Understanding variations between management fashions

Bezemer, J.; Karsten, L.; van Veen, K.

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Understanding variations between Management Fashions: a Comparison of The Different Institutional Expressions of Two Management Concepts

Jelle Bezemer, Luchien Karsten and Kees van Veen

SOM Theme G: Cross contextual comparison of institutions and organizations.

Abstract

In this paper, management fashion theory is criticised based on the fact that it does not pay attention to some relevant differences between fashions. An alternative three stage theory is suggested which can be used to understand and explain observable differences between management fashions. Subsequently this theory is used in order to describe and interpret the differences in development of two management fashions in the Netherlands, MANS and the Tilburg model.

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1.0 introduction

Since the beginning of the 1990's, management fashion theory developed into a small but active research area. The object of study is the increasing visibility of fashions in management thinking such as TQM, BPR, BSC and Six Sigma. The temporary popularity of management concepts raises many questions and opens discussions about fundamental issues in management thinking such as the causes for this phenomenon, the usefulness of these concepts and the relations between different groups who operate in this field such as consultants, scientists and managers themselves.

In this article, we would like to focus on the central concept in this discussion: fashion itself. Managers and consultants soon noticed the emergence of these management fashions (see for instance Pascale 1990). Abrahamson (1991; 1996) introduced a more systematic framework of fashions in management thinking. By following Rogers (1995), he introduced the bell-shaped curve to illustrate the changing popularity of concepts in the management field. This bell-shaped curve expresses the presence of these concepts in the media and indicates their ascending and descending popularity over time. Others followed this kind of analyses (Kieser 1997; Benders and Van Veen 2001). The strength of this approach is that it creates attention for an empirically observable process in which new ideas – or concepts as we call them here- are temporarily popular and vanish afterwards. This is rather counterintuitive to the common notion that new ideas are expressions of rationality and scientific progress (Abrahamson 1996, Van Veen 2000). Subsequently, it leads the attention to the analysis of the social logic behind the emergence, spread and disappearance of concepts in a certain period of time. The fashion metaphor contains an invitation to study the actors (managers, consultants, scientists), their motives (achieving organisational goals, assuring business by assisting managers and developing knowledge) and their interactions (i.e. more attention of managers creates a market for publications and raises the interest of publishers). In fact, the fashion metaphor was fruitful in generating new research questions and analysing actual empirical process within the management world of today.

2.0 Problems with fashion theory

At the same time, the existence of a bell-shaped curve causes some problems. First, the existence of the recurring curve suggests that there is a clear and distinguishable phenomenon. The existence of a curve shows the fashion-like character of management concepts over time and suggests uniform processes. As a result, the implicit assumption underlying fashion theory is that the 'fashion production' process is similar for all concepts and that it generates identical outcomes.

Figure 1 about here

A closer look at the field shows, however, signs of a more complicated process. There are large differences between management fashions that, as far as we know, are not discussed systematically. For instance, Kieser (1997) shows a graph in which the bell-shaped curves differ substantially (Figure 1 is an updated version of this graph). Theoretically, three variations between fashions can be expected. Fashions might differ in their total volume of popularity. This can be seen as the total amount of attention for a concept in the management community (often operationalised as the total amount of publications in a certain period). For example, in figure 1 there is a clear difference between Total Quality Management and Business Process Reengineering with the former as the more popular one in terms of number of publications. Second, the attention can take place in rather short periods, leading to high peaks in popularity and small standard deviations. They can also have low peaks and large standard deviations, which indicates the slow rise and fall of the concepts' popularity. See for instance the difference between Quality Circles and Total Quality Management in figure 1. Finally, the time when concepts reach their peak in popularity might differ. That is, concepts are only

fashionable during certain historical periods that differ for different concepts. The difference between Lean Production and Business Process Reengineering in Figure 1 is illustrative in that respect. This last kind of variation received more attention in the literature. Some studies such as, Guillén (1994) and Barley and Kunda (1992) address some differences between curves by connecting them to the societal contexts in which these curves are observed. However, many questions remain open and variations remain unobserved and unexplained.

