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The Dissemination of Management Ideas

A qualitative study on the complexity and consequences of enabling
the travel of an idea

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Abstract

This paper aims to broaden the understanding of the complexity in the dissemination of management ideas. This is done through studying the idea of self leadership within a specific setting; an educational initiative targeting university students. The purpose is firstly to understand how educational initiatives can be used in the dissemination of management ideas and how these ideas are being understood, translated and spread by different actors involved. Secondly, to investigate how the idea is received and perceived by the course participants. The study is qualitative in its nature and uses a case study to investigate how the idea of self leadership was taken from one context and transmitted and translated by the idea carriers, as well as by the receivers, in order to fit into the receivers' context. Data has been collected by conducting 40 hours of observations, as well as 18 interviews with facilitators and course participants. By analysing the findings with Institutional Theory, Actor Network Theory as well as Scandinavian Institutional Theory different insights is giving on how to understand the dissemination of management ideas on a macro and micro level. It also gives insight in a number of ways to structure an educational initiative by making it more attractive and available in order to create a positive attitude towards the idea among the idea receivers and hence eases the process of dissemination. This can contribute to knowledge in how idea carriers may utilize their way of spreading an idea in their context in order to succeed. Further, the study also identified a conflict where the facilitators used different tactics to enable the translation, but at the same time lost control over the idea. The paper may inspire to a continued debate on the complexity and consequences within idea disseminations.

Key-Words

Management Ideas, Dissemination of ideas, Self Leadership, Model of Translation, Institutional Theory, ANT, Scandinavian Institutional Theory

Introduction

In today's society we are constantly exposed to different trends and fashions telling us everything from how to dress, how to work out and how to raise our children. These trends come from ideas, or fashions. If these ideas are accepted, and thereby disseminated between a larger amount of people, it creates dominant ideas, or main trends (Røvik, 2008). These ideas could thus be seen as powerful as they create trends and thereby a change in society regarding for example economics, consumption patterns, organisational behaviour and interests (Abrahamson, 1991; Barnes, 2013; Røvik, 2008). These trends have during the years influenced organisations to change and contributed to success, but also meaningless imitations where the changes sometimes do not fit to the context (Prasad et al. 2010). It is therefore interesting to investigate these trends further, and especially how the foundation of these trends, the ideas, moves in order to create these changes. This is what this study will look into.

The different academic fields define fashion and trends in different ways. Alice Uniman, who works within marketing research, perceives trends as neither fads nor fashion; nor as a spate of consumer purchases (Uniman, 1998). Instead she sees real trends as a consumer inclination deeply rooted in the human psyche. Dr Liz Barnes, Lecturer in Product Development, defines fashion as something being popular for a shorter period and applied to product categories, lifestyles and business sectors (Barnes, 2013). It is further argued that the foundation of fashion as an academic subject comes from sociology and humanities by for example culture and clothing. Within the field of psychology trends are seen by some as subjective, value-laden and short-lived (Bort & Kaiser, 2011). Fashion is also stated to be the imitation of a given example to satisfy the demand for social adaptation by the creation of a general condition (Simmel, G 1957). But, it still satisfies the individual's need for differentiation and desire for change. At the same time, the content constantly changes, which means that fashion today differs from yesterdays and tomorrows.

Within the organisational field there are different views of studying ideas and practices; the rational view, the psychological view, the dramaturgical view (rhetoric), the political view, the cultural view and the institutional view (Sturdy, 2004). Within the institutional view management fashion can be understood as ideas, objects, and practices traveling in time and space (Czarniawska & Savén, 2005). Fashion is often explained as moving in cycles where the same phenomenon comes back after a certain time (Gill & Whitte, 1993; Abrahamson, 1996). But "A management fashion... is a relatively transitory collective belief disseminated by fashion setters, that a management technique leads to rational management progress" by Abrahamson (1996, p.257) is perhaps the most quoted definition according to Røvik (2011). Management fashions have during the years been highly useful, such as the lean production, while others such as the balanced scorecard more or less disappeared in the practice of companies, as well as in discourses on management practices (Bort & Kieser, 2011). The theorization of management ideas as fashion is thereby well established (Djelic, 2016). However, the organisational theorists have only began to frame the complexity in "the travel of these ideas" and how the ideas are created, translated and spread between organisations (Abrahamson, 1991; Djelic, 2016), and it is therefore interesting to investigate the dissemination of ideas further.

Management fashions are spread between organisations by managers and leaders that state to have some recipes' of what is stated to be good management (Andersson, 2008; Jönsson, 1996). Prasad et al (2010) argue that managers often have a high level of fashion consciousness making them pressured to being up to speed and fashionable. The techniques adopted by managers have to be both rational and progressive in order to gain support from shareholders (Abrahamson, 1996). Often scientists does not see themselves as followers or creators of fashion, but at the same time they want their research to be acknowledged by others (Bort & Kieser, 2011). Thereby researchers are also argued to play a part of the management fashion process and indicated to surf on the same, or at least parallel, fashion wave as managers (Andersson, 2008). Abrahamson (1996) also brings up mass media as a source of dissemination, and authors of famous books are also stated to have an impact (Prasad et al., 2010). Consultants are also claimed to play a big role in the development (Scarborough, 2003), diffusion, and translation (Røvik, 2000) of management ideas.

The 2000s has been characterized by reducing bureaucracy; process-based organising, higher focus on diversity and management ideas telling companies to reorganise themselves with a reduced focus on management and an increased focus on the control of the organisation (Prasad et al. 2010; Røvik, 2008). Ideas about how to organise and lead organisations have evolved and become even more popular since the 1980s and as much as 13.7 per cent of all new organisational ideas published between 2001 and 2007 in the Harvard Business Review focused on leadership (Røvik, 2008). There is also seen a shift in these leadership ideas from focusing on the almighty leader towards focusing on the everyday hero and the continuity-oriented leader who identifies strongly with the business orientation and values.

One of the ideas within leadership that emerged lately is self leadership (SL) (Stewart et al. 2011). SL is a complex phenomenon with many definitions. Bryant and Kazan (2012) state that SL involves the ability of having a developed sense of who you are and what you can do to achieve your objectives. They also claim that SL helps its practitioners to become better on communication, team collaborations and leaders. Manz and Sims (1980) further argue that SL is focusing on how people manage and lead themselves. The company SelfLeaders explains the phenomena by saying that “a developed self leadership increases your internal motivation and efficiency, providing an improved decision-making and make you more comfortable in your personal leadership and your communication” (SelfLeaders, 2016a). Stewart et al (2011) describe SL as a pattern of self-affecting processes that are designed to increase individual efficiency and create self-regulation and self-direction. SL is based on self-management but combines behavioural reinforcement, goal-setting, motivation and constructive approaches to thought patterns. SL theory is then designed to improve personal effectiveness by improving and strengthening the individual's feelings, thoughts and behaviours. SL became a phenomenon as Manz and Sims (1980) started to study it as an interesting contrast to previous research, which mostly focused on how leaders affect followers. Stewart et al (2011) argue that SL, through previous research, has proven to help individuals and groups to become more motivated and thereby efficient and high performing. The individual-tailored research has mainly focused on internal rewards, which often come into focus when the external needs are fulfilled. They found that individuals who take on tasks with internal rewards are more autonomous and more efficient at performing complex

tasks than those who take on tasks with external rewards. This is related to Maslow's classical pyramid of needs that, according to Hedegaard Hein (2012), describes how human behaviour is conditioned by unmet needs. When a need is satisfied, it is no longer motivating and new needs higher up the ladder will therefore be triggered. When the lower, external needs are met then even the top, internal needs can be met and a person can achieve self-realization. On a group level, Stewart et al (2011) states that research has been done on cognitive abilities, personality traits on information, mental ability, context and conflicts. This research has shown that SL also leads to increased collective motivation, increased productivity and a higher degree of conflict solving.

SL has thus become an emerging fashion idea within institutions and is, for example, stated to become even more integrated within the University of Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law's (S.B.E.L.) programs as a part of their new strategy (The University of Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law, 2017), showing that SL has become a hot topic lately. The coaches at Career Service, which is an organisation that acts as a link between students at S.B.E.L. and external organisations (Handelshögskolan, 2017a), also emphasize, during an interview, that SL has become essential in order to help the students to prepare themselves for their working life. One of the coaches further claims that they work hard to integrate SL into S.B.E.L.'s educations and it is therefore even more interesting to learn more about SL, and how students reacts on the idea, as an example in this study.

