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A patient is not a car

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'A PATIENT IS NOT A CAR', LEAN IN HEALTHCARE: STUDYING AGENCY IN THE TRANSLATION OF MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

Organizations invest significant amounts of time and resources in the adoption and adaptation of management concepts. To understand the flow and impact of these concepts, it is important to know how they are shaped and interpreted when they are implemented in organizations. However, knowledge on how actors respond to and enact these concepts remains in a nascent state. Research on the translation of management concepts has started to address this issue, but the assumption that translation as a theoretical perspective is both inherently coherent and agentic leaves considerable room for development. The application of Lean in Dutch healthcare made for a relevant research context, as the concept is still a relatively new phenomenon here, and was expected to require significant translation to be meaningful ('a patient is not a car'). Based on interviews, observations and contextual data, this dissertation shows how specific key intermediate agents may use micro-practices (positioning, labeling and channeling) and draw on different forms of identification (salience, transience and valence) to translate Lean. In doing so this research contributes to the conceptualization of human agency in the translation of management concepts, and as such advances our comprehension of how actors translate a concept to their specific contexts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marlieke van Grinsven is currently working as a postdoc at the department of Organization Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU). Prior to this position, she worked on her PhD-research at the department of Management and Organization (VU). She received her MSc degree in Business Administration (Cum Laude) from the University of Maastricht and also holds a degree in Communication and Information Studies (MA, Cum Laude) and Linguistics (MA, Research Master). Her research interests include innovation and collaboration in healthcare, translation of management concepts, narrative constructions of organizational realities and processes of power and identity.



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