A second problem is that fashion researchers are forced to study concepts that are already popular, because there are no unpopular fashions. This starting point leads to an inductive bias in theorising about the phenomenon. By focussing on one particular kind of end result (the bell-shaped curve), explanations tend to stress the existence of fashions. However, the question remains whether the curve is the only possible outcome of the underlying processes in the management world that originally produced this curve. So the possibilities of potential variations or other outcomes that do not fit the bell-shaped curve are ignored. Variations in the underlying social processes within the management community might lead to unobserved variations in the life cycle of management concepts to which no attention is paid momentarily.

The phenomenon would look rather different if we do not start with the fashion itself, but start to see it more as one rather specific outcome of a more general social process. In this article we would like to focus on this process and show how the characteristics of a specific fashion are just one possible outcome of the dynamics in the institutional field in which a fashion develops. As a result, variations become possible and even likely and are understandable once we reason from the underlying social processes within the field in general. After developing a model that makes it possible to understand the processes, we will continue by comparing the genesis of two Dutch concepts that emerged in the nineteen eighties and nineties. By comparing them in detail, it becomes possible to further understand the nature of differences and explore the usefulness of our model compared to usual fashion metaphor.

3.0 A framework to conceptualise differences between management fashions

Management fashions are a phenomenon that emerges within a field. The field in this study mainly consists of a population of managers who try to run their companies by solving their problems. These managers operate in a large number of management teams that are facing all kinds of (changing) problems and are trying to find ways to improve their position over time (in terms of profit, market share, power, et cetera). In this process, they can chose to be assisted or advised by other managers, by consultants or by scientists. In fact, there is a permanent search for ways to handle contemporary problems within organisations. Within this field, a fashion can be described as the development of a management concept by a set of actors in a specific context, the subsequent spread of this concept through a population of managers and finally, the actual (ab)use of a concept are the main items in the analysis. By replacing the object of study from the fashion to the behaviour of the actors in the field, fashion related issues are stretched and redefined in a more fundamental discussion around the way managers try to solve problems and how they create and distribute solutions.

Management concepts can be recognised on the basis of four characteristics. First of all, they usually have a clear label. Second, they diagnose an abstract and general management problem. Third, they offer an abstract and general solution to this problem. Finally, these solutions are usually promoted with success stories of companies that used the concept. In fact, concepts suggest solutions for management problems that are often seen as 'standardised' (Karsten and Van Veen 1998)[1], but have simultaneously interpretative flexibility (Benders and Van Veen 2001).

In order for management concepts to be classified as being a fashion in a certain period, they should be connected to the behaviour of the actors in the field. In fact, a concept turns into a fashion when it is widely accepted in large numbers of particular management teams as being a promising concept. This implies that management teams

should accept the problem definition of the concept and 'believe' in the suggested solution. To be precise, the proposed concept should enter the permanent discourse in which these management teams are involved.

This permanent discourse is an essential characteristic of management in general (see also Eccles and Nohria 1992). An important activity of every management team is to look permanently for ways to serve the goals of the organisation better. In this ongoing search, management teams discuss, they (re)formulate problems in their specific organisations and they look for actions which might lead to solutions (Schön 1983). This permanent discourse on management issues is present in every organisation. The presence of this discourse is not time nor place specific. But because each organisation is essentially unique, each management team will set their own specific management agenda and will try to develop their own solutions for their own problems.

The uniqueness of each organisation makes that management problems always have a local form/content. However, this does not imply that there are no similarities on a more abstract level. One could say that there is a list of issues that each organisation has to deal with and which can be traced on every management agenda (such as finance, logistics, marketing, human resources and so on). The ranking and the relative importance of the issues on the local agenda differs for each organisation and is permanently renegotiated and relabelled by managers within the companies (March 1994). In fact, the management world might be portrayed as a large number of management teams which are involved within their local discourse in which they permanently renegotiate the problems they observe in their local contexts and the solutions that seem appropriate (Schön 1983; Abbott 1988)[2].