Just as many other management fashions, the idea of SL can be seen as if it has been developed, translated and spread by for example consultants (Røvik, 2000), managers (Andersson, 2008; Jönsson, 1996), researchers (Andersson, 2008) and mass media (Abrahamson, 1996). The idea of SL can therefore be claimed to be disseminated and accepted by different people, which might make SL a dominant idea and a trend in our society (Røvik, 2008). When looking at the situation from an institutional perspective, SL can be viewed as a norm, forcing companies to adapt to the idea. This pressure can be due to the aim of gaining legitimacy, to imitate or simply to survive (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This may create isomorphism and a form of meaningless imitation if its not adapted to the specific context (Prasad et al. 2010). However, Czarniawska and Joerges (1996) argue that by using a less static perspective on institutionalization, and thus the model of translation, one can understand why a specific management idea might appear differently in different organisations and contexts. Since ideas about how to organise and manage organisations are a frequently recurring topic in our time (Røvik, 2011) and puts pressure on the management it is interesting to further investigate how these ideas are being spread. Also, by using the model of translation when studying the dissemination of these ideas one can gain an insight in how these ideas are being translated, received and if they become translated into actions and even institutionalised (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005).

It is seen that many of the companies, for example SelfLeaders and World Value Initiative (W.V.I) who are spreading the idea of SL, are using educational initiatives in the dissemination of their management idea (Selfleaders, 2017; World Values Initiative, 2015a). None of the previously mentioned authors brings up this as a source of dissemination of management fashions and hence it is interesting to investigate these educational initiatives further. What makes these companies even more interesting is that they are not just providing

courses directed towards companies, but also toward university students who not yet are in the position to affect the management fashions that are being implemented at companies. As these students are not yet that influenced by society and how to manage people in an organisation, it is interesting to investigate how these kinds of target groups affects the dissemination. Since the course is constructed in collaboration with Chalmers University of Technology (Chalmers), and are marketed through departments at the school as well as at S.B.E.L., it is also interesting to consider whether the idea of SL is gaining additional legitimacy from these well-established institutions, thus increasing the credibility by the students involved.

Further, as leadership has been a hot topic lately within management ideas (The University of Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law, 2017; Røvik, 2008), and SL being one of these ideas (Stewart et al. 2011), it becomes even more interesting to look at the idea of SL as an example of how management ideas are being spread and later of may create trends in our society. This research could help framing the complexity in “the travel of the ideas” and how ideas can be translated and spread in our society (Abrahamson, 1991; Djelic, 2016). Due to the discussion above, this paper aims at understanding how educational initiatives, or components of these, can be used in the dissemination of management ideas and how these ideas are being understood, translated and spread by different actors involved in the process. This could further contribute to a broader debate in how for example organisations or consultants could disseminate their ideas. The study intends to answer the following questions:

1. How can a management idea be disseminated by the help of educational initiatives?
2. How is the idea received and perceived by course participants?

Theoretical framework

This study uses several of the organisational theories in order to understand the findings and answer the research question: Institutional Theory, Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Scandinavian Institutionalism. These theories are connected where Institutional Theory helps to analyse the findings in a broader approach and how ideas disseminate on a macro level, while ANT helps in analysing it on a micro level. The Scandinavian Institutionalism can be seen as a theory connecting these two.

The Institutional Theory can be used in order to explain why organisations choose to implement certain ideas in order to become more similar to other organisations. The theory also helps understand the travel of ideas from a macro level by explaining why organisations starts to use an idea due to different pressures in the society, and is thereby helpful in this study in order to understand the broader elements affecting the dissemination. Meyer and Rowan (1977) state that organisations in the same industry tend to become institutionalized by becoming more and more similar to each other in terms of organisational structure to create stability and sustainability. This due to the hard pressures from the outside world, norms in the society, laws and adaption to new technology. The Institutional Theory thereby states that if norms and institutions are not followed, the organisation risks being criticized, lose their legitimacy and, at worst, be abandoned by customers and other stakeholders, which

can explain why organisations adapt to different fashions. As all institutions are striving towards gaining as much legitimacy as possible, isomorphism is created, meaning that institutions become more similar to each other (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Isomorphism can occur due to three mechanisms; coercive, mimetic and normative. The coercive isomorphism arises due to either formal external pressures as laws and procedures, or informal external pressures as adaptation to social expectations, culture or new technology. The mimetic isomorphism instead comes from uncertain organisations, which imitates other successful organisations in the same industry. The normative isomorphism arises from the organisation's employees, which often comes from the same kind of educations or professional networks, making them approach challenges in the same way, driving organisations to become more similar to each other.

Even though organisations are argued to be more and more similar as they adapt the same ideas within the same industry (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), Institutional Theory does not explain differences within an organisation and why ideas are disassembled and understood in different ways. Here, the concept of ANT can be used with researchers stating that these ideas take different shapes in different organisations and contexts (Callon, 1991; Latour 1986; Law 1994). The theory could thereby be used in order to understand how different ideas in management are spread and understood differently by different actors from a micro perspective. ANT explains a network created by a number of human and non-human actors, thereby both people and objects, who plays a more or less meaningful role in its context (Greimas & Courtés, 1995; Latour 1986; Law 1994). These actors are enacted as they become enrolled within a network into collectives of activities (Callon, 1991). When the non-human actors are enacted upon they becomes “objects-in-use” and a part of the network (Lindberg & Walter, 2012). This association of supporting actors, allies, gives power to an idea or a leader. Since the leader itself cannot hold power, power must be treated as a consequence rather than as a cause of action (Latour, 1986). ANT thereby has a view of power that differs from the traditional theories, which sees power as the cause of actions (Czarniawska & Hernes, 2005). In order to explain the spread of an idea/token Latour (1986) uses the translation model. This model explains changes of the token where actors will form the chain of actions according to what they think is important, depending on their own context. The shape of the idea/token depends on how the next actor along the chain decides to shape it, making it impossible to know how the chain will continue. Depending on each of these actor's interest and ways of making sense, the idea/token will be shaped, resisted or transmitted in the process of translation (Latour, 1986; Nicolini, 2009). An actor is thereby always dependent on the context and the idea/token or action is translated into their local context through the materialization of new ideas (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). Further, Latour (1986) argues that by using the model of translation, one may explain the creation of society and power by the small changes made in the development of the definition of a community.

ANT may also be used in order to understand and examine how institutions use different methods to spread their message and capture actors. Thereby, it views how ideas disseminate and changes along the way. Callon (1986) describes this through the process of translation and identifies four moments of translation: *problematization*, *interessement*, *enrolment* and *mobilization*. This process of translation demonstrates a merge between nature

and society by showing the relationship between both human and non-human actors within a network. The first moment is called *problematization* and captures when the initiating actor identifies the other actors involved within the network and their interests. Secondly, *interessement* involves an actor's attempt to convince the other actors within the network that the actor's particular interest is similar to the other actors interests. Third, through the moment of *enrolment*, the actor's defined roles are related to each other within the network and all actors involved are encouraged to adopt them. In this moment resistance may occur, and Callon (1986) states that there is always a negotiation process between the actors in the network in order to spread the message or idea further. Finally, the moment of *mobilization* captures how the initiating actor ensures that all allied spokespersons within the network are acting according to the settlement and does not betray their own interests. Thereby, an idea is established in the network.

Though, scholars have raised criticism against both ANT and Institutional Theory, creating a merge of parts of these theories, referred to as Scandinavian Institutionalism. Czarniawska and Hernes (2005), for example, accuses ANT of having a focus on macro-actors, rather than on "ecology". Furthermore, Whittle and Spicer (2008) criticize ANT of being "just descriptive", not providing a critical theory of organisations. Law and Singleton (2005) also argues that ANT has too much focus on how networks are sustained, rather than how they are enacted. Despite these criticisms, there are some theoretical advantages, such as ANT examining how actors act, interact, react and make sense of the management fashion they are facing (Bergström & Diedrich, 2011). This makes it interesting to be influenced by the concept of ANT and the translation process, which the Scandinavian Institutionalism elaborates further on. Also, Institutional theory has been criticised for not dealing with the issue of change (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996). Instead, stability has been viewed as the norm and change being treated as an exception. Also this critic has been dealt with in the Scandinavian institutionalism by suggesting that change and stability goes hand in hand. Thereby, a combination of change and sustainability becomes an organisational norm (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005). It is also argued that the concept of "power" is in need of a redefinition and should be viewed as a result since everything is stated to be an on-going process, and not as a cause as in the Institutional Theory (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005). Considering the discussion above, it is interesting to study the dissemination of management ideas by using Scandinavian Institutionalism.

