Actual salary is never mentioned. Phrases like "remuneration attractive" or "interesting remuneration" used. Development opportunities are also mentioned in 4 advertisements.
Responding	7 of 10 advertisements were conducted through a recruitment agency. Information regarding the employer is not usually provided. Apart from one request for a photograph, no application guidelines were given.	7 of 10 advertisements were conducted through a recruitment agency. Information regarding the employer is not usually provided. Apart from one request for a photograph, no application guidelines were given.
Other	Fluent English was required for half (5) of all advertised positions. Actual name of the company only mentioned 3 times. None of the advertisements required a foreign language other than English. Role descriptions were absent or minimal.	Fluent English was required for half (5) of all advertised positions. Actual name of the company only mentioned 3 times. None of the advertisements required a foreign language other than English. Role descriptions were absent or minimal.

Source: Communal and Senior (1999) and Data Analysis

Table 4: Salient Criteria of Firms for Managers in Germany in 1995 and 2006

Characteristic	1995 (10 advertisements)	2006 (20 advertisements)
Roles and Personal Attributes	Emphasis on the willingness and ability to fit and work within a team	Most advertisements look for 7 – 10 criteria. Communication and co-operation skills are mentioned as being important in 14 of 20 advertisements. International aptitude is mentioned 10 times. Being a team player, displaying leadership and creativity are all asked for 7 times. Having business acumen and the ability to see things through is mentioned in 8 advertisements.
Educational Requirements	The educational requirements tend to be very specific and very dependent on the job offer. For instance, for the position of product development manager, the educational requirements are: a chemist, mineralogist, or engineer with a similar speciality	11 advertisements mention a specific field of study; however few (3) seek a specific institution. 5 of these looked for a very specific qualification and grade results
Experience	Experience requirements correspond to the post advertised; 3 advertisements give some specific indication as to the preferred age of the suitable candidate	14 looked for significant industry or role related experience or knowledge. A specific amount of experience required, ideal age of the candidate, and preferred previous employers are all occasionally referred to.
Package	A package is only mentioned in 3 of the 10 advertisements	The majority do not mention any package at all. Remuneration, benefits, and development opportunities were rarely mentioned, 3 times each.
Responding	Nothing specific is mentioned for responding apart from, in two cases, a request for the applicant's salary ambitions	7 of 20 advertisements ask the candidate to specify salary expectations. Some requested that the application be in English. Many request online application and provide link for more information.
Other	2 advertisements require an applicant speaking 3 or 4 languages	Some advertisements were in English. IT Skills are required for 5 one quarter of roles. Languages were noted as preferable for few companies. English was required for 9 roles. Role description is frequently included.

Source: Data Analysis

1995 German Sample

There is a strong emphasis on ability and willingness to work in a team. Additionally very specific educational requirements were sought which were dependent on the job offer. A minority of advertisements require that the candidate could speak 3 or 4 foreign languages.

2006 German Sample

The emphasis on teamwork has been overtaken by a stronger emphasis on communication and the ability to cooperate. These were mentioned in the majority of advertisements. The amount of attributes looked for by companies increased from the 1995 sample. Leadership, creativity and teamwork were also regularly mentioned as crucial attributes. The ability to see things through and business acumen were also important. Educational requirements showed little signs of change from the '95 sample, remaining specific and dependent on the job. Industry related experience was crucial and mentioned in nearly every advertisement. The preferred previous employers were also noted in some advertisements, particularly in industries with large players, for example a leading fast moving consumer goods firm, or one of the big four audit and accounting firms. English was necessary for most German management positions however other foreign languages were less important than in 1995. A small number of advertisements referred to them as being advantageous, but not required.

1995 Austrian Sample

This sample showed that many employers looked for enthusiasm, personal engagement, communication skills and assertiveness in a candidate. Austrian companies in 1995 did not appear to be as specific with the educational requirements they expected of their managers when compared to the German sample and the 2006 Austrian sample. Industry and role experience, as in the German sample were seen as very important. However recruitment agencies were often used as a tool for the advertisement and recruitment process. The company name and role descriptions were often not provided and

when it was, little information was given in comparison with the 2006 Austrian sample. The ideal age bracket for the successful candidate was also mentioned in various advertisements.