In this universe of management teams who are involved in their local management discourses, there is a lot of local variety. However, there are also a number of common denominators. Some problems and solutions might be unique but some are not. Theoretically, one could abstract the total set of local agenda's to one collective management agenda that reflects the most common and the most pressing management problems within a population of companies at a certain point in time. There are external societal forces that determine the precise order of the local agenda's and subsequently the collective agenda. For instance, the developments in information technology opened new ways to structure administrative processes in a more efficient way. This resulted in new possibilities for cost cutting. Hence, many managers started to reconsider their business processes. They defined their existing problems and searched for new solutions by applying new technologies. Technological innovations pressed the design of administrative architectures higher on the local management agenda. This shift on the collective management agenda determines the discourse of local management teams. And here, we can easily see how a management concept such as Business Process Reengineering became fashionable. It basically fuelled the local discourses on a large scale by offering a standardised discourse on a more or less pressing item that many managers recognised.[3]

The remaining question is how, out of all these local discourses, new standardised problem formulations and accompanying solutions emerge and how these are subsequently spread. To understand this, we should make a distinction between processes on different levels and here we will see that fashions can best be understood as rather specific outcomes in a more general process. The levels differ in terms of the actors involved and the kind of relations they have with each other. On the most basic level, managers develop their own problem/solution combinations during their local discourse. In a sense, one could speak of a 'unique organisation specific management concept' within each organisation. This is what managers usually do within their management team. Once this unique concept is developed and applied, it will usually lead to an internal sequence of activities to solve the defined problem. However, this organisation specific concept might additionally serve – on the second level - as a source of inspiration within a circle of managers of other organisations. This circle can consist of people in local networks of

managers outside and inside the company, local branch organisations and so on (Pastor et al. 1998). The transfer of the concept is still based on personal communication of experienced individuals who take part in the discourse. The concept is carried by a group of managers and is diffused through their networks without any outside interference. In this situation, a concept has all the characteristics of a 'fad' (Abrahamson 1991)[4]. The discourse in the networks of managers is essentially different from the discourse within the original organisation. It is not related to the actual problem anymore, but it is focussed to an abstract, more general class of these problems that other organisations also encounter. In this discourse within the personal networks, other managers might be convinced which leads subsequently to the local spread of the concept to other organisations. In fact, on this second level, we might speak of a 'local concept'.

On the third level, a new category of actors emerges besides the managers. The reputation of concepts that are locally successful will attract attention of a new group of actors in the field: the professional communicators or fashion setters (Abrahamson 1991 1996; Kieser 1997; Newell et al. 1998). These are the actors who earn their money only with communicating about general management problems such as consultants, scientists, publishers, gurus and so on. Only on this level, the local concept is turned into a management concept with the specific characteristics as mentioned earlier. On the third level, new criteria start to play a role that concepts should meet. The professional communicators have different purposes and will start to redefine the concept in order to maximise its spread potential. These fashion setters are joining the local discourse in which the concept got its first rudimentary shapes. Subsequently, they try to push the local discourse to the level of the public management discourse in the total management world by connecting it more closely to the collective management agenda. For instance, it can be expected that fashion setters reformulate local discourses in new more abstract, and ambiguous terms which are recognisable and applicable for managers in other companies (Astley and Zammuto 1992). In this reformulation, the concepts get their 'standardised' form, which is often criticised. With this standardised concept, they try to enter the daily 'reflection-in-action' processes that other managers experience in their local discourse. By attempting to steer the public discourses, they introduce new concepts in an attempt to fuel the local discourses in still unaffected networks of managers or organisations. The professional communicators are the ones who connect local to public discourses in an attempt to enter still unaffected local discourses. Here, the concept turns from a 'fad' into a 'fashion' (Abrahamson 1991). Over time, this leads to reciprocal relationships between the local and the public discourses that mutually affect each other (Benders and Van Veen 2001).[5]

With these three levels, we have the basic ingredients for processes that lead to the emergence and disappearance of management concepts. Management concepts are portrayed as standardised discourses that are frozen into a certain discursive form, which is easy to communicate and can be introduced into other local discourses.

The model with the three phases is not meant to be deterministic. The model only presents the basic actors, interests, and attributes that are necessary to understand the processes within the different phases and it tries to show how organisation-specific concepts might transform into real fashions. It gives an explanation of how the concepts move from one level to the next and how, in the end, a fashion is a rather specific outcome of processes within the management world. In fact, differences in the foregoing stages might lead to differences in the way the fashion comes about. The volume, the timing, the means and the standard deviations are probably the result of differences in starting conditions of what is afterwards called a fashion.