In order to understand how some ideas become institutionalized, Czarniawska and Joerges (1996) developed the translation model within the field of Scandinavian Institutionalism. Further, this model also helps in explaining how an idea can take different shapes and have different meanings (Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005). The model builds on the institutionalization process through objectifying, externalisation and internalisation, combined with translation focusing on local processes. The translation model consists of a chain of certain translations where an idea is materialised and translated into an object, which in turn is translated to action. Further, this action is being translated again, repeated, and in some cases institutionalized. This institution is then in turn translated and the chain continues. The energy, which makes the idea travel, comes from the interest by every new actor involved in the process (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). These actors are referred to as the idea

carriers and the ones who receive and turn the idea into action in the local practice are called idea receivers (Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005).

According to Lindberg and Erlingsdottir (2005), the model of translation has been used many times in order to describe complex change processes, though there has been less research conducted on how the translation is done. This argument is strengthened by Røvik (2001) as he argues that there is a lack of focus on what happens to the idea as it enters an organisation. This is what Lindberg and Erlingsdottir (2005) investigates deeper and by their work they highlighted four moments of translation. The first moment is *disembedding*, where the idea is taken from its context in order to have the preconditions to be reinterpreted in another context in order for the idea to be able to travel in time and space. It later on become *packaged*, for example as a prototype or a model, in order to make it easy to communicate and fit a contemplated future context. Further, it is argued to be of importance that the idea is packaged in a way that present it as both unique and recognizable. The once who later on will be translating the idea will do it based on their context where the idea will be used. Due to this, the idea carriers have to do their translation based on where the idea is to be used and in which local practice. The next moment is the *unpacking*, where the idea meets a new practice and is brought into a new context. Depending on how detailed the “recipe” for the idea is, the room for reinterpretation will be different. The idea will further be edited by the idea receivers depending on the shape of the idea as well as the new context. The last moment of translation is the *action/institutionalisation*. In order to be translated into action the idea has to be made energetic. By providing the idea with concrete traits, for example by connecting it to already existing practices and produce written descriptions, the materialisation of the idea is being eased. Once an idea has been translated into action several times it will be taken for granted. If this is being done in a sufficient number of times in a sufficient number of organisations, the idea might eventually be institutionalized in the specific organisational field. Although, Lindberg and Erlingsdottir (2005) states that this is an ideal picture of how change takes place viewed from a translational perspective. Instead they are arguing that there are no clear cuts between the different moments as described, rather the moments might take place simultaneously, overlap, or in some cases all moments are not even taking place.

A difficulty of using the Scandinavian Institutionalism in practice is that the processes examined may become taken for granted and seen as succeeded (Czarniawska, 2004). In this case this is handled by studying this specific process with a critical mind. The advantages with this theory thereby outweigh the criticism and give an interesting view on how the dissemination of management ideas can take place.

Methodology of the study

As the aim with the study is to investigate how new management ideas and fashions, such as SL, are being spread, this study chose to look deeper into a course in SL targeting students, and study the educational setup of this course. The course was given during January to April in 2017 and it was the first time this course was given. A qualitative approach was applied and a case study was conducted in order to gain a better view of the educational setup and how the idea of SL is disseminated and understood by the actors involved. In this case, data was collected through observations, interviews and reviews of documents, articles and other

second hand sources. This is in line with the qualitative approach where it is possible to use different kind of data collection methods (Silverman, 2013). According to Jacobsen (2002), the intention of the qualitative method is in general to investigate how people understand and interpret a given situation and is appropriate to use when determining what a concept or phenomena is. By using a qualitative method it is therefore less likely to have an idea beforehand of what the result should look like (Jacobsen, 2002). This study can also be considered to be of exploratory nature and in order to answer this type of research question a depth and intense method is needed. This is a reason to why the sample size were kept small, making the study focusing on the specific actors involved in the educational initiative.

Collection of data

In order to understand how management ideas can be spread through educational initiatives, both primary and secondary data was collected. The primary data consisted of revived information from observations and interviews with the course founders and participating students. The secondary data consisted of information on management ideas and the educations, retrieved from media and from the organisation responsible for the educational initiative. These two types of data were gathered in order to help the researchers to gain a lot of different knowledge from several different angles and levels in order to compare these and get a broader understanding about the subject.

The primary data was collected through interviews conducted with actors connected to the course, along with observations. The choice of which educational organisation to investigate was based on a non-randomized selection due to access. Hence, the study will miss external validity and may not be used to generalize how other actors are disseminating management ideas, but will instead give insights about a specific unit and contribute to scientific development (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The selected course took place in Gothenburg where the researchers interviewed 14 course participants and the two course facilitators. The number of interviews with the course facilitators was limited due to the structure of the course as it only provided two facilitators. The amount of 14 participants is argued to be enough as the participants at this point started to give the same answers. Two interviews with employees at a department at S.B.E.L. named Career Service, who worked on implementing SL into the school strategy, were also conducted. As the work with this study carried on it became clear that these two interviews did not contribute to answering the research questions, but instead gave a deeper understanding of the context and general interest in SL. In total 18 interviews was conducted, seen in table 1 below. By meeting different types of respondents, such as participants and facilitators, the researchers gained a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon from different viewpoints (Silverman, 2004). Further, every interview happened on voluntary bases where only a few declined, due to time, even though they were positive to the happening. Studying how different course participants reflect and react upon SL and the education are, as well as the course leaders different insights on the idea and structure of the course, was considered interesting. This since the results potentially could draw conclusions on whether SL is being disseminated through the course as a management idea. This result could thereby help the organisational theorists to frame the complexity in “the travel of the ideas” and how the ideas are created, translated and spread between actors

(Abrahamson, 1991; Djelic, 2016). Which later on could contribute to knowledge on how ideas can be translated and spread between organisations as well.

In order to understand how the facilitators and participants reflect and understand SL, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted. This in order to gain a high freedom of choice within the interview questions (Silverman, 2013; Kvale, 2006). To the extent that it was possible, the aim was to conduct the interviews face-to-face. Even though the interviewers might affect the respondents and their answers (Quinlan, 2011), this is still argued to give an overall positive impact, creating the opportunity to observe the respondents reaction to different issues and hence get a clue of which questions to investigate further. In line with what is suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2014), an interview guide was used in order structure the interviews. The interview questions were constructed and asked in a chronological order in order to understand if and how the idea of SL was disseminating. This way of construction makes it easier to analyse the answers along with the model of translation. An interview guide was used as a base where the respondents also were encouraged to talk freely about their view of the phenomenon in order to be objective and ethical (Silverman, 2013), to not steer the dialogue (Czarniawska, 2014) and affect the respondents as little as possible. During the interviews, lasting between 30 minutes and 2,5 hours, both researchers were present where one had the leading part and the other took notes and contribute with follow-up questions. All of the interviews were, in accordance with the interviewees, recorded. Even though the recording might make the respondents speak less freely, the researchers agree with Jacobsen (2002) as the advantages of being able to listen to the interview again is even more beneficial. In order to protect the course participants and facilitators and help them to be even more honest in their interview answers, the interviews were all made anonymous (Silverman, 2013). As all the interviewees were Swedish, the interviews were conducted and transcribed in their mother tongue in order to avoid problems when they express their thoughts in a foreign language (Van Nes et al., 2010). Thereby, the researchers translated the collected data and all quotes to English, which may have affected the analysing part.

In order to gain a wider perspective on how SL is being spread, and in order to put the statements of the interviewees into a situation and get new insights (Watson, 2011), 40 hours of observations also was done by participating in the course of SL. These observations have been direct observations through participation (Watson, 2011), where the researchers had the same role as the other course participants. This was considered advantageous as many of the moments in the course were very personal and by not participating the students may felt watched and less willing to open up during the sessions and interviews. Further, all of the participants got knowledge about the observations from the start of the course and approved to the collection. Notes were taken during the observation of the course, at the same time as the researchers were active course participants. This might be seen as a challenge since there can be difficulties in focusing on two things at once. In order to prevent this, additional notes were taken after each course occasion in order to not forget the observations and impressions. The researchers also discussed the days together after each seminar in order to evaluate and understand different sections.