2006 Austrian Sample

As in the German sample, communication surfaced in the later sample as a crucial attribute for potential managers. This is a change from the focus of the 1995 sample. The 2006 advertisements were much more informative, in relation to both the position being advertised and the company offering the job, than the 1995 sample often giving an introductory paragraph about the company, history, products, achievements, and other related issues. The ideal age for the candidate was still occasionally mentioned despite the earlier mentioned EU directive which restricts the right to openly include a preference for characteristics such as age, gender and marital status (Directive 2000/78). (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2007)

Discussion

As shown above, many issues arose during data analysis. However four were most prevalent in the findings from the advertisements and interviews. On analysis of all data the major issues which arose when the newer samples were compared with the older were the increased importance of communication skills for managers in both countries, the changing nature of the market to a more competitive environment, the specificity of education, and an apparent convergence between the two countries.

Communication

Robson and Tourish (2005) stated that improved internal communication helps organisations to be more successful. As can be seen in Table 2, communication skills were the personal attributes most frequently asked for in the 2006 sample. This was not the case in the 1995 study. The increased level of globalisation combined with Austria's accession

into the European Union in 1995 and new Eastern European focus has led to a more international environment in the country. One interviewee commented: "Before Austria joined the European Union, it was extremely provincial. This has changed in the last ten years. It is not sufficient for Austrian companies to compete on a provincial scale anymore; they must now compete on a European level".

The free movement of trade and labour that comes with being an EU member has acted as a catalyst for this. Managers are dealing with different cultures on a day to day basis more often than their 1995 counterparts did. They therefore need to possess excellent communication skills. This finding adds significance to House's affirmation that companies increasingly require a more international mindset in regard to the way in which they communicate with their employees and customers (House, 2004). This point was emphasised in one interview with a German manager who works in Austria: "As a German in Austria, I am seen as a more direct person. For example, if one of my sub-ordinates is doing something wrong in Germany, I will pull them aside and tell them, "Hey, you are doing this wrong, I want to see it done like this" and there is no problem. It's just the way we do things. Here, however, I have to be a lot more sensitive with people I work with as the culture dictates that people do not like to be criticised as much and as directly as in Germany. I have found this is the case with Austrian and international co-workers."

It is therefore important for managers in both cultures to understand the environment in which they are working and to adapt to it. House supports this contention further when commenting that the implications of the increased cross border mergers and acquisitions is that firms are now encountered with global employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, and creditors, which leads to increasing interconnectivity and complexity (House, 2004). It is clear therefore that increased internationalisation leads to the need for improved communication, and relates to many interpersonal skills including cultural aptitude and social competence.

Specificity of Education

In Communal and Senior's (1999) study, German managers are required to have many *fachspecifisch* (subject specific) qualifications. The example given in the original study was of an advertisement for a product development manager. The requirements were that along with business knowledge, the applicant should be a chemist, mineralogist, or engineer with a similar qualification. At that time, business knowledge was expected to be acquired through experience, and degrees should have been focused on specific technical skills required for the role e.g. a degree in chemical engineering. In the 1995 and 2006 samples references were made to degrees from universities, but none to qualifications from Fachhochschulen.

In the Austrian sample of 1995 little reference was made to particular subject matter studied at third level, however the type of institution attended was often referred to specifically, with many advertisements referring to a preferred type, for example *Wirtschaftsuniversität* (Business University). In the later sample advertisements from both countries subject matter is often referred to; however the naming of a specific type of third level institution is even more prevalent.

In Communal and Senior's (1999) study, and also findings from Klarsfeld and Mabey (2005), the Germanic countries are mentioned as not being elitist in terms of universities, as in comparison with France's Grand Ecoles. However, this would not appear to be the case in these samples. Authors such as McCarthy and Puffer (1999) have suggested that a more technical, practice oriented third level training with cooperation of business is required for future managers. This is the primary function of the Fachhochschulen, however the data collected shows that elitism in both Germany and Austria persists. Some advertisements requested that applicants come from universities. Some advertisements requested that graduates came from very specific institutions, particularly in the Austrian sample. Several advertisements requested that the candidates had studied at the Wirtschaftsuniversität

(Business University), of which there is only one in Austria, or in the Technisches Universität (Technical University) of which there are only two (Universität Wien Online, 2007).