In the following sections, we would like to show how in this dynamic social system different concepts can emerge and subsequently express themselves in very different ways in the management community. The theoretical notions we just introduced are necessary in order to describe their genesis and understand how the concepts have different institutional expressions over time. This way, we hope to extend the fashion

literature by broadening its scope, by introducing possibilities to ask more detailed and specific questions and to press researchers for more detailed analysis.

4. The different institutional expressions of two popular management concepts in The Netherlands

For our study, we chose to focus on two management concepts that were popular in the Netherlands in the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties: MANS and the Tilburg Model (Bezemer 2001). These two management concepts open the possibility to study the differences and similarities between two management fashions within the Dutch management world. By describing the different stages in detail and comparing them on a number of aspects we would like to increase the understanding of the fashion related processes and open up the underlying processes. Sources of data for the reconstruction of these fashions over time were in-depth interviews with people involved, expert outsiders, and actual users of the concepts. Besides this, we used a wide variety of books, articles, public and personal archives, videotapes and newspapers. The results of these analyses will be presented below in detail. The description of each concept will be followed by an analysis of the story in the framework we presented before.

4.1 The history of MANS

MANS is a management concept which was actually launched on purpose in 1982. Its label is an abbreviation of Management and Labour New Style (or *Management en Arbeid Nieuwe Stijl*). The concept was explicitly launched in a period in which the Dutch economy was in the middle of a large crisis. The crisis started around 1980. In the sixties the Dutch economy started to restructure itself quickly due to rising labour costs. In the seventies, this was followed by three important trends. First, the American dollar was disconnected from the gold standard. The European reaction was the introduction of non-fluctuating exchange rates that connected the Dutch Guilder to the German D-mark. The result was a quick rise in the effective exchange rate of the guilder. Second, the Dutch labour market knew a few developments, such as the wage indexation, which resulted in quick rises in wages.[6] Third, the enormous gas reserves which were discovered at the end of the sixties led to industrial policies which stimulated energy intensive production and made the economy vulnerable for fluctuations in oil prices. In short, the Dutch economy was more and more connected to outside economic and political developments. Following the developments in the US, the economic crisis of the beginning of the eighties hit the Dutch economy hard too. And just like the American management community, Dutch managers started to notice the growing import of cheap, high quality products from Japan.

In this depressive atmosphere, the ideas of W.E. Deming and his companions started to spread first to the United States and were also noticed in The Netherlands. W.E. Conway, the CEO of Nashua Corporation transferred the ideas of Deming from Japan to the USA. On a trip to Japan, he first hears from the ideas of Deming concerning quality management (Ter Hart et al. 1984: 21-22). In 1978, he asks Deming to help to introduce this philosophy including its tools in his US-based company. The results of this initiative were impressive and rumours started to spread among managers. In 1980, NBC finally broadcasts a documentary called 'If Japan can, why can't we?', that meant a clear push in the popularity of Deming's concept (Locke 1996: 167).

In The Netherlands, only some individual people had noticed the ideas of Deming up till then. For instance, the CEO of VICON, a producer of farming machines, W.J. Ter Hart, listened to a speech of Deming when he was starting a Japanese subsidiary of the company in the seventies. Although he was an engineer, Ter Hart always had a keen interest in what he called 'the human side' of production and was impressed by Deming's presentation. '*It turned out that Deming had developed a company philosophy, which fitted me like a glove. It was almost a religious experience when I heard his ideas. It is such a clear and natural way of looking at people in organisations[7].*' Back in The

Netherlands, Ter Hart tried to apply by Deming's ideas within VICON by explaining the concept to the employees. However, the implementation turned out to be difficult. By accident, he heard employees discuss how '*the boss had read a new book again*' and decided that talking was not the way to do it. Talking was one thing, acting was more important. Ter Hart took this helpful experience with him when in 1978, he became the Chairman of the Federation of the Employers in the Steel sector, the FME (*de Federatie voor de Metaal- en Electrotechnische Industrie*).

The establishment of the concept in The Netherlands really started when it was noticed by A. Deleye, CEO of Volvo Car. Deleye took a plane to the USA and talked with Deming and Conway. Convinced about the usefulness of the ideas, Deleye returned to The Netherlands. He convinced the other managers of Volvo Car and they started a project with the title 'Volvo Car New Style' on May 1st, 1982. These activities passed not unnoticed in The Netherlands. Many people started to ask for more information of Volvo. Deleye decided, together with E.P. Van den Boogaard of the Dutch branch of Nashua, to organise a meeting in order to discuss Deming's ideas. The journalist E. Peereboom was approached to preside this meeting that took place in September 1982. Among the speakers were Conway and Deleye.