The collection of secondary data was done by using information and documents reflecting on management trends and SL in order to understand the phenomenon further

(Eisenhardt, 1989; Silverman, 2013). This data was collected through a systematic search approach by focusing on articles published in well-known, printed and digital, medias. These were founded by using different search engines and keywords such as “Management trends”, “Management ideas” and “Self leadership”. When reading these articles it became clear that some of their sources were also useful for the researchers. Due to a high amount of articles the focus has mainly been on well-cited articles from highly ranked journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Organization* and *Journal of Management*. The organisation’s webpages and documents received from the organisations about the course layout, was also used with the aim of getting access to broader information about the course setting and how the facilitators structured the course. During this collection, it was essential to consider for whom and by whom the data was written in order to keep a critical mind (Silverman, 2013).

Table 1. Participating organizations and respondents.

Name	Organization	Respondent	Why relevant for the study
Student A	Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student B	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student C	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student D	Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student E	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student F	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student G	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student H	Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student I	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student J	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student K	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student L	Chalmers University	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student M	Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Student N	Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law	Student	Receiver of the management trend
Facilitator A	World Values Initiative	Facilitator	Disseminators of the management trend
Facilitator B	World Values Initiative	Facilitator	Disseminators of the management trend
Coach A	Career Service	Career Coach	Disseminators of the management trend, provides information about the subject
Coach B	Career Service	HR-Specialist and Coach	Disseminators of the management trend, provides information about the subject

Analysis of Data

After collecting the empirical data, it was sorted and analysed, resulting in a time consuming, analysing process (Jacobsen, 2002). Both researchers participated in the interviews, creating the opportunity to immediately construct a detailed transcript of the conversation. This was supplemented by the recording as it made it possible to go back and fill in if something was missed the first time. By doing so the transcription process was made more efficient. The method used during the analysis of the data was inspired by the steps suggested by Martin and Turner (1986). When studying the data, different themes such as "marketing", "the group dynamic" and "focus on the individual" became interesting as they appeared repeatedly over time during the observations and interviews (Holme and Solvang, 1997; Martin and Turner, 1986). During the first step of the analysis, the data was therefore sorted under these themes in order to get a better overview of the data (Silverman, 2006). In the next step of the analysis, these themes were compared and discussed. This resulted in these themes being linked to, and analysed with different theoretical concepts from the translation model presented by Erlingsdottir and Lindberg (2005); (1) disembedding, (2) packaging, (3) unpacking and (4) action/institutionalisation. In this step it also became clear that this study mainly had data from the moments of packaging and unpacking as these parts were the once

mostly connected to the course and the study's observations and interviews. Thereby, the analysis has a main focus on these parts where the facilitators way of find and package the idea created different reactions from the students during the moment of unpacking, affecting the dissemination process. This analysis thereby contributed to a deeper understanding of how management ideas are being disseminated and how they travel into new, local contexts and meets various actors. In order to portray the context in which the course was founded, a short presentation of the involved actors will be given in a later chapter of this study.

Limitations

Even though this study takes a lot of decisions in order to contribute with as much knowledge as possible, it is likely important to understand the existing limitations and what is not in the scope of this study (Silverman, 2013). First of all, this study is not able to follow the idea of SL through a longer period of time, making it hard to see if the idea becomes institutionalized or not. Secondly, this study is based on interviews and observations connected to one case and one context, making it hard to see the final result as a general rule for how disseminations of ideas becomes easier to affect, as it may be different in other contexts. Thirdly, as the researchers were active in the observations they might have missed things that happened during the study, even though they used different tactics to avoid it. Fourthly, the direct observations may also influenced the researchers to be more positive about the idea of SL than they otherwise would have been. However, since the aim of the study is not to examine the idea itself but how it is spread, this is not seen as something affecting the study's trustworthiness. Thus, these limitations are not affecting the study's validity, which still can be seen as high as it fulfils its purpose by providing answers to the research questions. The researchers also tried to keep an as critical thinking as possible through the study and the empirical data has been handled with great confidentiality and in good research method.

Introducing the main actors involved

In order to work with self-fulfilment and convey knowledge in SL, organisations such as SelfLeaders and W.V.I. raised, providing courses within the subject on universities in for example Stockholm, Lund, Uppsala and Gothenburg (SelfLeaders, 2016b; World Values Initiative, 2015a). The organisations provides shorter courses in order to create a deeper understanding of the participant's own motivation, personal values and strengths, and clarify the link between the universal psychological needs, well-being and performance. The courses aims to develop the participants' self-management, which is argued to provide opportunities for the participants to take decisions and act in line with what they think is important and meaningful.

The course investigated in this study is an initiative driven by two consultants through the organisation W.V.I, which is a non-profit organisation aiming to be a platform for students in order to develop themselves through dialogue and experience-based methods (World Value Initiative, 2015a). The organisation was founded by inspiration from actors as SelfLeaders in order to create an awareness of the topic and help today's and tomorrow's leaders to learn about their own values to get more passion in their roles (World Value Initiative, 2015b). The organisation first began to disseminate their message by the creation

of World Values Day, which is a day filled with workshops about value-based questions. But as the interest grew, W.V.I. instead became a large umbrella organisation helping promoters around Sweden to provide monthly workshops and all-day events. Today, the organisation provides activities in four regions and at seven universities, reaching more than 1,500 people each year. The organisation's main target are university students, but they also offer workshops for different types of businesses (World Value Initiative, 2015a). Their vision is to create “A world where every human being thrives in their own uniqueness, to create spaced and experiences empowering people to find and live their own true selves, today” (World Value Initiative, n.d.) The organisation use storytelling to achieve this and everything is based on a value-driven approach as they argues that values are a source of motivation and commitment, and thus form the basis of a person's actions.

The company SelfLeaders is also introduced, as it is well known within the area of SL and referred to during this study since W.V.I. started their work within the area by the help and inspiration from SelfLeaders. SelfLeaders was the first company to start a course in SL at Stockholm School of Economics in 2009 (SelfLeaders, n.d.). SelfLeaders was first founded with the aim of creating and spreading this course but is today a company that provides a lot of different courses and activities, both towards students and companies.

Both the facilitators are former engineers with experience from working with value driven leadership at companies, such as Volvo. Further, they both also went through different type of crises, which contributed to a raised interest in their own well-being and, eventually, helped them to get in contact with SL. During a conference both facilitators meet W.V.I. and SelfLeaders and started to get an even deeper understanding in the subject through their workshops. Facilitator B describes the network of organisations that works with SL as a duck pond where everyone comes in contact with each other at some point. The students participating in the course came from both Chalmers as well as S.B.E.L., where they study several different educations at different levels and years.

Findings

The findings will be presented in two views in order to capture the travel of the idea, where the first part focus on how the facilitators understands SL and how they used different tactics in order to structure the idea of SL to a course. The second part is viewed from the students perspective and involves their reflections on the course, and thereby the idea of SL, in order to understand how they receive and perceive it. In the end of each part, an analysis is made with the help from the translation model by Czarniawska and Joerges (1996) and Lindberg and Erlingsdottir (2005), in order to understand the travel of the idea. This is then discussed further in the upcoming discussion and final conclusion.

Dressing the idea

Both of the facilitators describe that they have a passion for values and argues that it is an important foundation of a good corporate culture and creation of wellbeing among employees, and thereby the whole society. Facilitator A explains that values creates a good corporate culture, good leadership and often creates a commitment in the workplace, and thereby helps employees to feel meaning in their work. Further, he believes that leaders must

be aware of their passion and inner goals, as well as being able to really listen and understand what drives the people around them. He states that SL is about starting to make conscious choices to live the life you want:

SL means being aware of who I am and what matters to me so that I can make conscious decisions and live the life I want. It creates genuine energy from within and makes you feel better, become happier and want a bit more. - Facilitator A

Facilitator B further states that SL is about helping people to understand themselves in order to lead themselves. This makes you less dependent of what you think that other people and the society thinks is important, and rather listen from within. He further states that you need to take care of yourself before you are going to be able to take care of others and to contribute to the society:

It is the same thing as the airlines say when they go through security procedures "If the pressure in the cabin suddenly fall would, it will arrive oxygen masks. Put on your own mask before you assist your neighbour or your child." Since it is very difficult to help someone else if you fainted. - Facilitator B

This picture of SL creates his motivation for the subject, and he hopes that he will be able to contribute to a better society with better leadership and wellbeing by spreading the topic. This conviction and motivation of what good SL could do is stated to be the reason to why both of the facilitators chose to make the idea their profession and work with the idea in different contexts.