Derr (1987) and later Klarsfeld and Mabey's (2005) Germanic models and the research which supported them suggested that in the Germanic countries there is an emphasis on specific subject related qualification. This research, using a different sample, identified a preference for candidates from elite institutions or fields of study rather than those with a more specific qualification. The earlier research had indicated that this model was mainly specific to French culture, particularly in relation to the *Grande Ecoles*. Though no specific elite universities in the traditional sense exist in the field of business in either Germany or Austria, some institutes are valued as being elite, or superior to others. An example of this would be the preference for the Technical or Business Universities, with general universities arising as a second preference, and Fachhochschulen not being mentioned. Degrees for subjects such as law and engineering are also held in particularly high regard, and graduates will be considered for positions although their field of studies are not directly relevant. The findings in this study however would indicate that although it may sometimes be preferred not to openly state a preference for more elite students, the tendency to recruit students from elite institutions or fields of study over their equally qualified counterparts exists. One interviewee stated: "Our ads don't say that you had to go to university, and my company doesn't have a rule that you have to have a degree from a university, but let's just say I know there isn't anyone in my office that went to a Fachhochschule……our company recruits law graduates from the Universities because they are, you know, the top students, even if they know less about the job".

McGregor's (1960) argument, which is still as important and valid today, is that the individual must take an active involvement in his or her development in order for it to be successful. If the manager becomes an active party to the decisions that are made in relation to their education they are likely to make the most of the opportunities that are presented. If, however, they act simply as a passive agent being rotated between departments or sent to classes, promoted or otherwise manipulated, they are less likely to

be motivated to develop themselves further (McGregor, 1960). This could explain why candidates who come from elite universities or courses, though not specifically related to the role are given preference. The candidate, through proven performance in succeeding in an elite environment, and career planning through internships and further achievements has proven their active involvement in their career and potential success. This would appear to be more important to many recruiters than role or industry related knowledge.

Increased Competition

Mayerhofer predicted in 1995 that following Austria's entry into the European Union, and the subsequent opening of its personnel market to the other member states, that the country's traditional human resource management structure would experience significant changes. Segalla et al. (2001) have suggested that with the implementation of free movement of labour throughout the union two major differences are apparent from the recruitment market for managers. Firstly, the competition for talent is much fiercer than previously as potential employees are much more mobile and willing to travel than before. Secondly the new European managers, even those working only within their own country, require a much wider skill set than their predecessors (Mayerhofer, 1995, Segalla et al, 2005). Both of these changes were apparent in the samples from 2006 when compared to those from 1995. This is supported by House's (2004) assertion that globalisation is resulting in increased competitiveness in the search for managerial talent. The prominent difference in the Austrian samples from 1995 and 2006 would suggest that entry into the European Union has accelerated these trends.

The higher level of competition in the market is apparent from both interview and print media data. Despite an increased use of the internet to advertise for managerial positions, and an unemployment rate that has remained low and relatively constant (OECD, 2007), the number of managerial positions advertised in Austria increased significantly. "I need graduates for internships, but I just can't get any good people. I mean we're a big

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company, people know us, we can offer a lot, but I just can't good people. I am even willing to settle for someone with only basic German skills, but I just don't get them".

The nature of the advertisements also showed a marked change. The internationalisation of the labour market and increase in competition has caused companies to be more professional in the advertising of jobs. In the 1995 sample little or no information was given regarding the employer, many were not even named. In 2006 small biographies describing the companies' activities and values were often included. Role descriptions were sometimes included in the earlier sample, but their frequency and complexity had increased significantly by the later sample. Personal development opportunities and further qualifications were also frequently mentioned in the later Austrian sample to make the position more attractive to applicants.

Despite relatively similar positions being offered in both samples, the number of characteristics and skills required had also a marked rise. Interview candidates suggested that this rise resulted as much from the increased complexity of the jobs as the increased competition for talent. An example of the strategic use of characteristics such as creativity or a dynamic personality in advertisements as a way to lure candidates was given by one interviewee coming from a financial services background, who stated: "Of course everyone says that you need to be creative for this job, to find new solutions, new ways to do things, but actually when you get in to the job you have to do it like everyone else, that's the job."

Another interviewee also stated that although preferred, in practice it was not necessary for candidates to be in possession of a litany of positive attributes. "Basically I am only interested in two things; if you can do your job, and if you can get on with your colleagues. Everything else is just rubbish. Of course if you already have good presentation or IT skills, or you speak fluent French, well, great, but if not we can outsource it."

This quote may indicate that although many of the advertisements did not explicitly mention industry knowledge or technical skills, it may be assumed that the candidate will be aware that these are relevant for the post. It would also imply the control of technical skills required for the position, although it was not explicitly stated, when the ability to perform the

task is referred to – to do the job. Therefore it can be argued that for some firms having the necessary technical skills to do the job will be more important than any personal characteristic.

