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“We are at day one of a new life”: translation of a management concept from headquarter to a production team

Introduction

There has been a growing interest in the literature on how multinational corporations (MNC) transfer practices across borders. One theoretical position is that MNCs standardize their practices to all subsidiaries (Ritzer, 1996). Another position claims that even the most global companies remain deeply rooted in their own national business systems (Almond, 2011), and that practices are complicated, if not impossible, to transfer, because of variations in institutional and cultural contexts.

In addition, the process of implementing *management concepts* in organizations has been widely studied, mostly from the supplier’s position, and seeing the client organization as a passive consumer. Later, a more active perspective began to be developed in which the client organization is seen as a *co-consumer* (Heusinkveld et al., 2011) or even as a *co-constructor* (Rolfsen, 2011).

Our aim is to combine the two theoretical positions and study an MNC transferring a concept across borders, using a team perspective on the shop floor in one of the company’s subsidiaries. The plant is a part of a global production company with its own production system. Our research question is: *What possible explanations are there for the difficulties faced by MNCs in transferring a management concept into a local team?*

Our literature review will start by considering research on management concepts and implementation, explaining the management concept applicable to our case, and discussing earlier research on the transfer of concepts within MNCs. The methodological issues will then be discussed, and the case and results presented.

Literature review

Management concepts such as Total Quality Management, Lean Production and Business Process Reengineering are all fashionable ideas presented in the business literature. Such concepts usually have a vague and ambiguous meaning, which is perceived as one of its success criteria (Huczynski, 1993), because different actors can reconstruct the concept to fit their own values and needs (Benders and van Veen, 2001).

The literature on management concepts has traditionally focused on the “supplier” side, with a management “guru” offering ideas presented with persuasive rhetoric. The organization is described as a slavish follower (Huczynski, 1993, Clark, 2004, Clark and Salaman, 1998, Rolfsen, 2004). The management concept considered in this article was developed in Japan during the 1940s. In 1990, however, the production concept became famous under a new label: *Lean Production*, and later just *Lean* (Womack et al., 1990, Womack and Jones, 1996). The MNC under study uses an adapted version of Lean, which we refer to here as *Lean Enterprise*.

Teamwork is an essential part of Lean, and there has been ongoing discussion on the role of teams within Lean (van den Broek et al., 2004, Sederblad, 2004). Thompson and Wallace (1996) identify a polarity between semi-autonomous work groups with a strong position in Scandinavia (Berggren, 1992, Sandberg, 1995), and teamwork within Lean being more characterized by Taylorism (Taylor, 1967) and normative control (Macduffie, 1995a, Macduffie, 1995b, Womack et al., 1990, Adler and Cole, 1993, Barker, 1999). Scandinavian companies applying Lean have used more autonomous types of teams compared to their Japanese, American or even Central European counterparts.

Thorough descriptions of the implementation of management concepts are lacking in the literature, and those that are available mostly describe companies following a fixed procedure (e.g. Ahuja and Khamba, 2007, Ahuja and Kumar, 2009, Ireland and Dale, 2001), and identifying detailed implementation procedures with distinctive phases to be followed. In this way, the concept is implicitly treated as a “black box”, which is assumed to be possible to copy across different contexts.

In our case, the concept is implemented within an MNC. This issue has been less examined in the literature, even though much has been written about cross-national transfer in general. As the starting point, Kostova (1999) focuses on organizational practices that are *infused with*

meaning and value, which occurs when employees approve a practice, and it becomes part of their organizational identity. In addition, the *institutional distance* is important (Kostova, 1999); countries differ in their institutional characteristics and organizational practices, which reflect the institutional environment of the country; therefore, when practices are transferred across borders, they may not “fit” (Kostova, 1999). In conceptualizing this distance, Kostova (1999) uses a profile, derived from Scott (1995), that distinguishes between regulatory, cognitive and normative aspects. Regulatory components reflect the existing laws and rules in a national environment that promote certain types of behavior and restrict others. The cognitive element reflects the rationales shared by people in a particular country, and which constitute the frames through which meaning is made (Scott, 2008). The third category, normative component, refers to the values and norms held by individuals in a given social context.

However, Kostova’s theoretical model does not contribute to identifying characteristics of the *content* behind the concept. Lean was developed within a Japanese context, then re-created by US researchers, and later adopted globally. The principles of Lean are based on the value stream, quality and involvement. Several tools and recipes are available as a part of the concept. The concept can be understood as being *infused with values* of responsibility and commitment, and systematic registration, to use Kostova’s (1999) theoretical terms.