The emergence and design of the course

Through his involvement in the duck pond, facilitator A's interest grew and he started to facilitate the subject at different associations and schools, as well as involved in the W.V.I.'s Advisory Board in Gothenburg. Facilitator A states that he realized that students in today's universities are deteriorating due to all the pressure regarding careers, grades, and social contexts. This awoke his interest in starting a course in SL, targeting students. During the spring of 2016 he tried a shorter pilot, including subjects such as values, mental training and mindfulness, in order to get a deeper understanding about how students think and how they work. During 2016 facilitator A started to structure the course and asked facilitator B if he wanted to lead together with him. They both state that the aim of the course in SL is to create awareness, insight and tools for students to understand themselves better. The training would thereby build mental strength, reduce stress levels and help all participants to set clear goals in order to create motivation in everyday life and for future jobs. Facilitator A claims that it is his belief that this eventually will reduce un-health within organisations and create engagement in the workplaces.

In order to make the course available for as many students as possible the course was given for free. Hence, one of the hardest challenges was to collect money, which was done through sponsorships. Facilitator A explained that the interest for the course was huge, but still companies dropped out when they realize that they needed to pay money for it. The

facilitators therefore hope that this edition, which they carry out on a voluntary basis, will create greater awareness and interest, making it easier to raise funds in the future. They also hope that they, through the creation of a bigger interest for the future employees and leaders, are going to be able to make people understand the importance of SL and this kind of courses. In order to do so, they aimed at collecting several of proof through measurements and surveys from the first participants' experiences in order to show that the course really works. During this edition of the course AB Volvo was the main sponsor and one of their leaders responsible for culture and organisation development gave a lecture during the final seminar of the course.

Marketing and course application

In order to market the course the facilitators got help from W.V.I.'s active student members who put up posters at Chalmers, talked about the course with students and created marketing through social media and newsletters. They also invited students to a lunch lecture held by facilitator A in order to help them understand what the course and SL is about. During this lecture facilitator A tried to emphasise that the course should not be seen as an education, but rather as an exercise program, which would demand that the participants had the strength to participate long enough and give the course the time that it required. They also took help from Carrier Service at S.B.E.L. in order to market the course at the business school through newsletters. The marketing resulted in 28 applications to fill 20 positions, which exceeded the expectations. All of the applicants, studying at both Chalmers and S.B.E.L., applied to the course by writing an application letter in which they justified why they should be selected. The application consisted of questions regarding the applicant's' background, desired changes, expectations and why they wanted to be a part of the course. The application process thus required some commitment and was primarily used since the facilitators during the pilot realized that students often begin things without finishing them. They therefore believed that the application process could be seen as a barrier that makes it somewhat tougher to get into the course, but also filter out students who are not 100% motivated and mature to take the course and spend the necessary time:

We made the application a little more difficult and more time-consuming to show that the participants would need to keep this level and do the tasks properly through the course. We also hoped that this would create motivation. -
Facilitator A

The course setting

The facilitators emphasizes that they needed a long-term approach to change the habits of the participants. Though, they also argued that students finds it difficult to commit themselves and therefore decided that the course should last for a term with a more concentrated beginning in two full days, followed by a full day seminar per month, in total four seminars during five days. The facilitators stated that the course is built upon four principles: Focus, Courage, Curiosity and People's own choice. They both emphasizes that it was the students' choice to apply for the course and that it is up to them if the course will help them to become less stressed, get to know their own values and make conscious choices in order to affect their future to the better.

Facilitator B further states that it is sometimes easy to hope for too much and think that you are able to change someone's life. But it is important to remember that people won't change if they are not prepared for it and have the right mindset. SL is not something you can force on people and it is not right for all people. It is just a model to help people so they can feel better and become happier in their lives. He further says that:

I told facilitator A that: "You can not lead the horse to water". But he said: "Yes, you can lead the horse to water but you can not make it drink", "Well there you are partly right," I said, but I also told him: "You can not lead the horse to the water in this case. Within a course like this, we can just point and tell the horse that there is the water, but people actually have get up and go to the water themselves." - Facilitator B

Varying exercises

During the seminars the students got to participate in a mix of exercises, guest lectures and group assignments. The exercises were structured in several different ways were the students for example were to discuss different topics while taking a walk, interview each other, meditate or select a number of personal values. What many of the exercises had in common was that they were often interactive and the students were the ones who did most of the job while the facilitators had a more withdrawn role. Another common thing for the exercises was that even if the topics and constellations were different, many of the exercises started with the participants reflecting on their own or discussing in pairs, to later presented and discuss within the group what they had been talking about. In these group discussions the facilitators usually made sure that all of the students got to say what they had been discussing, even the once that did not raise their hands and volunteered to tell.

There were also an amount of exercises that should be conducted before the course and between the seminars. Before the seminars the students were given some preparatory tasks, where they for example were to read a book about the brain, watch six shorter movies about motivation, happiness and wellbeing. They also conducted some individual exercises through reflection on their own personal values and how they live their lives. In between the seminars there were some additional individual exercises, but also tasks and issues that should be discussed in smaller groups of four students.

All seminars and exercises were voluntary but desirable to carry out. Through the observations, it was obvious that the facilitators never questioned who carried out the tasks or not, making it easy for students to cheat. But there were also a commitment in the group where the facilitators, especially in the beginning, stated the fact that the students applied for the course with the knowledge that they had to spend a certain time on seminars and exercises. Facilitator B stated that the course was created for people with the right mindset, wanting to change something in their lives. SL is not something you could force people to work with, it is something you must want in order to really understand, and it is therefore a reason to help the most motivated ones:

The course is a lot about finding people who have a maturity to address these issues, which made us have a rather hard application process. Then we began to

serve the questions in packages during the course to create awareness and later a vision of what the students wants to accomplish. - Facilitator B

However, both the facilitators state that they never believed that all students should succeed with all tasks, which became clear during the observations of the second seminar. As a task in the first seminar facilitator B presented mindfulness and meditation, which all students were supposed to learn through an eight-week program with a daily exercise of 2*10 minutes. This session of mindfulness was not anything that the students knew that they were supposed to learn during the course, neither that they had a daily homework of 20 minutes each day. During the first seminar the facilitators told the students that they were supposed to meditate each day. But during the second seminar they started by asking how the meditation-task had turned out, and it soon became clear that none of the 20 students succeeded to meditate two times each day during the last month. Instead, most of the students only meditated once each day or less. It also became clear that neither facilitator A nor B expected the students to succeed with this task, and spent nearly an hour long session talking about how to succeed with a task and create a new life routine. It also became clear that the setup was more flexible then presented earlier and that the students could adopt the task to suit their lives.

Focus on the individual

Both the facilitators state that SL is about first knowing yourself and your values in order to be able to understand the group's values and act as a good leader. This argument was reflected upon during the seminars as most of the tasks in the course were created around the participants. During the first seminar the focus was on reflecting over the participants' current state and why they were in that position. Some focus was also on the group members getting to know each other. The second seminar contained exercises questioning were the participants wanted to be and what their dreams were. During the third seminar the focus was on conscious choices and how the participants were to reach their dreams. Lastly, the fourth seminar concerned the role of the individual in the group and facilitator A argued that you have to work with yourself first in order to be able to look beyond yourself and take care of others. The focus on the individual could also be seen during the exercises conducted in the study groups were the participants, in one way or another, got to tell their story and discuss it with the other group members.

The group's dynamic and influence

As mentioned the majority of the participants did not know each other from before as they were from different classes and educations. During the first session the group set some collective rules of how to behave in the group. The exercises were then shaped in a way so that the participants got to talk a lot to each other and tell each other about their lives. The atmosphere became open and non-judgmental quickly and people opened up to each other by for example telling stories about tougher episodes in their lives:

I was so glad that the dynamics of the group became open and honest so fast, it just felt fantastic and as a really good start. - Facilitator A

Analysis: The main foundations in the packaging

As mentioned previously the moment of disembedding (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005) takes place when an idea is taken from its context in order to give it the preconditions to be reinterpreted into the context of the future idea receivers. As this moment took place before the start of this study, no concrete examples of this can be shown. Though, as the facilitators describes the idea in an open way, which can be useful to many people and in many contexts, one can imagine that the idea has been disconnected from any eventual previous context in order to enable it to spread to a wide range of receivers.

