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**Examining the stability of managerial behavior: A
replication of Henry Mintzberg's classic study 30 years
later**

by
Stefan Tengblad

Gothenburg Research Institute
School of Economics and Commercial Law
Göteborg University
Box 600
SE 405 30 Göteborg
stefan.tengblad@gri.gu.se

Abstract

A replicating study about Swedish CEOs reveals a different pattern of behavior compared to the original study of Henry Mintzberg. The CEOs in the new study for instance spent much more time on meetings with subordinates, concerning information exchange and ceremony and less time on tasks of administrative character such as desk work and decision-making. The diverging results compared to the Mintzberg study are explained by changing conceptions about the role of the top executive. Paraphrasing Selznick's terminology, the participants in the new study acted more like institutional leaders than administrative managers. In the end of the article, theoretical implications of the diverging results are discussed.

Examining the stability of managerial behavior: a replication of Henry Mintzberg's classic study 30 years later ¹

Introduction

In 1973, Henry Mintzberg published the seminal study "*The Nature of Managerial Work*". The book included both an extensive presentation and synthesis of previous research and a summary of his intensive study of the working behavior of five chief executives. Mintzberg formulated on the basis of this vast material ten managerial roles and he made 13 propositions about the characteristics of managerial work (Mintzberg, 1973: 51-53). In the propositions Mintzberg presented a view of the top executive as reactive, concentrating attention on current events and working at a relentless pace with fragmented and diverse activities preferably conducted through verbal interactions. The propositions also included more specific descriptions of the general use of time towards external contacts. The propositions describes managerial work in a rather precise and well defined manner based on the assumption that structural conditions determine managerial behavior to a large extent.

30 years later "*The nature of Managerial Work*" is still used as an important source of reference for informing management research and education. One reason for this seminal status is that Mintzberg's results were confirmed by Kurke & Aldrich (1983). in a replicating study with the telling title; "*Mintzberg was right!*" These authors were amazed of the amount of similarities of executive behavior between the studies and the robustness of Mintzberg's propositions. Kurke and Aldrich explained the minor differences that were revealed in individual behavior with four contingency factors (organizational size, industry, degree of environmental stability, and public versus private ownership). The article ends with a suggestion of complementary studies in different contingency settings in order to further specify and refine Mintzberg's basic propositions (ibid. p. 983).

The picture one is given through Mintzberg's ambitious and talented work and the replicating study of Kurke & Aldrich is that managerial work is one of a stable phenomenon, mainly mediated by structural contingencies. The strong emphasis

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on structural conditions inherent in the work itself and the surrounding contingencies leaves little room for executive idiosyncrasies and the exercise of different management philosophies.

However, countless number of management books have been published during the eighties and nineties advocating different management techniques and leadership styles than those prevailing at the time of Mintzberg's study. A standard argument in such books is that the society and business life is changing rapidly and that managers need to change their behavior accordingly. The development of management thought during the last 30 years have been examined by Barley & Kunda (1992). They coin the period between 1955-1980 as the era of "systems rationalism". Characterizing this period was according to these authors a reliance on computer science, modeling, planning, forecasting and other quantitative techniques often amalgamated in the concept of management science. Not only managerial practice of that time but also Mintzberg's study clearly belong to the management science tradition not least illustrated by the fact that the great bulk of the book devoted to the topic of programming managerial work and the use of management science for this purpose (chapter 6 and 7). Mintzberg's final recommendation in the book is that researchers must identify and describe managerial work as a systems of programs and after that make simulations of managerial work practices (Mintzberg, 1973: 198). It is also worth noting that the replicating study of Kurke & Aldrich (1983) was published in the journal *Management Science*.

The management discourse during the period of 1980 and onwards is according to Barley & Kunda dominated by a rhetoric centered to the concept of organizational culture. This rhetoric emphasizes the importance of shared goals, vision and values and decentralized operations with empowered employees. As will be discussed below this rhetoric has been incorporated into Swedish business life, and has become a part of its self-presentation. This examination will indicate whether it also has become a dominant practice.

Aim, scope and limitations

The picture of a transforming nature of management in most books about management during the last decades stands in sharp contrast to Mintzberg's study

in which it is presented as a stable phenomenon: *“In essence, managers work today as they always have”* (Mintzberg 1973: 161). The aim of this article is to examine robustness of Mintzberg’s results and descriptions over time in order to answer the question whether managerial work is a stable phenomenon or not. The claims of generality in Mintzberg’s study will also be tested a different national context.

The scope of study is the work of four Swedish CEOs during one week each CEOs. Thus it is only managerial work at the very top of corporate hierarchies in large or medium size firms that will be investigated. The article is primarily empiric-descriptive but explanations about the diverging results will also be provided, although these will not explain all aspects or give complete explanations.