      Given the success of the meeting, Ter Hart and Peereboom decided to organise a follow up. In November 1982, they invited 10 entrepreneurs[8] who met in the FME headquarters and discussed for hours what to do. They decided to arrange a fact-finding mission to the United States and left in May 1983. During this trip they visited a number of American companies such as Ford, Hewlett-Packard, Westinghouse, General Motors, Honeywell, ITT, Western Electric, and Wang. At the end of their tour, the participants discussed how they could push a further spread of Deming's concept in The Netherlands. And here, the plans for a large-scale push of the concept emerged. The group members decided that they should bring the ideas under the attention of other entrepreneurs and managers in The Netherlands. This should be realised by a special Foundation: *de Stichting MANS*. MANS was supposed to be a concept which was largely based on Deming ideas[9] and could deliver a new orientation on companies. It would not only serve several management goals (as quality, profit and so on), but also be in the interest of other stakeholders such as the employees.

      The travel companions decided to pool some money by giving a non-interest loan to the newly established Foundation. The Foundation was supposed to spread the concept itself and the experiences of the travellers. Statutes were developed, an office was found, personnel were hired and the first brochures were written. Ter Hart became the first President of the Foundation. N. Lemmens was the CEO. One of the first activities was to organise a symposium about MANS. On November 15th 1983, this symposium took place with speakers like Prime Minister R.F.M. Lubbers, former CEO of Royal Dutch Shell G.A. Wagner, Ter Hart, and Conway himself. Eight hundred managers attended and the message was received positively.

From this point onward, the spread and use of the MANS concept expressed itself in a rather specific form. The first push of the concept came from this small group of interested managers/entrepreneurs who simultaneously applied the concept in their own companies. They initiated the Foundation MANS from their own specific interests. However, the Foundation had a few additional purposes which turned out to be decisive for the way the MANS concept developed itself in the years to come. First of all, the companies which initiated the Foundation planned to implement the MANS philosophy themselves and the Foundation was supposed to assist them in doing this together. No consultants were involved. Second, the Foundation was supposed to spread the philosophy to other interested companies. And third, if these companies were really interested, the Foundation would assist them in applying these ideas by creating local networks of managers which were connected to the Foundation by its MANS consultants.

The intention behind it was 'Entrepreneurs helping entrepreneurs' in which the Foundation served as a facilitator and not a seller of the concept. This can be observed in two different activities of the Foundation. First of all, the Foundation started organising two-day seminars in which interested entrepreneurs met experienced MANS entrepreneurs. A large number of these professionally organised seminars have been given in the few years to come. Second, once a company decided to be really interested in the application, they could join the Foundation as 'participant'. This implied that they joined one of the many local MANS-circles and signed a contract for five (!) years to pay contribution to the Foundation. If companies were not willing to do so, they were seen by the Foundation as not totally dedicated and this could only lead to failure, according the Foundation's view. `The Foundation has no need for enthusiast starters, who do not want to miss the boat of the latest gimmick but will drop the concept with the first problem they encounter and head directly to the next fashionable concept', as was written on a publication of the Foundation (Ter Hart et al. 1984: 160). Basically, we see that the Foundation positioned itself as a catalyst in the local discourses among managers. In fact, the way the concept MANS expressed itself institutionally has all the characteristics of a social movement of entrepreneurs/managers. It delivered a standardised concept for local discourses in management teams and stimulated the further discourse within and between these teams by creating a platform in which mutual assistance could be realised.

MANS was well known in the Dutch management world in a very short time, as the interviewees and the documents suggest. In a short time, MANS had over a hundred members. More and more workshops were organised, hundreds of seminars were given by Ter Hart and others, a yearly conference was established, the number of experts increased. The foundation started a monthly information bulletin 'More about MANS' (*Meer over MANS*). This development culminated in a conference in September 1986. The Foundation had many requests of students who were interested in the concept and decided to organise a conference for students on the topic. Over 1250 (!) students signed up.