As the facilitators decided to give the course to students they had to adapt it in order to fit the students and their lives. This can be seen as the moment of packaging where the facilitators dressed the idea in cloth suitable for the new context (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005). A first example of how the facilitator chose to package the idea can be seen already in the marketing of the course where it was emphasized that the idea was not an education but an exercise program, which demanded a certain amount of time from the students participating. By packaging and marketing the idea in this manner the facilitators direct it towards students that are motivated enough to put down the time required. Further, framing it as an exercise program can also be a way to increase the interest and motivation for the course and the idea of SL.

Another example of how the idea has been packaged during the course is the focus on the individual combined with the interactive and flexible exercises. By focusing on the individual from the start and construct the exercises so that they evolve around the participants they can be a part of constructing and translating the idea as co-creators. According to Lindberg and Erlingsdottir (2005) this is beneficial for the spreading of the idea. By packaging the idea through a focus on the individual it is also easier for the students to relate to the idea and see how it could be beneficial for them. At the same time this is the first time the students have been given the opportunity to be a part of a course like this for free and can hence be seen as unique. This is something that argued to be yet another beneficial factor when the idea carriers translate and package the idea (Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005). It is further seen that the facilitators also used a student customised course structure, different tasks and created a group with a positive attitude when packaging the course. What this means for the dissemination of the idea will be investigated later in this study.

Adjusting of the outfit – Reactions from the students

Many of the students expressed that they became interested when they heard about the course and choose to apply as they felt that they were in a specific time in life where they needed a toolbox to help them find themselves, and thereby make it possible for them to gain better control over their own lives. This interest had arisen as some students gone through big crises in life, while others were only stressed about expanding their CV with leadership experience, and only had a keen interest in personal development issues. Further, some students' saw the course as a saviour in a society filled with opportunities, hoping it would help them get some answers and quick fixes in their lives:

I wanted to learn more about SL because I was bullied at school as a child and had poor SL. Since then, I have understood that I should start to get better at controlling my life, instead of letting others control who I am and what I want to do... The course also creates a different social context where I have met new friends with similar interests, which I appreciate. - Student K

The way that the students applied for the course was not something they were used to. Some even described it as uncomfortable as they were not used to disclose as much of themselves and what challenges they were struggling with. It was described as hard to know how to answer some questions and some students expressed that they considered how much to share and if they were to increase their chances of participating if they presented their situation as more severe than someone else's. Although, the application process was also described as serious and as a proof of that the applicant is truly willing to put all the time needed on the course. Further, one of the students states that the process was motivating:

I got a completely different driving force to complete the course through the application process. It created a completely different motivation since I really had to evaluate why I wanted to do this. - Student A

This motivation is something that most of the students comes back to, even the once feeling discomfort answering the questions. They describes it as interesting and as a first part of a process where they got to reflect over their values and what is important to them, why they wanted to participate and what they were hoping to achieve through the course. The students also express that the application process gave them a picture of what to expect from the course and what kind of people they were going to meet during the sessions. Once the students found out that they had been accepted to the course many of them expressed happiness, and some expressed gratitude for being selected to participate in the course and appreciated that it was given for free.

Many of the students felt that the course gave them an opportunity to really dig deeper into themselves by being forced to put words on what earlier in life might just have been a feeling. As SL evolves around the subject "I", the students expressed that it was easier to relate to this topic, in comparison to their original educations at Chalmers and S.B.E.L.. Further, they expressed that it made them feel that the course was shaped after them, creating more motivation. During many of the exercises the students, through the design of the exercises, pushed each other to take their analysis about themselves even further:

If compared to the usual school, I am more committed and I learn more in this course. So, I think I absorb it easier here since the interactive exercises help you to be involved all the time. - Student B

Even though this sometimes made a few of them a bit uncomfortable, as well as unfamiliar to share so much personal reflections, they still found it helpful and valuable as it made it easier for them to get to know themselves. There was also an appreciation for the opportunity to hear what others had to say about them, both in groups and through the 360-evaluation that

were conducted, as the students from the beginning hoped to get to know themselves better. Although, some of the student expressed that they were dissatisfied with not getting the quick fixes and concrete tools they expected. Even though many of the students expected to work with themselves during the course they were of the perception that a lot of focus would be on how to work and plan for the future instead of looking backwards by for example analyse their values. One student expressed it as follows:

I think I was expecting to understand how to go from knowing to doing. But it feels like we are going more from not knowing towards knowing. - Student F

In general the students appreciated the preparatory tasks prior to the course and several of the students expressed that these tasks gave a hint of what to expect during the course, giving a serious conception of it. Though, some of the other individual exercises that were to be conducted between the seminars raised some different reactions. The mindfulness exercises were something that they were not prepared for, even though they expected some tasks in between the seminars. Although a few of the students questioned the meaning with the whole task most of the students viewed it as something positive and as something they believed would contribute to their wellbeing. Despite the conviction of the positive effects of mindfulness, the students generally had problems making it a routine and carry out the meditation each day, making a lot of them only meditate once a day or less. Some students even abandoned the meditation and replaced it with mindfulness painting. But even if they created their own routines it is clear that they were constantly aware of the original setup. Some of the students even expressed that they got a bad conscience and became stressed since they did not manage to meditate as much as they should have done according to the instructions:

Actually, I think I appreciate the meditation, but I have trouble with people who tell me what to do. Often I get very stressed of having things I have to do. - Student D

Further, the students also state that they struggled a bit to understand the aim of the exercises conducted at home as they never were brought up again, neither in the study-groups nor at the seminars. Some feedback on these exercises was requested in order to make them less as a homework that they just checked off the list. Further, the students seems to value that the facilitators always made sure that everyone joined the discussions and tried to make sure that everybody said something. The students saw this as something positive and expressed that it was easier to grasp and remember the discussion as they were forced to reflect and talk.

The students liked the group constellation, which in most cases consisted of people who did not know each other before the start as most of the participants came from different backgrounds. This was argued to contribute to more insights and perspectives, but also new relationships and friends. Also, it was described as something taking away barriers, as there was no expectations of what roles the participants should take in the group. Further, the students appreciated the size of the group as they felt that everyone got a chance to be seen at the same time as they still could be one in the crowd. The students all state that the group

were open where the participants were willing to share their thoughts, some even shared things about themselves during the course that not even their closest friends knew about them. A few students went as far as saying that if some of the participants were not willing to share their thoughts, it could harm the whole group as it might have contributed to making others feel insecure and thus less likely to open up. This openness in the group was described as a positive group pressure where all should share their stories, out of respect to the other students, as they all showed a lot of faith in opening up. The positive group pressure was also motivating in the individual tasks as none of the students wanted to be the one that did not put down the effort needed and was not prepared for the group meetings and sessions:

It feels like the group creates a positive group pressure. We are helping each other to talk about the exercises and motivate each other. Hence, you do not want to be the one who did not do the exercises in the group. - Student K

Though, some of the participants also expressed that it occasionally could be tough in the group as they felt a need of being social and friendly in order to make a good impression to their new classmates. A few also expressed that it sometimes was uncomfortable to open up to the whole group as they just got to know each other. In these cases there was a benefit with the smaller groups where the students expressed that they got a chance to bring up subjects that they were not quite ready to bring up in the big group yet.

The voluntarism to open up through the tasks was highlighted as something important, creating motivation and the right mindset to the course and the idea. They also experienced the course seminars as innovative and interactive, describing the sessions as workshops more than lessons, arguing that this type of tasks helped them to be active and engaged, which helped them to absorb the message.

Further, the students argue that it is a bit too early to say if the course will change their life, but many of the students argue that they have become more aware of how they feel and why they act in certain ways in certain situations and that this awareness gives them both the responsibility and possibility to steer their lives in the direction they want. The majority of the students agree upon that SL is something that they believe will be important and beneficial in the future, regardless of where they will be working or how their lives will look.

Analysis: The reactions illustrates the unpacking and translation

As the students react on SL they become the idea receivers and start to unpack the message of the idea, as illustrated in the model of translation (Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005). This happens when the idea meets a new practice and is brought into a new context. In this case the idea of SL was packaged as an educational initiative towards students. Depending on how detailed the “recipe” of the idea is, the reinterpretation and reactions from the idea receivers will be different. As a lot of the students felt that they had some impact of how the course played out, as well as that they were able to change and utilize the idea of SL in their own lives, the idea could be seen as their own and not forced to be used in a specific way. According to the model of translation (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005) this could be seen as a moment of unpacking where the guidelines are not specifically strict and the students could change it after their own context. As an example

the students took the idea of mindfulness, which first was introduced as mandatory, and adapted it to their own context by for example adjusting the structure of the meditation program. The ways of packaging the course as editable and flexible thereby tends to be of importance. This since it gave the students a chance to adapt it to their context and their values, creating a higher motivation within the course.