The ambition is not to further refine Mintzberg’s propositions but to put his observations in a perspective: a 30 year old US study and a recent Swedish one. This replicating study is like those of Mintzberg and Kurke & Aldrich restricted in size, context and time. In many respects this article can serve as a warning to universal and timeless claims about what top managers are doing at work. But this article which is based on intense structural observation can serve as a means to identify evolving trends in managerial work, which may be examined further in future research.

Methods

This article belongs to a research project celebrating the fact that 50 years has passed since the first systematic study of managerial work was conducted. It was in the late forties that professor Sune Carlson observed the working behavior of nine Swedish CEOs (Carlson, 1951). An extensive empirical material was gathered through diaries and observations made by secretaries and telephone operators (Tengblad, forthcomingA). In a follow-up study of Carlson, reported in Tengblad (forthcomingB), eight Swedish CEOs were studied during four weeks each using similar methodology as Carlson’s in order to facilitate comparisons. In this study it was also decided to include direct observation in the same vein as Mintzberg (1973). Four of the CEOs were thus observed during a working week (five days) and the other four were observed during 1-2 working days each. In this article it is only the behavior of those CEOs observed during a full week that will be presented.

Included in the measures is work conducted during the whole week, also work activities that the author was not able to observe. In particular the CEOs worked relatively frequently during the weekends (mean value nine hours per participant). Other reasons for restricted access concerned work at home during the week and also some sensitive matters.

TABLE 1

Reasons for not making direct observations

	Hours/week per participant	Share
Work conducted during weekend	8,9	12%
Work conducted at home during the week	1,0	1%
Not observed, sensitive matters	2,8	4%
Not observed, various reasons	2,0	3%
Total time not observed	14,7	20%
Total time observed	57,5	80%
Total working time	72,2	100%

When observations were not made, the CEOs were instead asked about the duration and content of the unobserved activity. The information gathered through interviewing is not as precise as the observations, but these kind of working activities need to be included in order to get a fair description of the work conducted by top executives. As an example, if only actual observations were included, the total working load would become underestimated by around 20%.

The replication does not include all investigations that Mintzberg conducted, since the main purpose was to make a systematic replication of the Carlson study. For that reason, no analysis of in and out-going mail was made, neither whether the meetings were scheduled or not nor who the initiators of verbal contacts were. This delimitation should not be considered as major drawback. Mail was not considered as a particularly important media for either the participants in the Mintzberg's study (pp. 40-41), or for the CEOs in the new study, who had delegated most of the mail processing to their secretaries. And it is often very difficult or impossible to find out who the initiator is for a verbal contact: Who is the initiator for instance when a subordinate contacts the CEO because the CEO earlier had expressed a wish that the subordinate should contact the CEO when

certain things occur? A surface analysis would code such an event as initiated by the opposite party, but is in reality initiated by the CEO.

The participants and the institutional setting

In contrast to the Mintzberg study all participants in the new study were CEOs of privately owned firms. In three cases the firms were listed at the OM Stockholm Exchange, and the fourth one was a large family owned company. The CEOs of the listed companies all had a long experience of CEO work and they were very highly regarded in the Swedish business community. The companies employed on average a little more than 6000 persons and the combined market value of the three listed companies exceeded 12 billion US\$ at the time of study. This means that the participants in the new study were in charge of companies at least as big as the ones in the Mintzberg study and considerably larger than the ones in the Kurke & Aldrich (1983) study.

CEO 1 was in charge of a privately owned company in the media sector. The company was the smallest in the investigation, employing around 1500 persons. This CEO was born in the early sixties and had been quite recently appointed at the time of study.

CEO 2 was leading one of the largest and most successful financial institutions in Scandinavia. He held a strong reputation as being a capable manager and was a member of three boards in other large Swedish companies.

CEO 3 was a very experienced manager who for many years had led the build-up of a nation-wide company in the retailing sector. He had during his career received several national awards for his leadership achievements. Despite being close to retiring age, he was the participant who worked the longest hours.

CEO 4, an engineer by training, was leading a rapidly growing manufacturing firm with more than ninety percent of the operations located outside Sweden. The company had become at the time of study the world's largest in its sector and employed more than 12.000 persons. This CEO had also received much public attention for his leader performance.

The geographical setting differed for the companies. The company of CEO 1 was concentrated to one region, the company of CEO 3 was nationally dispersed and the company of CEO 2 was dominated by its large Swedish operation, but had important subsidiaries in the Nordic countries. Finally the company of CEO 4, was operating globally with the US market as the largest (representing one third of total sales).