Figure 2: the popularity of different management concepts in The Netherlands[10]

Figure 2 about here

The popularity in the mid eighties is only partly observable in a graph with the print-media traces (see figure 2). The numbers are low in this figure, but it can be seen that MANS peaked in 1984. This peak is mainly caused by the publications of the Foundation itself. At the end of the eighties, MANS was caught up by its own success. Some of the Foundation's goals were actually realised such as a high concept awareness in the Dutch management world. Success on this point raised the importance of the other goals and this made the slumbering inconsistencies between them apparent. One of the main goals of MANS was spreading the concept in the Dutch management community. In this, the Foundation was very successful. In a rather short time, an enormous movement around quality was realised and looking backward, it seems unlikely that the concept passed unnoticed to any Dutch manager in that period.

However, an interviewee noticed: *'If someone tells a story 10 times, it will be more or less similar the 11th time. At a certain point, we knew what they wanted to tell us.'* This phenomenon expressed itself in a different way during the yearly conferences. The number of visitors stabilised, but its composition of the audience changed quickly. `*In the beginning, the top of many companies attended the conferences. After a while, the second echelon was sent and later the 3rd echelon, the quality managers. This affected again the attendance of many entrepreneurs who showed up for the first time and did not return. Than it is finished rather quickly.*[11]

This process was accompanied with some internal problems related to the other goals of the Foundation MANS. It became more and more clear that companies that used

MANS were confronted with similar problems and local application problems created a generally felt dissatisfaction around MANS.

In the autumn of 1986, the Foundation decided to study the use of MANS in its population of 100 hundred members. A large number of problems emerged in the application. For instance, companies noticed that there was a lack of vision of the top which leads to '*sloganization*', personal and political considerations played an important role, many managers feared the changes, middle management had to make the quality plans of the top concrete and had hardly any operational quality definitions, a lack of tools to generate the necessary feed back, lack of communicative skills, and so on. This lead to the conclusion that for instance 'participative management', one of the important goals of the MANS concept, was mainly publicly discussed in The Netherlands but not very deeply rooted in practice.

These developments raised the demands for assistance within the companies who applied MANS. They were looking for operational assistance in order to realise the implementation. This created a dilemma for the Foundation. They always claimed that the implementation was the responsibility of the participants themselves. The companies themselves were able to train their employees or hire external consultants because in the Foundation's vision, there was no standard plan for using MANS. All companies and circumstances were seen as different.

However, the Foundation did have contracts with professional consulting firms such as Twijnstra Gudde, Berenschot and Bakkenist. These firms knew MANS and could assist participants to introduce MANS ideas. However, the participants did not like this at all. '*They blamed the Foundation that they were introducing external consultants into their firms. They did not accept that there were for instance also Berenschot consultants involved. ... For these external consultants, MANS was one of their many products and could be found in drawer no.216.*'[12] And this was against the philosophy of MANS. As a result, the assistance of the Foundation was limited to 5 internal MANS consultants for 100 participants. And here the basic elements of the crisis in the Foundation submerged.

The Foundation felt the increasing pressure from the participants for more assistance in the application of the concept. The Foundation was, however, never started for this reason. Within its board, a clear fragmentation of opinions emerged. The discussion centred on three different groups with different opinions on the future of the Foundation that we label the Commercialists, the Idealists and the Spreaders. The Commercials were willing to change the nature of the Foundation. They basically argued that MANS was a huge success, but was confronted with new demands of the participants and should transform itself in order to meet their needs. To realise this, the Foundation MANS should become a commercial consulting firm. The Idealists were opposed to this idea. They clearly saw MANS as a concept around which a network of entrepreneurs/managers had found each other and that this social movement aspect should be nourished. According to their opinion, the Foundation should continue as it was doing since its foundation. '*Running a consulting firm is something else than having a drink twice a year and talk about vision*' as one of the interviewees put it. The third and final group were the Spreaders. They saw the Foundation as an enormous success due to the fact that they indeed brought the quality discussions to the public discourse in the Dutch management community. The successful spread of the concept was the main reason to suggest that a further continuation was not necessary. They wanted to pull the plug.