Lillrank (1995) offers a model in which management concepts are divided into three categories with different “abstraction levels”. He uses an example from a Japanese company, in which workers start their daily work routine by singing a company song. The *singing* symbolizes organizational cohesion through face-to-face interaction, and is rooted in Buddhist cosmology (Lillrank, 1995). However, transferring this precise practice (the song) to a German or American company would probably be unsuccessful, because the cultural interpretation would be missing. A three-category framework is helpful to identify the different aspects of a concept; the first category is *management principles* with a high degree of abstraction. In Lean, “flow”, “responsibility” and “involvement” serve as examples. The second category, *organizational vehicles*, is defined as the structures required to carry out a strategy, such as the labour market, incentive structures and level of education. *Teamwork* will serve as an example of an organizational vehicle in our case. The last category is *management techniques and tools*, which focuses on practical elements (Lillrank, 1995), with a low level of abstraction.

Lillrank's point is that tools can easily be transferred as they are; however, the results depend on their connection with organizational vehicles and their interpretation within a wider context. Transferring elements with a high level of abstraction is more difficult and less likely to be successful, depending on the distance, both geographically and culturally. The larger the distance, the more meaning is lost due to misunderstandings (Lillrank, 1995).

Combining these theoretical contributions aids understanding of the transfer process within an MNC. The concept consists of the three categories developed by Lillrank, and all will be mutually influenced by the three components in the subsidiary; regular, cognitive and normative (Table 1).

Table 1: A model for understanding transfer of management concepts			
	Regulatory elements	Cognitive elements	Normative elements
Management principles	Regulatory elements influencing principles	Cognitive elements influencing principles	Normative elements influencing principles
Organizational Vehicles	Regulatory elements influencing vehicles	Cognitive elements influencing vehicles	Normative elements influencing vehicles
Techniques and tools	Regulatory elements influencing tools	Cognitive elements influencing tools	Normative elements influencing tools

We will investigate the transfer of Lean Enterprise from the German headquarters to the Norwegian subsidiary, and specifically to *Team X*, a small unit consisting of a dozen

employees, a team leader and a supervisor, led by a production manager. Lean Enterprise consists of management principles, as well as techniques and tools.

Methodology

A qualitative research methodology is well suited to our purposes, because the aim is to explore and understand a social phenomenon without having a clear-cut hypothesis that can be tested. The research approach involves an in-depth qualitative case study of the team. We chose this approach because the aim is to provide a deeper description and understanding of the practices in question, the approach is also especially appropriate in new topic areas, where the existing theory is often novel and highly testable (Eisenhardt, 1989). Further, a single case approach is especially fruitful when the aim is to get as close as possible to the phenomenon described. The goal is to provide a rich description of the social scene and to describe the context in which events occur, and it also determines the extent to which existing theories help us to understand the case or require modification (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The analysis undertaken, and inferences drawn are thus grounded in an interpretative paradigm (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991)

We gathered our empirical data mainly through short-term employment in May 2013 within a research project involving two of the authors. Initially, the main assignment was to conduct work instructions for the different product types within Team X. By working on the shop floor, we obtained a profound and valuable insight into the day-to-day practices within the firm.

Two other research assistants continued the work, and follow-up data was gathered during four weeks in July 2013. Previously, data from other units of the plant was gathered through 120 interviews, related to the same research project. In October 2013, we conducted follow-up interviews and observations. Table 2 provides an overview of the data:

Table 2: Overview of the empirical data		
Period of time	Circumstances	Data gathered
2011 - present	Research project on Lean Production	Interviews: 126 Observation studies Informal meetings and discussions
May 2013	Working as short-term contracted employees in the MNC's factory.	Observation studies Informal meetings and discussions
July 2013	Working as short-term contracted employees in MNC's factory.	Observation studies Informal meetings and discussions

Transferring Lean Enterprise to Team X

The case considered here is an industrial MNC headquartered in Germany. The Norwegian plant became part of the MNC a few years ago through an acquisition. The MNC has its own production system, termed here Lean Enterprise. Since the acquisition, the Norwegian plant has been obligated to implement Lean, beginning with an introductory course for all employees. Although Lean is far from new to the Norwegian plant (the employees have been working with Lean under different labels for decades), the introductory course assumes that the principles and tools are new to the participants. Our interviews revealed that many employees consider Lean “old news”:

Lean Enterprise is what we are meant to work with now, though I have not noticed any difference. (Operator, October 2012).