Corporate governance

In Sweden a single board is responsible for the company performance towards the shareholders. The board is elected at the annual general Shareholders' meeting. The board in turn appoints the managing director, who also serves as CEO. The board has mainly a monitoring and policy-making function; the chairman of the board has no legal right to act as CEO. The role of the managing director/CEO is perceived as relatively strong (Arlebäck 1997), due to the fact that the board is dominated by outside directors and that the meetings commonly are held only on a bimonthly basis (ibid.).

The power of the shareholders in Sweden did increase substantially during the nineties, reflecting both the economic difficulties for the Swedish economy (high unemployment and a weak public economy) and an internationalization of ownership and governance structures. All of the three listed companies had a large proportion of foreign ownership and the CEOs monitored and discussed their company's stock performance regularly. They also devoted much time on contacts with stock market actors, up to one third of the total of the external meetings. To satisfy the demands from the shareholders was perceived as the most challenging task in these companies, while keeping the employees satisfied (mainly journalists) was a main concern for the CEO in the private company.

The prominence of shareholder influence represents a major difference to the Mintzberg's study. The word shareholder is only mentioned once and this with the purpose of explaining the shareholder's relatively lack of influence (p. 76). Mintzberg's study adheres to a stakeholder perspective of the firm in which professional managers have occupied the role of handling various stakeholder claims (c. f. Perrow 1961). This perspective is clearly expressed in the paragraph "*The manager as a spokesman*" (pp. 75-77), in which the top executive is attributed

the role of spokesman of 'his' organization in order to inform both the general public and 'his' board of directors.

Leadership practices

Studies of the specific character of Swedish leadership report about a vagueness of directives, a preoccupation with consensus seeking and an international orientation (Jönsson 1995). The vagueness is often expressed by a reluctance to give people detailed commands. A typical command to a subordinate reporting a problem is "*see what you can do about it*", and thus showing faith in the subordinate's capability of making good judgments of their own (Edström & Jönsson 1998: 167). This pattern of behavior is consistent with Hofstede (1980), in which Swedish professionals score low on uncertainty avoidance (they can and will to a relatively high degree cope with the uncertainty of not having clear instructions). Secondly the consensus orientation, connected to the also very low score on masculinity scale in Hofstede's investigations, implies a relatively strong orientation towards maintaining cooperation and good relations compared to a stronger emphasis on achievements and competition in for instance the US business culture. Thirdly the international orientation can be illustrated by the fact that many Swedish companies at the end of the nineteenth century established operations abroad since the small size of the market restricted domestic growth.

In particular since the Second World War the Swedish society had culturally been strongly influenced by the United States. The post war influence from the US has been especially strong with regard to management practices. Management techniques and philosophies such as scientific management, human relations, divisionalization, financial management and corporate culture had received widespread implementation in Swedish business life. Also numerous books, both translated from English, and by Swedish authors, were published in Sweden during the eighties about corporate culture: Of extra importance is the most sold management book ever in Sweden: "*The moments of truth*" by Jan Carlzon (Carlzon 1988). This book originally published in Swedish in 1985 has been translated into more than 15 other languages and contains a particular blend of ideas about service management, customer orientation and transformational leadership. During Carlzon's CEO-ship, the troubled airline carrier SAS reached financial success in the late eighties. This financial improvement was by external

commentators attributed largely to that Carlzon was able to alter the corporate culture through his visionary and communicative leadership style (Edström et al, 1989). The central message from this discourse about SAS and Jan Carlzon, that has become widely accepted and almost taken-for-granted in Swedish business life, was that a top leader should command the organization through communicating ideas rather than giving instructions and setting rules (Edström & Jönsson, 1998). The picture of the top manager as an efficient administrator become definitely out of fashion during this period, and the message that a manager should be a leader and not a boss or administrator has been put forward on countless numbers of occasions.

Mintzberg's study, cast in the management science tradition as mentioned earlier, is more oriented towards decision-making and efficient administration than leadership. In his presentation of the ten managerial roles, the arrows are going from the interpersonal roles and the informational roles to the decisional roles (p. 59). The sub-role "leader" is described in relatively administrative terms; such as staffing, motivating and maintaining "*a certain degree of alertness in the organization*" (p. 62). Furthermore ceremonies, which are central from a leader/culture perspective are coded as "secondary" (p. 249), while the administrative task of negotiating are given a central position in managerial work since it is coded as one of the decision-making roles (p. 257).

With regards to work organization in Sweden there has been a general development towards group or team organizing since the seventies, compared to management of individuals as in the scientific management tradition (Bäckström, 1999). Team working was introduced during the seventies in Sweden as an effort to democratize and humanize industrial work but efficiency aspects have become more and more prevailing over time. The teams are given larger autonomy while being held responsible for meeting performance targets, and this kind of organization was dominant in the Swedish working life in the late nineties (ibid. 185ff). It has many similarities with other so-called "empowered and autonomous" work teams in the US or elsewhere, but most important here is that it represents a very different kind of work organization compared to that of the late sixties in the US when Mintzberg conducted his study.