About the clash of opinions that followed, not much is known in detail and the participants in this discussion are evasive about it, even more than 10 years later. The foundation was torn apart by a number of conflicts between the people involved. The end result is however clear. The Foundation was discontinued in its existing form. In 1990, D. Dorr and J. Zuidema, who where outsiders, bought what was left of it and turned it into a professional consulting firm. This change towards commercial activities seemed to have ended the explicit push of one specific concept. Nowadays, the firm MANS is, in terms of its products, a consulting firm like there are many others. It still has a special

relation with many of its clients, though its is not the embodiment of the movement among entrepreneurs and managers as it used to be.

The end of the MANS concept as a popular concept basically also ended the movement of 'entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs'. The public discourse on quality issues, which the Foundation MANS stimulated enormously and on purpose, changed itself when new concepts emerged on the scene. A number of the interviewed people mentioned that new and more practical quality methods emerged on the scene. Terms as ISO and TQM are mentioned. Especially the last one is interesting in this context. The Dutch variation of TQM, *Integrale KwaliteitsZorg* (or IKZ) can be seen as another variation of Deming's philosophies which also inspired the creation of MANS. IKZ was much more practically oriented and demanded less in terms of the personal beliefs and behaviour of managers. IKZ was in that sense, much more a management tool that can be bought from commercial consulting firms and its religious qualities were less accentuated. Where MANS failed in terms of application of the concept, IKZ jumped in and turned the philosophies into plain consulting tools. Interestingly enough, the number of publications on IKZ has a much larger volume, a smaller peak and peaked ten years after MANS (see figure 2).

4.2 The analysis of MANS

If we analyse the development of MANS we see that the concept has a very particular institutional expression. At first, the concept was not locally developed, but imported from outside (Japan/USA). But it was a concept that inspired only a few local and personal discourses when Ter Hart and Deleye tried to apply the ideas (level 1). Shortly after that, the concept was picked up by a small network of managers who discussed the issues, besides in their own company, in a small circle of interested colleagues (level 2). This group knew each other well, travelled to the USA in order to inform themselves, applied it in their own companies and reformulated it into a Dutch variation of the original concept. Hence, there was a step to level 3 in the development of the MANS-fashion. After the fact-finding trip, the local discourses were at once transformed from a small network of a few interested managers into a public message send by a professional organisation. The professional organisation was, however, an initiative of the local users themselves, and not from an external agent such as a guru or a consultancy firm. Arrived on the public scene, the message clearly hit a latent problem that was on the management agenda of many other managers and it fuelled their local discourses. It is interesting to see that the communication of the MANS concept was very effective. The concept was spread in no time. It was a real 'fashion' in Abrahamson's terms, although it tried to be a 'fad' (Abrahamson 1991). The spread of the message was not backed up by the usual assistance in terms of consultants. The Foundation chose for a construction in which the assistance was organised in local networks (level 2) and had a strong social movement character. The actual implementation turned out to be strongly dependent on the quality of the local discourse within management teams (level 1). In this situation, tensions emerged due to the fact that MANS could not deliver what the audience expected when it arrived in the public discourse. Here the elements of a quick disappearance were present and the public discourse changed quickly in the direction of ISO and IKZ. These concepts could meet the demands better in that period and took over the public attention as far as it concerned quality issues. As a result, we see a rather short life cycle in which the third level was reached rather quickly and resulted in a short but intensive popularity. However, its more instrumental variant IKZ reached a much higher peak and had a broader standard deviation (figure 2).

4.3 The history of the Tilburg Model

The development of the second 'Dutch' concept shows a completely different picture. If we focus on patterns in the development, the spread and the applications of the concept,

we see a different institutional expression. Where MANS was clearly imported, adapted a little and pushed in the public discourse with a big bang, the Tilburg Model emerged slowly over a long period of time. In fact, it is still debatable whether the label Tilburg Model justifies the actual discourses that were going on in the different networks of managers. Even worse, the concept was labelled in retrospect when the local debates already moved ahead. As a result, the institutional development of the concept was totally different from MANS.

The Tilburg model is a concept that was labelled in the beginning of the 1990's. It was, however, a label that entered a discourse under government officials/managers that started in the end of the seventies and early eighties. The source of the discourse can be found in the specific organisational design of municipalities in this period. The organisational design was mainly based on the Municipality Law in 1851. This law arranged a few general aspects of the organisation, but the municipalities had the freedom to vary their designs based on local circumstances. This created a rather interesting structure in the networks of local management teams. To be precise, the institutional environment for the hundreds of municipalities is basically the same. Municipalities have to deal with the same laws and more or less have to 'produce' the same products for their local communities. And, there is no competition between the municipalities. In terms of our model, there is a large number of organisations which are more or less similar in structure and environment and, as a result, have rather similar management agenda's: ideal conditions for the emergence of management fashions.