There are not any great differences. It is more or less just old news. (Maintenance worker, October 2012).

In addition, there is a perception among employees that there are great differences between Norway and Germany, where the headquarters is situated:

The culture and the understanding of things differ from those of Germany (Improvement coordinator, October 2012).

It is German. It does not fit us. (Administrative employee, October 2012)

Similarly, some of the operators expressed a desire to implement a Norwegian version of Lean Enterprise (Field notes, October 2012). Whether actual or just perceived, this amplifies some country-level differences. Despite the concept travelling across borders, there is no evidence of it being customized:

It seems like [the MNC] wants to implement Lean Enterprise everywhere regardless of the different contexts (Supervisor, October 2013).

The employees themselves pointed out that it is typical for Norwegian employees to be involved in decision-making (Field notes, October 2012), which constitutes the normative aspect in Kostova's (1999) model. Moreover, the Norwegian Working Environment Act from 1973 regulates the right of a meaningful work situation through co-determination and worker involvement, hence a forming part of the regulatory aspect. Decision-making has also taken place indirectly through the plant's powerful trade union, and the direct and indirect involvement together, could lead to a perception of the new system as a threat.

Team X is a small unit, within which verbal communication is the main communication form; few instructions are written down. The operators follow a one-shift schedule. The turnover is exceptionally low, and the operators have worked together for decades. They have coffee breaks and lunch together at fixed hours during the day in the team leader's office. The team leader is a former operator, and he contributes to the production process when necessary.

The production is characterized by a high product variety and small batches, and the main work tasks are related to assembly and packing. Job rotation and variation in work tasks are parts of the day-to-day work. When difficulties occur, the operators help each other out. In practice, they have many of the characteristics of an autonomous team (Rolfsen and Langeland, 2012),

During our stay, our main task was to conduct and develop work instructions for the most frequently produced products. Each operator has evolved ownership of certain products, and thus knows the process steps by heart. There was a need to document the work instructions to make them available to all workers.

Before introducing Lean Enterprise, a meeting was held every morning, around 9am, between the team leader and supervisor. The meeting took place at the team leader's office, and involved going through the production plan and assessing changes in the schedule. We observed that these meetings were rather informal: they were often delayed, the subject under discussion changed frequently, team members often dropped in, and there was no formal agenda (Field notes, May 2013). However, it seemed to fit the purpose for planning and coordination. For the remainder of the day, the team worked autonomously, deciding which tasks to work on, and helping each other when necessary.

Introducing Lean Enterprise

During our time at the MNC, the production manager introduced Lean Enterprise in Team X. This implementation began as a morning meeting in the production area next to a large, new whiteboard. The production manager, supervisor and a Lean coordinator were all present. All workers were supposed to attend the meeting, but only four of them did; the rest continued working. The supervisor emphasized the importance of introducing the new system to Team X:

We are now at day one of our new life. (Supervisor, May 2013)

This statement was probably meant to encourage the operators to implement Lean Enterprise as a new practice. The Lean coordinator introduced the new whiteboard, which is used to display status updates and deviations after each shift. The whiteboard consists of figures that are to be colored with green or red lines, to distinguish between normal production and deviations, with respect to delivery, quality and productivity. The whiteboard and the meeting are both *tools and techniques* within Lean Enterprise. The Lean coordinator explained how to use the whiteboard, and questions were raised as to which elements should be measured, and how. The measurement issue turned out to be difficult; as first recognized by the production manager, no clear descriptions were given on when a line should be colored green or red, and everybody agreed that the tools had to be adapted in order to fit Team X:

This system must then be tailor-made for each unit. We get a template, but this template must be adjusted for the specific unit. (Supervisor, May 2013)

The problem seemed to be how to clearly distinguish a deviation from a normal situation. The supervisor argued that the figure representing *Delivery* could be colored green as long as they were delivering in accordance with the revised production schedule; the production manager, on the other hand, stated that all deviations ought to be based on the initial production schedule. A red mark would then indicate a change in the original plan, regardless of the cause of the change and employees' capabilities of handling it.