Another reason stemming from the interviews for the increase of named characteristics and requirements for applicants was that a litany of achievements such as languages learned and internships completed, though not necessarily relevant for the job can be used as a gauge for the applicants natural ambition, curiosity, and engagement. One active recruiter stated: "I would expect that graduates had already done a few internships. Even if they were not in the area it shows that they are not the kind of person who is happy to sit in every day watching TV, that they are engaged on another level."

Mayerhofer (1995) foresaw that in Austria companies would begin to perform many HRM activities which had been previously outsourced. The number of agencies present in the sample would suggest this is true. In 1995 the majority of the advertisements were placed by recruitment agencies, and the names of the companies were not given. By 2006 the majority of advertisements were placed by the companies themselves, which were named and information given. Another reason for this could be that in 1995 many companies were entering the Austrian market for the first time, and hoping to use Austria, and particularly Vienna, as a base for Central and Eastern European activities. As these companies had yet to establish a base in Austria, the use of a recruitment agency would be common. The information which could be gained from the nature of the jobs advertised in the 1995 sample would suggest that this was often the case. The high volume of agency reliance in 1995 may therefore be seen as a temporary situation due to changes in the business environment, rather than a regular Austrian business practice.

Convergence and Globalisation

Both the interviews conducted and the analysis of the newspaper advertisements pointed to the fact that cultural convergence has increased between Austria and Germany. One interviewee referred to development of a "homogeneous" culture between the two

countries. "When I first taught in Germany and Austria in the 80s, you could really hear the regional dialogues and could say "Yes, he's from Bavaria, or she's from Vienna!". But now everyone is speaking "Hochdeutsch" (High German) and it's impossible for me to tell where anyone comes from anymore. I would say that in general there is little if any difference between my Austrian and German students".

This is supported by the newspaper analysis in which there are many similarities between the roles and personal attributes required by German companies and Austrian companies in the 2006 sample. As can be seen in the Table 2, there are very few differences between the German and Austrian columns in most areas. An example where Austria has converged to a more Germanic standard can be seen in education. The 1995 Austrian sample shows that educational requirements were only asked for some of the time compared to the German sample where they were nearly always mentioned. The 2006 Austrian sample shows however that education is now more important in that companies are more specific in the type of education they ask for, often mentioning the specific institution e.g. WU, TU. Attributes such as leadership and international aptitude also frequently appear in both the German and Austrian sample.

This finding challenges House's assertion that "the increasing connection among countries, and the globalization of corporations, does not mean that cultural differences are disappearing or diminishing. On the contrary, as economic borders come down, cultural barriers could go up, thus presenting new challenges and opportunities in business". (House, 2004: 5). However interview data would imply that there are in fact important differences, for example in interpersonal conduct. One American interviewee with experience working in both countries stated: "One difference is that in Austria the people are a lot calmer. In Germany if you knock over a cup of coffee they practically call the police whereas in Austria, they are like, ok, it happens."

Little explicit evidence of cultural difference is shown in the results from the print media analysis, though differences are referred to by interview subjects. This situation can be explained using Schein's (1999) iceberg model. Schein used an iceberg as a metaphor

for culture. He stated that the majority of what makes up a culture, much like an iceberg, is below the surface, and not apparent to the casual observer. To gain a deeper insight is much more difficult. This would explain that while the print samples appear to offer little differences between the countries and there is evidence of convergence, different behaviours, values, and traditions persist. "The increasing connection among countries, and the globalization of corporations, does not mean that cultural differences are disappearing or diminishing. On the contrary, as economic borders come down, cultural barriers could go up, thus presenting new challenges and opportunities in business" House, 2004: 5.

The findings give weight to Communal's (1995) original assertion that "European management is not yet born" in that while the profiles of managers in Austria and Germany are relatively similar there are still inherent differences that exist and should not be ignored. In summary the impact of globalisation, internationalisation, and a changing economic environment has increased the need for communication skills amongst management, has increased competition for management talent and mobility of managers, and has led to a degree of convergence between Germany and Austria. However pragmatism in terms of a preference for selecting managers from different educational backgrounds is not evident from the sample. Elitism with regard to the third level institution attended by managers was shown to exist in both samples, and was particularly strong in Austria.

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