There are several indicators showing that the facilitators forced the students to unpack the idea of SL. An example of this is how the facilitators made sure that all of the students shared their thoughts during many of the exercises. By doing so, the idea receivers had no choice but to translate, unpack and make sense of the idea (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005). Further, as the students seemed to feel a responsibility towards one another, the positive group pressure seems to have motivated the students to learn more about the idea and put down the time needed. Hence, this can also be seen as a forced unpacking of the idea as the students had to do all the exercises in order to fulfil the pressure.

However, there seemed to be a difference in what some of the students expected from the course and what the facilitators choose to found the course on as some the students were expecting more clear answers of how to handle their future. Thus, even though the students were prepared to put the time needed, they were still expecting more of a 'quick fix' than the course delivered. This could be argued to make some of the students more critical to the idea of SL and might have complicated the unpacking.

In order to make the idea of SL energetic, it needs to be translated into action, as stated in the model of translation (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005). As SL is translated into action in several ways, where the students for example started to reflect even more, started to meditate and changed some parts of their lives, it could be argued that the idea has gone through the moment of action and thereby the model of translation. But as it is yet not possible to see if the idea of SL has created any long term changes, and as the student has not done any of the actions in a sufficient number of times, it is too early to state that the idea of SL has been institutionalised. It is clear that the students consider the subject important for the future. Still, the students had not adapted all of the recommendations fully. Though, the students seems to have a belief in that even if the changes does not come straight away they will still appear in the future. This is interesting as one could imagine that the students would be most inspired during and right after the course, and that this inspiration would fade as time goes by.

Discussion: important elements in the dissemination

The travel of the idea of SL could be viewed in both a macro and micro perspective. If the dissemination is viewed from a broader and larger matter the idea can be seen to travel between organisations such as SelfLeaders, W.V.I. and the other organisations in the duck pond. All these organisations work within the same kind of industry (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and could be argued to be pressured to work with the idea and become more and more similar in isomorphic ways (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As all the actors in the field seems to compose a rather homogenous group it could be argued that there is a normative isomorphism where everyone affect each others' perception of how to work with the idea of

SL. There also seems to be some mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) in the case of S.B.E.L as they chose to include SL in their work, just as their competitor had done earlier. This could be argued to be an attempt to gain more applications and a higher status towards stakeholders and competitors. When looking at this specific course sponsors might also give legitimacy to the idea of SL. If big names such as AB Volvo work with a fashion, it may pressure other organisations to do the same and thereby support the dissemination of the idea. In order to keep giving this course, and thereby create a dissemination of the idea, the sponsors' needs to be convinced by the facilitators that they have a common interests, as within the moment of interessement (Callon, 1986), before they gets enrolled. The facilitators expressed that this is something that they hope to do by for example gather evidence of the benefits in the course through a survey, giving the course legitimacy.

A micro perspective of the dissemination

This study has narrowed down and mostly focused on studying the dissemination of a management idea through a micro perspective, by following the idea of SL on a bit of its journey through different contexts. It has been seen that the translation of the idea looks different during different parts of this voyage. Further, it becomes clear that the translation of an idea is not a linear process (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1986; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005) where the idea travels in its original shape from a beginning to an end. It is not possible to date the beginning, as it is hard to state where the idea started. It is even possible to argue that the process has lasted a long time and that the facilitators have gone through parts of the model of translation before, but as idea receivers. This since they received the idea from previous idea carriers, such as SelfLeaders, and unpacked and tailored it into their own context and further implemented it through actions, which have created an institutional behaviour where they for example meditates each day. An example that illustrates the translation is a nonlinear process is how the idea meets resistance, as seen in the example of mindfulness, and is renegotiated along the way as the idea receivers adapt the idea to their own contexts, where all actors make sense of it in different ways (Latour, 1986). Thus, through the translation and different contradictions, several different translation processes are created, and as the idea receivers in their turn may disseminate the idea of SL, in the role of new idea carriers, making it impossible to see an end of the dissemination process.

Through this study the focus has been on the moments of packaging and unpacking (Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005). When studying the translation that has been done it is seen that there are two main themes that seems to contribute to the dissemination of the idea. These two are accessibility and attractiveness and will be developed below.

It can be argued that the structure of the course contributed to the accessibility of the idea and made it easy to participate in the course. To start with, by offering the course for free, the facilitators lowered the obstacles for the students to take part in the course and learn about the idea of SL. The course was also applicable for students with different educational background and did not require any kind of prerequisites, which enabled more students to take part of it and hence increased the accessibility. Another factor that is argued to contribute to the accessibility of the course is the way it was scheduled. By dividing the course of four whole day-seminars the facilitators aimed at making it as available as possible for many students. The low investments that the students had to do in time and money can

also be stated to have helped in disseminating (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005) the idea of SL to students. This since students in general are known not to have that much money or much free time and could easily choose not to prioritize working with the idea otherwise.

Further, the course is structured in a way where the requirements that are set not really are required or in any way controlled. For example, when the students applied for the course there were some requirements regarding the time they were expected to put on the course. Though, as it is a course that the students have applied for voluntarily, there is nothing binding that pressures them to carry out the course if they do not want to. Also, even though some of the tasks are described as more or less mandatory, such as the meditation, there were no moments in the course where the facilitators controlled whether or not the students actually performed these tasks. Hence, the obstacles are lowered even more.

As stated by Lindberg and Erlingsdottir (2005), the idea can be packed so it appears to be more or less attractive and create a more positive mindset towards the idea. In this case the facilitators selected the applicants who already from the start had a positive attitude towards the idea and hence found it attractive. Further, there are some moments along the course that makes the idea and course even more attractive for the students. Many of the students expressed gratitude and felt privileged as they were chosen to participate in the course. This privileged feeling was then reinforced by the actions of the facilitators as they structured the course, and hence present the idea, by focusing on the individual to a large extent. There was a self focus during the course and the exercises were mainly self oriented. The fact that the idea itself had a focus on the individual, and thereby was structured around the idea receivers and their wellbeing, seems to have been a motivating factor that made the students willing to devote the time needed to the course. This way of package the idea of SL thereby seems to have participated in creating a positive attitude from the idea receivers as the idea claimed to help them understand themselves, and contributed to their wellbeing and personal development. The idea of SL could thereby be argued to be easier to disseminate as the idea receivers can see their own purpose of learning about the idea (Callon, 1986), unlike if, for example, the aim of the idea would have been to help the organisation the idea receivers works for. Hence, it could be seen that the human ego affects the dissemination of an idea, and by packaging the idea to always benefit the idea receivers on an individual level, the idea carrier can make the idea more attractive and create a more positive attitude.

Another factor that seems to have created a success within the dissemination and made the idea more attractive is the group dynamic. By being a part of the group that participated in the course, the participants became part of a social context. This can be argued to be especially attractive for the students that expressed that they were missing a social context and had a need for socializing with like-minded people. There was a positive group dynamic, created by a group that had a common and positive mindset towards the idea. The atmosphere in the group is argued to have had an impact on how the idea was unpacked as the open group atmosphere made the students take an even more active part in the exercises. As the students encouraged each other through the exercises they also created a group pressure that seems to have contributed to the dissemination of the idea. There was also a positive group pressure pushing the receivers to work with the idea through exercises and homework, and thereby forced them to unpack the message in different ways. This since they

expressed that they did not want to fail the group by, for example, not contributing in the discussions within the study groups. This pressure is argued to have pushed the idea receivers to learn more about the idea. The group pressure may also have created an environment where idea receivers that were not yet convinced accepted the idea just because everyone else already seemed to like it. Hence it should lie in the interest of idea carriers to package an idea so that this type of group dynamic is created, as it seems to be an advantageous context, which in this case contributes to the students implementing the ideas into their lives. This was done in this course by, for example, making sure that everyone spoke in most of the exercises.