Institutional setting; conclusion

To conclude, the institutional setting differs in many respects between the two studies. In particular the rise of a shareholder value movement in Sweden during the nineties, the strong impact of the corporate culture discourse since the eighties and the implementation of team working during the whole period, together constitute the important differences in the context between the two studies. For explaining differences in behavior between the executives in the two studies, the perceived role of the top manager will primarily be used. This does not imply that differences in national culture is of minor importance, rather that the discourse of corporate culture and Swedish work-life practices (group-orientation, social control and autonomy) to a large extent has coalescence with each-other.

TABLE 2
Main differences in institutional setting

	Mintzberg	Tengblad
Corporate governance	Stakeholder oriented	Shareholder oriented
Perceived role of the top manager	Administrative decisionmaker	Leader, communicator of ideas and values
Work organization	Individual accountability	Group/team accountability

Comparing the total work load

There is a considerable difference between the two studies as regards work effort. The total working time in the new study was no less than 72 hours per participant, almost 60% more than that of the participants in the Mintzberg study. The high working pressure that Mintzberg viewed as a serious problem is even more present in the new study.

TABLE 3

Total working time average values per participant

	Mintzberg		Tengblad		change percent
	H/week	share	h/week	share	
Meetings	28,0	64%	45,7	63%	63%
Tours	1,0	2%	0,9	1%	-8%
Telephone calls	2,6	6%	5,4	7%	107%
Total verbal	31,6	72%	52,0	72%	64%
Desk work	8,8	20%	9,0	12%	2%
Transportation	3,6	8%	11,2	16%	212%
Total working time per participant	44,0	100%	72,2	100%	64%
Total working time incl. a 7 hours trip	45,4	100%	72,2	100%	59%

The increase of work has not been equally distributed with regard to communication technique. The amount of time spent on desk work and tours is very similar in absolute numbers, the meeting time has increased proportionally to the total working time, while time on telephone and particularly transportation has exploded. The large increase of transportation activities can be related both to geographical structure and a conviction about the importance of local visits. This conviction was formulated by one of the CEOs in a feedback session: *“You can’t build a culture or create commitment for company goals and visions by sending written instructions from the head office. You have to meet and talk with the people were they work”*.

The reasons for why the participants in this study work so much is not easy to detect. But a probable explanation is that they felt strong external expectations on performance. The study was as mentioned made at a period when shareholder value was heralded and the CEO performance was linked to stock valuation. Even CEOs of financially very successful companies could be attacked by disgruntled shareholders focusing the stock performance the last six months, rather than the long-term development. Of the companies listed at the Stockholm Exchange 19% changed their CEO in 1999, the year when most of the fieldwork was carried out². This figure can be compared with a turnover of around 10 percent (in Sweden) at the time of Mintzberg’s study (Holmberg, 1986). The normal reason for leaving CEO positions at that time was retirement, while dismissals were mainly related to financial crises or scandals (ibid. p. 45).

² Source: Svenska Dagbladet, 27th of October, 2000 (a leading Swedish newspaper)

TABLE 4

Total working time, individual values

	CEO 1	CEO 2	CEO 3	CEO 4
Meetings	71%	59%	61%	63%
Tours	1%	0%	4%	0%
Telephone calls	8%	2%	3%	16%
Total verbal	80%	62%	68%	79%
Desk work	13%	23%	11%	4%
Transportation	7%	16%	21%	17%
Total working time per participant, hours	61,5	68,3	81,3	77,5

Compared to the Mintzberg study, the CEOs spent relatively less time on desk work. They were not by far processing as much mail as the Mintzbergs managers, who received on average 26 letters per day and sent nine. The CEOs in the new study had delegated most of the mail processing to their secretaries. Like the Mintzberg managers, they clearly preferred personal interactions. It was only CEO 2 who distributed the same proportion as the Mintzberg managers on desk work. However much of this work was carried out at home, reading newspapers on the Internet for almost an hour before he went to his office. As CEO of a large financial institution he felt a need of keeping himself well informed on domestic and international business affairs. He made sparsely use of telephone calls, he preferred to use e-mail instead of routine communication. The second reason for the fact that the CEO 2 allocated relatively much time on desk work was that he spent five hours on writing a monthly letter to the employees during the observation.

CEO 4 allocated only three hours on deskwork but more than twelve hours on telephone calls. As a head of a truly international company, he thought the telephone was the best way of keeping himself informed between meetings, which required long travels for either the CEO or the local managers.