While only four of the workers were present at the meeting, they also spent most of the time talking about other things, and paid little attention to the explanations made by the Lean coordinator and discussions on how to distinguish red from green. One of them even asked if she could be excused:

Can't you (the leaders) just attend the meeting, and then do a briefing with the rest of us afterwards? (Operator May 2013)

Besides the whiteboard and the team meetings, no other Lean tools were presented. Neither did we observe any discussion regarding the production system as a whole, or an explanation to the operators regarding what the intentions of the system are.

The first red colored line

As mentioned above, all of the employees were supposed to take part in the introductory course, but none of the Team X members had. Comments were made that they thought it was just something new that the management had come up with, and that the system was probably better suited to other parts of the company (Field notes, May 2013). In other words, the team members did not consider the course relevant to them.

Expressions of skepticism towards the management initiative were further emphasized when later observations revealed that the practice around the meetings did not change. The team leader and the supervisor met, while the operators continued working. Seven weeks after the implementation, the whiteboard was still not updated. The whiteboard was mainly used to display the production plan, rather than the deviations. Although the production manager claimed that the all operators were supposed to attend the team meetings, even the managers preferred for the operators to prioritize production over the meetings. The production manager

agreed that the system had not been followed as intended, and that the coloring had not yet followed the regular pattern. He further explained:

The operators do not understand that the system is meant to help them in visualizing the day-to-day situation. (Production manager, July 2013)

More than two months after being introduced, the first red mark was made. The production manager could probably sense the frustration of one of the operators:

[Operator's name], you mustn't let this red line cause you a heart attack! (Production manager, July 2013)

In response, the operator emphasized that he was not to be blamed for the change in schedule:

I've just been concentrating on my work; it has been so much to do. It's not my fault, for sure! (Operator, July 2013)

Implementation of what?

Two concrete tools had been implemented so far; the whiteboard with the figures to be colored green or red, and the regular meetings. The intention was to include the ideas through the introductory course; the values of flow, participation and visual information were supposed to be “infused” within the tools. The main problem with the whiteboard was deciding how key performance indicators should be measured, and when to color productivity, delivery or quality green or red. In spite of the mutually accepted misfit between practice and intentions, the figure was colored, although nothing had actually been measured:

It is just colored green (...) we admit we are not using it as intended. (Supervisor, October 2013)

The managers were aware of the “incorrect” practice, but passively supported it by not taking action. For the managers, it seemed to be important to avoid the red color; they preferred rephrase definitions to make the line green, or just ignoring the inaccuracy of the tool.

The other problem was that participants were not attending the regular morning meetings. The idea behind the meetings is to communicate, share updates and production goals, and gain mutual learning on what has gone wrong in the past. The red and green lines are supposed to

facilitate mutual learning, and should have been colored by the operators themselves. The team, however, ignored the whiteboard:

No, we are not good at using the whiteboard (...) It is [the team leader] who's using this figure stuff. (Operator, October 2013)

When asked if the operators used the figures on the whiteboards, the team leader also echoed the above comment:

No, they do not use them. (Team leader, October 2013)

The intended meaning and values inherent in the tools – increased involvement and verbal communication – thus had the opposite effect intended; this was caused by the local context and the previous traditions for communication within the team. In the next section, we combine these findings with the theoretical concepts presented earlier in the article.

Discussion and conclusion

Our research question aims to investigate the transfer of Lean Enterprise to Team X, and identify possible explanations for the observed difficulties. According to the literature review, the level of success will vary according to the institutional distance (Kostova, 1999), in relation to regulatory, cognitive and normative components. The greater the distance, the harder it is to transfer a practice “without loss”. In this case, we connect the general discussion of transfer to how Lean Enterprise as a *management concept* is perceived, how it is connected with national rules and agreements, and the values associated with it.

The MNC's intention is to transfer the whole concept of Lean Enterprise; which consists of principles and tools. The principles are described in official documents as efficiency, continuous improvement, flow, commitment and involvement. The *organizational vehicles* can be identified as visualization on the whiteboard, involvement, teamwork and standardization. The *tools and techniques* used in Team X were twofold; the whiteboard and the morning meetings. There is supposed to be a close connection between the principles, vehicles and tools. The starting point was the introductory course, where all employees were supposed to learn the overall principles. Next, the whiteboard with the key performance indicators was introduced. The most visible difference from previous practice was the figures.

The underlying value is thus to create a more cohesive team and a higher level of involvement.