It could also be argued that the students applied to the course in order to gain legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), especially as some expressed that they did it in order to learn more about leadership and get this knowledge on their resumes. Further, there are some actors involved in the network (Latour, 1986; Law 1994) that can be stated to increase the attractiveness of the idea and course. One of these actors is the main sponsor of the course, AB Volvo, who not only sponsored the course but also contributed with a lecture during the course. By being able to show the support the idea has from a player that big, the idea is given legitimization and the facilitators can package it in a way that is argued to be attractive for students. However, this attractiveness comes with a price. Not only might they give the idea legitimization but they also contribute with the power of money. As the course would not be possible to conduct without money, money can be seen as a non human actor (Greimas & Courtés, 1995; Latour 1986; Law 1994) and an 'object-in-use' (Lindberg & Walter, 2012). Hence, this actor affects the course and may change the content and dissemination of the idea through this educational initiative, nearly as much as the human actors. A balance between sponsorships and the idea carriers (Lindberg and Erlingsdottir, 2005) integrity is therefore needed to be considered. Further, by marketing the course through the channels of the different universities, it could be argued that the legitimacy of the idea is strengthened even more and hence the attractiveness increases.

From what is seen in the discussions above the accessibility and attractiveness of the idea are two factors that seem to have had an impact on how the idea travelled and was translated. It could even be argued that the accessibility contributed in making the idea more attractive. Further, there are also other elements affecting the dissemination process, which will be discussed below.

Additional elements that affect the process

Through the whole course, it has been clear that even though the facilitators have tried to give the students a positive view of the idea of SL, they have not steered how the students choose to implement the idea into their lives. The lack of control through the course has opened up for the student's own interpretation, where the facilitators did not have any opinion in how they should perceive the idea. The whole course is built upon voluntarism and the participants applied on voluntary bases. Even though there was an expectation on the students to spend all the time required to complete the tasks, the performance of these tasks were never checked. This contributed to the tasks being viewed as voluntarily anyway. This could be argued to have helped the whole process as it contributed to less resistance (Callon, 1986) through the process of translation and helped the motivation and thus contributed to a

positive mindset. However, some resistance were still present, for example regarding the mindfulness. In this case it seems like the resistance came as a result of both the fact that no participant expected the course to contain mindfulness, as well as that the assignment itself was mandatory. Thus, it seems important to have voluntariness as well as satisfying the expectations, or exceed those expectations, in order to create the right mindset, motivation and thereby help the dissemination of an idea. It could thereby be argued that mandatory participation creates resistance easier than if something is done on voluntary bases, just as seen in the study by Lindberg and Erlingsdottir (2005).

The idea itself also enabled the dissemination as SL is easy to apply in many contexts, and it could be argued that the idea already from the beginning was constructed in an open manner. This most likely affected both the disembedding and packaging (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005) of the idea as there probably was not many characteristics that had to be taken away from the idea in order to undress it and pull it away from the original context. Neither it had to be reframed to a bigger extent during the moment of packaging. This since the idea was shaped in a way that focuses on the individual and hence can be argued to be packaged in a way that suits most people and makes it easier for them to feel connected to the idea through the unpacking.

As emphasized above, the focus on the individual makes the idea of SL more attractive, which in turn makes it easier to disseminate the idea. Though, as nearly all of the students expressed that they were in a specific time in life where they needed guidance regarding how to lead themselves and others in the future, as well as missing a social context, they could be viewed as vulnerable and seen as easy targets. Further, they are not that influenced by the society and have not yet developed an institutionalized behaviour (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1983) in how to lead and manage people or themselves. Hence, they could be seen as less resisting and easier to affect with the idea of SL as they could be seen as more open than students who do not experience any need for guidance. The students participating in the course thus have a more positive mindset towards the idea of SL from the beginning and this seems to have had an impact on how the moment of unpacking folds out as all students in this case are positive towards the idea of SL.

The discussion above gives insights about several factors that can be used in order to ease the dissemination of management ideas through educational initiatives and create a positive attitude towards the idea among the idea receivers. Addressing idea receivers who already have a positive mindset towards the idea is argued to contribute to the dissemination of an idea. The positive mindset also creates a desirable group dynamic, which enabled the continued reproduction of the idea. Further, highlighting the receivers' individual benefits from the idea and making them taking part of the idea on a voluntary basis and in a context that lacks demands is argued to contribute to a more positive mindset and hence have a positive effect on the dissemination process.

Later on in the process, the students translated the idea by making it more concrete and putting it into actions. Though, it seems like they all made sense of it in different ways as they acted upon the idea differently and translated it into their own context, which could be explained through the translation process (Latour, 1986; Nicolini, 2009). This is for example seen as the students change their way of meditate in order to fit it into their own context of being busy students as well as choose to work with mindfulness in totally different ways,

such as painting or meditating. Hence, what is seen after the course is that they all give power to the idea of SL in one or another way and can thereby be seen as supporting actors who have been enrolled within the network (Callon, 1991). Though, it is shown through different type of actions. Further, as the group will be dissolved after the course one could question if the idea will continue to reproduce itself even though the dynamic of the group will be missing. It can also be questioned if the dissolution of the group instead will create a greater difference in the reproduction and translation of the idea, compared to if the group were to continue existing, which is the case in the most organisations that may use educational initiatives in the dissemination of new ideas.

Conclusion and implications

This study aims at understanding how educational initiatives, as a whole or partly, can be used in the dissemination of management ideas. Further, it has investigated how the idea receivers understand and translate the idea. This was investigated through a course in SL where the idea of SL was taken from one context and transmitted and translated by the idea carriers in order to fit into the receivers' context. As a result, this paper gives insight in a number of ways to structure the educational initiative by making it more attractive and available in order to create a positive attitude and right mindset towards the idea among the idea receivers and hence eases the process of dissemination. Though, it has also shown that the translation process is an on-going and non-linear process where it can be hard to establish a clear beginning and end. As this study was limited to a certain amount of time it is impossible to say if the way of spreading the idea was a success or not as the idea just started to spread to the receivers. Thereby, this study is not able to see if this idea travels on, create trends or become institutionalized. Though, it instead provides insight on the complexity in the dissemination process.

As seen above the travel of the idea is enabled through different tactics used by the facilitators in order to avoid resistance and make the translation smoother. Firstly, the facilitators used a sort of self selection by stating different requirements, such as time, already in the application in order to find people with the right mindset. They also shaped the course around the students who applied on voluntary bases. Secondly, the students were also able to carry out the tasks as they wanted without control from the facilitators, creating even more lack of resistance. Thirdly, the meaning of the idea and how it evolves around the students' lives also makes them see their own benefit of the idea, leading to lack of resistance. Fourthly, the legitimacy created around the course as well as the sponsorship, making the course free to participate in and thus easily accessible, can also be argued to create even more lack of resistance. Thereby, there are several methods that the facilitators used in order to enable the translation and dissemination, but it can be questioned to what price. Since the different methods used created an open structure of the idea it enabled several translations from the students, creating several new processes. Hence, the facilitators loose the control of the content of the idea already during the course and lose even more control as the new translation processes occurs. Thus, in a macro perspective the different packaging methods used in this case makes the idea spread more easily and to a larger audience. But at the same time, when looking at the case through a micro perspective, the

facilitators lose control of the basic idea and no consistency is created. It can therefore be argued that an idea that is made attractive and accessible to many is spread easily, but this process also has consequences where the idea carriers lose control over the idea and its content. The idea itself is therefore not likely sustainable and it is difficult to see it become institutionalized even in the future. Though, if the idea were to be spread in an organisation where the context would be the same during a longer time, it could be argued that it would be easier for the idea to be reinforced and institutionalized. At the same time, there can be another challenge within an organisation where the participation might be mandatory and every employee has his or her own agenda.

As this study investigates students and not employees, it is different to many other studies within the institutional view, which investigates how organisations and employees act and disseminate ideas or fashions. This study could thereby work as a complement to these studies where the idea is more or less forced on the idea receiver. Another implication seen in the study is the complexity of studying this kind of concept, as a process is not linear and does not have a clear beginning or end. This is limiting the study as the results cannot tell if the idea may become institutionalized, nor if the idea will become a trend in the society.

Through the discussion above it can be seen that this study contributes to knowledge on the phenomenon, the complexity within “the travel of the ideas” and how ideas are translated and spread between actors. Although, additional research needs to be done in order to understand the complexity even more, where especially a longer study of a dissemination is required. It could also be argued that additional research can be done in order to support the relevance of this study's result. The result has created a number of interesting topics within dissemination of management ideas where the importance of voluntary participation permeates many factors that can be argued to simplify the spread. It would therefore be interesting to compare the dissemination of an idea through two different initiatives, one on voluntary bases and one on mandatory. It would also be interesting to investigate how much the right mindset and creation of egocentric benefits within an idea enables the spread, and how idea carriers could merge the benefits for both the individual and the organisation in packaging an idea.

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