The three CEOs of the geographically dispersed companies traveled frequently. CEO 3 spent 17 hours on transportation, which was nearly as much as all the five participants together in the Mintzberg study. Also interesting, travels in Mintzberg's study were only related to "external meetings". The majority of the travels in the new study was either to meetings within one's own company or

internal meetings at external sites (for instance airport lounges and conference venues).

Analysis of verbal contacts

The largest part in Mintzberg's description of his observational study concerns the analysis of the verbal contacts which corresponded to more than 70% of the total work registered. The comparison between the two studies will include the dimensions of location, kind of participants at meetings, number of participants and purpose of verbal contacts.

TABLE 5
Location of verbal contacts

	Mintzberg		Tengblad		change percent
	H/week	share	h/week	share	
Manager's office	12,3	39%	12,1	23%	-1%
Office of subordinate	2,5	8%	1,9	4%	-22%
Hall or plant	0,3	1%	2,0	4%	556%
Conference or board room	4,4	14%	15,9	30%	260%
Away from organization	12,0	38%	20,1	39%	67%
Total time in verbal contact per participant	31,6	100%	52,0	100%	64%

The CEOs in the new study met people relatively less time at their own office. Instead they met people in conference rooms much more than the managers in the Mintzberg study. The CEOs in the new study also spent more time away from their own organization, but this difference is largely related to internal meetings at external sites.

TABLE 6
Location of verbal contact, individual values

	CEO 1	CEO 2	CEO 3	CEO 4
Manager's office	49%	20%	17%	11%
Office of subordinate	3%	0%	5%	6%
Hall or plant	3%	6%	7%	0%
Conference or board room	34%	45%	16%	31%
Away from organization	12%	29%	55%	52%
Total time in verbal contacts, hours/week	49,4	40,5	55,5	61,0

Except for CEO 1 who preferred to meet people in his own office, the other CEOs generally met people in conference rooms and places outside the own company. An explanation for this difference is that CEOs 2-4 were in charge of companies with operations in 50-200 different places, while the company of CEO 1 was concentrated to one region of Sweden.

TABLE 7

Participants at meetings/tours

	Mintzberg		Tengblad		change percent
	H/week	share	h/week	share	
Directors (superiors)	2,0	7%	1,6	3%	-21%
Peers	4,6	16%	4,3	9%	-8%
Clients, suppliers, associates	5,8	20%	3,3	7%	-43%
Independent and others	2,3	8%	5,1	11%	119%
Subordinates	13,9	48%	32,3	69%	132%
Total time in meetings/tours per participant	29,0	99%	46,6	100%	61%

The examination of those who the CEOs were meeting reveals an interesting shift. The total meeting time that the CEOs allocate with superiors, customers, suppliers and various external stakeholders is virtually the same (fully 14 hours), and the whole increase in meeting time is related towards meetings with subordinates. This shift in behavior should not be explained by a decreasing need for the companies to interact with their environment. It is much more likely that the shift is related to changing conceptions of the role of the top executive. Mintzberg likened the top manager to; "...the neck of an hourglass, standing between his own organization and a network of outside contacts, linking them in a variety of ways" (Mintzberg, 1973: 52). In many respects the liaison role of the top managers, has been delegated further down in hierarchy in the investigated companies of the new study. Especially the contacts with suppliers and customers have become more a responsibility to other general and functional managers and also to non-managers as purchasers, sales representatives and also production workers.

TABLE 8

Participants at meetings/tours, individual values

	CEO 1	CEO 2	CEO 3	CEO 4
Directors (superiors)	3%	12%	0%	0%
Peers	1%	15%	20%	0%
Clients, suppliers, associates	9%	8%	9%	3%
Independent and others	8%	11%	21%	2%
Subordinates	78%	53%	51%	95%
Total time in meetings/tours in hours	44,6	40,5	52,8	48,6

The measures regarding meeting patterns for just one week need to be treated with caution. For instance the high share of meetings with directors for CEO 2 was due to preparation work with the chairman concerning an attempt to acquire a competitor. CEO 3 participated at a conference about environmental issues for top leaders, therefore the high value for peer meetings. And CEO 4 was engaged both in an internal top management conference and in a management training session during the observation week. But including the whole material of more than 1000 hours of meetings, the overall picture remains similar. The CEOs in the new study were less involved in meetings with superiors, peers, clients, suppliers and associates and they were substantially more involved in meetings with subordinates.

TABLE 9

Size of meetings/tours, frequency

	Mintzberg		Tengblad		change percent
	No. of meet.	share	no. of meet.	share	
Meetings with the CEO and one person	32	68%	34	49%	4%
Meetings with the CEO and two persons	4	9%	10	14%	121%
Meetings with the CEO and three persons	3	6%	6	9%	130%
Meetings with CEO and more than 3 persons	8	17%	19	28%	142%
Total number of meetings/tours per participant	47	100%	68	100%	45%

The increase of meetings is related to meetings with more than two persons, in particular to meetings in large settings. However since the frequencies of meetings are measured, the impression is that the meetings with two persons are the dominant form. However this reflects mainly the fact that the short and unscheduled meetings usually are dyadic. In Table 8, a one-minute meeting with the secretary is given the same weight as a four-hour board meeting.