We will now combine the three dimensions of the concept with Kostova's three dimensions in order to understand the transfer process. We start with the management principles in Lean Enterprise; *efficiency, continuous improvement, flow, commitment and involvement*. In the presentations and written documents on Lean Enterprise, these principles are implicitly expected to be new to the company, as if involvement of employees is introduced for the first time. Applying Kostova's (1999) regulatory elements, these values are incorporated in Norwegian law and agreement system in quite a different manner from that of an American or German, context. The level of involvement in the national regulatory context is thus *higher* than in Lean Enterprise's principles, but this mismatch was not taken into consideration. The introduction of Lean Enterprise can be considered by workers in Norway as a reduction, rather than an increase, of involvement.

The cognitive elements are specific to the actual plant and team. The company adapted the Lean principles more than 20 years ago, under different labels. The principles of efficiency, continuous improvement and flow are thus familiar, while the presentation of Lean Enterprise also considers these principles to be new and unfamiliar. The *normative* elements supporting the principles of Lean Enterprise are thus strong in the local context, but are not strongly connected to Lean Enterprise as a concept: the principles are a part of the plant's history, as well as of a strong national tradition.

The next element is organizational vehicles: in our case these can be perceived as teamwork. This is also presented as "new" in Lean Enterprise, while in reality teamwork has also been a well-established practice in Norway since the industrial democracy project in the 1960s (Emery and Thorsrud, 1976). For the plant in question, teamwork has been the norm since the 1980s, and Team X in particular works autonomously to a much higher degree than is assumed in Lean Enterprise. Again, the normative aspects are strong, but not connected with Lean Enterprise as a concept.

The last consideration is techniques and tools. There is no connection here with regulatory elements, but in relation to the cognitive elements we can see that Team X has previously used similar tools. What is new to them is the whiteboard. The whiteboard techniques are not connected to the team's needs since they already have all the available information. The new

practice is a somewhat more formalized one, especially with respect to the red and green lines. For Team X, there is no connection between the principles (involvement) and vehicles (teamwork, visualization) and the technique (whiteboard and meeting), because the norms and values were present already, and not “infused” via the new tools. Instead, interestingly enough, we can observe the opposite effect; the techniques are normatively associated with more control and more bureaucracy.

This combination of the theoretical framework by Kostova (1999) and Lillrank (1995) can be conceptualized in the following way:

Table 3: Transferring management concepts across a distance			
	Regulatory elements	Cognitive elements	Normative elements
<p>Management principles</p> <p>Efficiency, continuous improvement, flow, involvement</p>	<p>The Norwegian law and agreement system requires involvement from employees; these values are taken for granted</p>	<p>The company has worked with Lean since 1985; the connection between efficiency and involvement is taken for granted.</p>	<p>Very low connection with Lean Enterprise, even if the overall values of the system are accepted. Lean Enterprise is perceived as “just another management system”, and not relevant.</p>
<p>Organizational vehicles</p> <p>Improve communication and sharing of information by visualizing results and “practices”. Teamwork</p>	<p>Employee involvement is statutory in Norway.</p> <p>Teamwork is a well-established practice in Norwegian industry.</p>	<p>Practices for information and knowledge-sharing and team organization are present.</p> <p>Change fatigue due to changes as a result of yet another owner.</p> <p>This particular plant has had semi-autonomous teams since the 1970s.</p>	<p>Horizontal communication already present, facilitated by flat organizations.</p> <p>The concept of Lean Enterprise assumes a lack of involvement, although involvement is a general norm in this social context.</p>

<p>Techniques and tools</p> <p>Whiteboard with figures.</p> <p>Team meetings.</p>	<p>No regulatory aspects of techniques and tools.</p>	<p>Tired of change because of frequent acquisitions, leading to ignorance of new tools.</p> <p>Lack of ownership and identity regarding foreign techniques and tools.</p> <p>Tools perceived as control from headquarter.</p>	<p>High degree of responsibility in conflict with definite measurements.</p> <p>Distinct tools for facilitating information flow are perceived as unnecessary.</p> <p>Standardized tool for measurement perceived as unsuitable.</p>
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What can clearly be seen as new practice is two techniques: the morning meeting and the green/red lines. Without the meaning “infused” with the techniques, these practices were interpreted differently from the intention inherent in the Lean Enterprise concept. The Norwegian industrial climate in general and this plant in particular, has a strong tradition for autonomy, teamwork and informal ways of working. In the previous morning meetings, everybody could join in, interrupt, tell jokes or just sit down for a coffee, while the meetings are in front of the whiteboard and thus perceived as more formal and “bureaucratic”.