Measuring the meetings in time reveals the dominance of meetings with many participants in the new study. Dyadic meetings accounted for only 20% of total meeting time while meetings engaging more than four persons measured up to no less than 61%.

The larger emphasis on group meetings can be explained both by cultural factors (the Swedish culture has been described as less individualistic than the US one (c. f. Hofstede, 1980)), and by changing conceptions of management (the popularity of corporate culture discourse and team organizing).

TABLE 10
Size of meetings in *hours* per participant

	CEO 1	CEO 2	CEO 3	CEO 4
Meetings with the CEO and one person	30%	18%	16%	19%
Meetings with the CEO and two persons	15%	6%	5%	8%
Meetings with the CEO and three persons	25%	7%	9%	4%
Meetings with the CEO and more than 3 persons	31%	70%	70%	71%
Total number of meetings per participant	71	46	76	80

The CEOs 2, 3 and 4 had a very similar meeting pattern with respect to the number of participants. They all spent more than 2/3 of total meeting time in settings with more than 3 persons. CEO 1 on the other side met people in smaller settings, in a relatively similar pattern to the Mintzberg executives (Mintzberg, however does not present figures of the time distribution of this category, making comparisons difficult).

TABLE 11

Purpose of contacts

	Mintzberg		Tengblad		change percent
	h/week	share	h/week	share	
Organizational work	0,6	2%	0	0%	-
Scheduling	0,9	3%	0,7	1%	-27%
Ceremony	3,8	12%	8,2	16%	117%
External board work	1,6	5%	1,9	4%	20%
Total secondary	6,6	21%	10,8	21%	64%
Observational tours	0,3	1%	0,9	2%	193%
Receiving information	5,1	16%	11,4	22%	125%
Giving information	2,5	8%	10,1	19%	298%
Review	5,1	16%	9,1	18%	81%
Total informational	12,6	40%	31,5	61%	149%
Total requests and solicitations	5,7	18%	4,3	8%	-25%
Strategy	4,1	13%	3,6	7%	-14%
Negotiation	2,5	8%	1,8	4%	-27%
Total decision-making	6,6	21%	5,4	10%	-18%
Total	31,6	100%	52,0	100%	64%

The final dimension of the verbal contacts concerns their purpose. Also in this regard a different pattern of behavior emerges. The CEOs in the new study spent much more time on exchanging information, particularly giving information (four times more!) and also on ceremonial activities. The CEOs in the new study allocated instead less time on strategy (defined by Mintzberg as important decision-making), negotiations, and on various requests (giving permissions, assignment of working tasks, handling of proposals, etc). In sum these differences indicate that the CEOs in the new study exercised leadership in a more general way, less of deciding, handling requests and taking care of various administrative tasks. Instead they were more engaged in broad-topic discussions, speeches and ceremonial activities. In fact they spent twice as much time on ceremonies than on strategic decision-making.

TABLE 12

Purpose of contacts, individual values

	CEO 1	CEO 2	CEO 3	CEO 4
Scheduling	1%	1%	2%	2%
Ceremony	15%	17%	8%	23%
External board work	0%	7%	8%	0%
Total secondary	16%	25%	18%	25%
Observational tours	2%	0%	5%	0%
Receiving information	18%	21%	17%	30%
Giving information	16%	23%	22%	17%
Review	25%	17%	15%	15%
Total informational	60%	61%	59%	62%
Total requests and solicitations	10%	5%	9%	9%
Strategy	8%	10%	7%	3%
Negotiation	5%	0%	7%	2%
Total decision-making	13%	10%	14%	5%
Total time in verbal contacts per participant	49,4	42,1	55,5	61,0

The individual differences of behavior between the participants in the new study were not as large as the differences between the two studies, which indicates a more general shift in behavior. The informational activities consumed around 60% for all participants. The second most important activity was ceremonies, which included business dinners, inaugurations and other social gatherings. Also the high value of ceremonies for CEO 4 was related to a management training program in which many (but not all) activities had the character of ceremony. The main missions with the program were to build a common corporate culture and to create horizontal links between units in different countries. The CEO wanted the training program to have a high status and this was the main reason for his participation during two full days.

Comparing fragmentation

A central message in *"The Nature of Managerial Work"* is that top managers work in a very fragmented way. The fragmentation is related to both variation and brevity. Mintzberg was critical to this behavior and argued for a more systematic management based on planning, programming and scientific analysis. The observations from the new study, however, show a much lower degree of fragmentation.

TABLE 12
Number and duration of activities

	Mintzberg		Tengblad		change percent
	No. of act.	share	No. of act.	share	
Desk work, number of sessions	36	33%	28	21%	-23%
Number of telephone calls	27	24%	32	24%	20%
Number of meetings	41	38%	65	45%	58%
Number of tours	6	5%	3	2%	-44%
Transportation	?	?	11	7%	?
Number of activities per participant	109	100%	139	100%	27%
Number of activities lasting less than 9 minutes	54	49%	48	34%	-12%
Number of activities lasting longer than 60 minutes	11	10%	17	12%	57%
Average duration of an activity, minutes	24		31		29%

The comparison shows a lower fragmentation in the new study, mainly due to fewer desk sessions and a longer duration of telephone calls (mean 12 minutes compared to 6 minutes). In total the mean activity is nearly 30% longer.

But what is more important, the presentation of the frequency of activities easily leads to an exaggeration of fragmentation since short activities, however plentiful, do not correspond to much of the total working time. The activities lasting less than 9 minutes only accounted for 7 percent of the CEO work in the new study, to be compared with 55 percent of the total working time for activities lasting longer than one hour. The conclusion is that fragmentation, measured as brevity of activities is not a very characteristic feature of CEO work in the new study. Instead a great bulk of the work was devoted to meetings and transportation lasting longer than 60 minutes. Also the meetings themselves were not particularly fragmented in the new study. Characteristic of longer meetings were rather thorough discussions and presentations that had been well prepared by at least one of the participants.

TABLE 14
Number and duration of activities, individual values

	CEO 1	CEO 2	CEO 3	CEO 4
Desk work, number of sessions	26	39	32	13
Number of calls	26	10	33	59
Number of meetings	68	46	66	80
Number of tours	3	0	10	0
Transportation	4	14	15	11
Number of activities per participant	127	109	156	163
Activities shorter than 9 minutes <i>of total time</i>	7%	7%	8%	7%
Activities longer than 60 minutes <i>of total time</i>	52%	60%	62%	46%
Average duration of an activity, minutes	29	38	31	29

There are no big differences between the participants with regards to the length of the activities. Short activities were rather numerous but did not affect the general time distribution much, which were dominated by longer or medium long activities (10-60 minutes). The only individual difference of substance was that the CEO 2 had around 20 percent longer activities than the others. The main reason for this was that he had fewer short unscheduled meetings and relatively many meetings lasting two hours or more.

Analysis

On the whole, there are many major differences between the two studies, which can not be explained as an incremental development of managerial work, within the realms of the propositions that Mintzberg stated. In many aspects the observed behavior in the new study is not only quantitatively different but also different in qualitative aspects.

Considerably more prominent in the new study:

Travelling
Meetings with subordinates
Meetings with more than four or more people
Ceremonial activities
Exchanging information- in particular giving information
Activities with long duration (one hour and more)

Considerably less prominent in the new study:

Routine processing of administrative (desk) tasks
Meetings with clients, suppliers and associates
Work with requests and solicitations
Decision-making activities
Activities lasting less than 9 minutes

The qualitative differences concern changing conceptions about the role of the leader. A frame-of-thought with high explanatory value in this case is Selznick's classic distinction between administrative management and institutional leadership (Selznick 1957). Selznick related the concept of administrative management to impersonal and efficiency-oriented techniques for decision-making and control that was emerging in the field of organization theory, operations research and information science at that time. He warned that this growing emphasis on formal structure, administrative routines and management information-systems was relatively irrelevant for understanding executive work:

The logic of efficiency loses force, however, as we approach the top of the pyramid. Problems at this level are more resistant to the ordinary approach of management experts (Selznick, 1957: 3).

Selznick advocated instead studies about the interrelation of policy making and administration and about creation and protection of organizational values.

Contrary to Selznick's urge for institutional leadership, both Mintzberg's description of the behavior of the studied executives and his more theoretical discussions can nicely be fitted to the concept of administrative management. According to Mintzberg, there are symbolic activities that the executive needs to carry out such as ceremonies and figurehead tasks, but these are treated as secondary in comparison to the heart of executive work; to process information, to make decisions and to giving instructions. The natural place of work is the own office where all in-coming and out-going contacts meet like a telephone switchboard. Also, the work of the executives is oriented towards administrative efficiency and productivity where various administrative tasks are proceeded at high pace.

Mintzberg's relatively critical discussion of his observed work processes, does not challenge the administrative management perspective per se. It was by the use of management scientists and programming work activities, that the executives were expected to perform the role of being an information processor and decision-maker in a more systematic and efficient way.