What can be seen from the theoretical model is the occurrence of a “missing link” between the principles and vehicles on the one side, and the tools and techniques on the other. The reason can be understood with reference to Kostova’s (1999) three dimensions: the principles and values, both regulatory and cognitive, are already present, but are not “infused” as a part of the new tools and techniques. Rather, the Lean Enterprise tools are perceived as pure control mechanisms and increased bureaucracy, rather than a vehicle for involvement. One way to explain this is that there is an inherent assumption of lack of involvement in Lean Enterprise; the concept assumes that operators were not previously aware of their performance level, and that introducing the green and red lines is supposed to increase this knowledge. In Team X, however, the operators have direct access to such information in the form of printed sheets of the production plan on the wall. Issues with the system could be observed when the production manager produced the “first red line”; the operator was fully aware of what had happened, and had already started to take action even before the line had been colored. To the operator, the purpose of the red line was control; it did not help him to do his job. Similar reactions to the red/green lines were also present in other parts of the plant, which perceived the lines as unnecessary, or even alienating.

The same point also arises in relation to the meetings. All information is already being distributed within the team, so that the meetings do not meet any local needs. The information-sharing within the team has always been informal as messages are delivered more or less spontaneously. When difficulties occur, the operators help each other without hesitation. When one operator requested not to participate in the Lean Enterprise implementation meeting, she knew she would get the information later, which implies that formalized meetings are not considered important. The team has worked together for decades, and they seem to know each other through their common work and practice mutual learning processes (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Negative responses from employees arose not only as a result of the concept in itself, but the way it was implemented. The concept also assumes a lack of involvement and communication. Consequently, there is an ironic relation between the inherent values in the concept and the implementation approach: The concept attempts to facilitate involvement and communication, but employees are not involved in the process of implementing the concept, and the essence of Lean Enterprise is not communicated to the degree necessary to succeed.

Despite the initial enthusiasm of the mid-level manager (“*we are now at day one of a new life*”), the system is perceived as yet another management fad, and the tools implemented have not represented any meaningful improvement in the context of Team X.

The theoretical contribution of this article is that we combine earlier research on management concepts (Lillrank, 1995) with aspects of the social context Kostova (1999). By dividing the concept into principles, vehicles and tools, it becomes meaningful to explain why there is a missing link between tools and values, which run contrary to the original intentions. Because the values, principles and vehicles that are intended to be “infused” via the tools are already a part of the social context in this plant, the new tools are perceived as different. These ambiguous interpretations arise due to the inherent ambiguity in management concepts (Benders and van Veen, 2001).

This theoretical framework can be further developed to explain why the introduction of management concepts often fail. Without the distinction between various aspects of Lean, it would have been less obvious why the team members were reluctant to embrace it, or even rejected it. When we divide Lean into these three elements, it becomes obvious that there is a mismatch in the plant between the tools and the existing values. In the normative context,

these were not connected, the tools were not infused with the intended values of involvement, but with opposite values of control. This framework can be useful for other kinds of organizational concepts implemented within MNCs. Such concepts have been only vaguely defined to date, and thus it is possible to interpret them quite differently from the original intention. Using the framework and identifying the concept's principles, vehicles and tools, and then analyzing transfer processes into a subsidiary's regulatory, cognitive and normative elements, can be helpful for actors striving to introduce new practices and tools at a global level.

Going back to our research question - *What possible explanations are there for the difficulties faced by MNCs in transferring a management concept into a local team* - the lack of adjustment to the local context is a key point, as well as identifying the separate elements of the concept. The tools and techniques in the concepts were new to the local team, while the principles and vehicles were considered "old news". Thus, the tools became uncoupled from their intended "infused" meaning and value, and were instead associated with opposite values.

Many companies struggle to introduce concepts worldwide, and one can imagine similar problems arising when introducing concepts into a different context without investigating the existing situation. The central point is that all idea transfers will involve some type of translation, so that transferring a concept using a "blueprint" is hardly possible (Czarniawska and Sevón, 1996). It is thus recommended that MNCs identify the separate concepts using the presented framework, and take the local context seriously instead of aiming to create a global blueprint.

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