From an administrative point of view the behavior of the CEOs in the new study appear as strange. What's the point of all these excessive group-discussions, lengthy ceremonies, and time-consuming travels, if they are able to spend only less than a quarter of the work in their own office and less than 10% on decision-making activities? The management scientist should clearly have suggested to the CEOs in the new study to have shorter and more structured meetings, to allocate more time on formulating policies and decision-making, and to handling the paper and information flow in a much more systematic manner.

Viewing their behavior from an institutional leadership point of view, a different picture emerges. If the task is to create and maintain a corporate culture, (in Selznick's terminology to infuse the organization with values), then much of the CEO behavior in the new study is reasonable. Then it makes sense to meet many employees at many places, and also to have ceremonies that are especially rich of symbolical values. Exchanging information is still important but it involves less of forwarding facts and instructions and more of communication of values. Also, if a CEO conceptualizes his/her role as an institutional leader, then many administrative tasks appear natural to be delegated to others.

Actually, one of the participants defined his role in terms of institutional leadership at a feedback session: *"My most important task is to tell the history of the company"*. This history was about a major crisis some 30 years ago and a successful cultural change made by an externally recruited CEO.

The point in this paper is not that administrative management should be viewed as obsolete, only that the role of the top-leader however does not need to resemble that of the efficient administrator. It is more appropriate to compare the role of the CEOs in the new study to that of a high priest, in his work of communicating values and creating faith and commitment towards company goals and objectives. Furthermore, the Selznick concepts are not mutually exclusive. Managerial work includes both administrative and institutional leadership roles. No participant was 100% of either of the Selznick concepts. But there are large differences between the two studies concerning the blend between the roles. There were also substantial differences in behavior in the new study between the CEO 1 who acted more like

an administrative manager while the other participants were much more oriented towards institutional leadership.

The instrumentalization of institutional leadership

The participants in the new study that primarily acted as institutional leaders, were occupied with the task of creating shareholder value. For Selznick, institutional leadership was something more profound than to make as much money as possible. Instead he related this outlook of profit maximization to administrative management and the formal organization, which he viewed as *“an expendable tool, a rational instrument engineered to do a job”* (Selznick, 1957: 5). Institutional leadership on the other hand was about the fulfillment of social needs in the larger community. Thus he related institutional leadership to a stakeholder perspective; the main purpose of the leader was *“to choose key values [from the wider society] and to create a social structure that embodies them.”* (Ibid. p. 60). But as this article illustrates these domains for different kinds of leadership have become blurred. The Mintzberg executives exercised administrative management in a stakeholder paradigm, while the CEOs in the new study act according to institutional leadership in a shareholder value era. This indicates that the techniques of institutional leadership have become used as tools for creating shareholder wealth, rather than to institutionalize the organization within the society. This embodiment of institutional leadership into a traditional corporate profit-oriented rationality should not surprise the reader who is familiar with the corporate culture discourse. The embodiment is visible both in prescriptive books about corporate culture such as Ouchi (1981), Peters & Waterman (1982) and Deal & Kennedy (1982) as well as in managerial practices revealed in critical/empirical studies (Kunda, 1992). The emerging conclusion is that institutional leadership exercised by top executives in this corporate setting should not be seen as morally superior to administrative management but maybe as more appropriate.

Implications

The comparison between the studies shows, not remarkable similarities as the previous replication of Kukre & Aldrich (1983), but rather many important differences. Therefore, it's not possible to interpret the behavior within the realms of the realms of Mintzberg's 13 propositions. The probably best way of understanding the differences is to relate them to changing conceptions about the

role of the top manager, from the busy administrator, to a manager who communicate values and handles symbols, rituals and ceremonies. This conclusion, even if it is tentative in character, implies that a paradigmatic shift about the role of the top manager has taken place between the two studies. This shift is rather easy to detect in literature about leadership and general management, in which a huge stream of publications formed "The New Leadership Approach" during the eighties (Bryman 1992). Central to this approach in which concept as transformational leadership (Bass 1985; Tichy & Devanna 1986), charismatic leadership (House 1977, Conger 1989) and visionary leadership (Sashkin 1988) is a view that leadership is about fostering organizational culture (Bryman 1996).

Bryman (1992) concludes in a critical review that the New Leadership Approach has preponderance towards sweeping generalizations and that the approach often lacks attention to situational analysis and descriptions of real leadership practices. This study indicates that the New Leadership Approach has influenced the behavior of CEOs, and that it can be used for understanding their work. However, the work of establishing an alternative paradigm about managerial work than the one based on management science is not yet finished. There is a need of further in-depth studies in the methodological vein as Mintzberg (structured observation). But such observations should also make use of categories and conceptual distinctions that has been developed within the New Leadership Approach.

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