In the Law of 1851, a distinction is made between the policy development departments and the operational departments. This is the so-called Secretary or Legal Model. After World War II, the municipalities grew quickly, both in terms of their inhabitants, as well as in the number of tasks that they were responsible for. As a result, municipalities were confronted more and more with co-ordination problems as result of the Secretary model. These problems grew in size when most municipalities shifted to a new organisational structure: the departmental model. In this model, the organisation of the municipality was further differentiated based on the responsibilities of the different aldermen. Additionally, the policy problems within the municipalities started to become more interrelated and need more technical knowledge that is mainly present in the operational departments. As a result, the policy departments become more and more dependent on information and suggestions from the operational departments. The result is a rather complicated system of interdependencies that led to double work, delays, confusion, conflicts and unexpected policy outcomes.

At the end of the seventies, local discourses emerged on these problems. These discourses fit in developments in other countries were similar discussions emerge such as Great Britain and the USA. In The Netherlands, the national government also started to experiment with new governance models and introduces the concept of self-governance (Z*elfbeheer*: see figure 2) in order to introduce some kind of output measurement systems in the public sector. Issues as decentralisation, privatisation and deregulation start to enter the public discourse. In 1981/1982, the pressure for change increased dramatically. The economic crisis created enormous debts for the government and the municipalities were confronted with budget reductions of 10 to 15%. For most municipalities, this implied large-scale reorganisations including layoffs. However, this external pressure also created a new atmosphere around the leading principles on which government organisations should be built. A.P.M. Schrijvers, who later became one of the leading voices in the public discourse, noted in an interview: '*In 1982, the first round of budget cuts started. ... In that time, I studied at a business school and thought about introducing these business concepts in the government organisation. I was not the only one. In that time, articles and reports emerged such as the one on contract management of Verbaan. ... There was a whole informal circuit of top civil servants who met once a month at somebody's place to discuss ways to increase the future performance of the government, both nationally as locally. ... It was a kind of think-tank.'*

Especially important was the report of Committee Verbaan in this context. This Committee (*de ambtelijke Heroverwegingswerkgroep Verbetering van de Bedrijfsvoering van de Overheid*) published a report with the title *Zelfbeheer* in which the traditional governance and organisation model were rejected. Inspired by Peters and Waterman (1982), the committee suggested that proven management techniques and philosophies from the private sector should be introduced within the government context. Biesmeyer and Verbaan (1984) defined the idea of *Zelfbeheer* with the following points:

- The head of a Service becomes budget responsible;
- The department management closes a contract with the Service head which contains output/activities and the budget;
- The budget holder is free in spending the budget on the design of the production process;
- The budget holder is constrained by the budget and will be accounted for relation between input costs and the output;
- If the budget holder realises a positive relation and creates a budget profit, (s)he can spend (part of) this profit within his own Service.

The Committee Verbaan planned to give a political signal, without going into all the details of this new concept. Around these issues, the local discourses occurred on national and local levels and were in full swing. In 1985 there were already 20 pilot projects on 7 Ministries that have been described in the report *Kompas voor Zelfbeheer*. The Ministry of Internal Affairs started, with the help of municipalities, provinces, other ministries, Association of Municipalities (*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten*) and a few consultants, a new initiative. They established the foundation of Policy and Governance Instruments (*Stichting Beleids- en Beheers- Instrumenten*). This foundation was supposed to spread the ideas and assist in experiments in the area of contract management in different government organisations. In 1985, the Law with the Accountability Requirements was changed to create more possibilities to introduce these techniques in the municipalities and other government organisations.

The Dutch developments are not isolated activities but are part of a more general trend. In many Western countries, public discourses can be observed which focus on the way the government should be organised. In New Zealand, Australia, the USA, Great Britain, Denmark, and later in Germany, national discourses develop in which models are generated which should create more efficient government operations that deliver higher product quality. Many of these public discourses can be found under the label of New Public Management (Walsh 1995). This label has basically two pillars. Under the first pillar, discussions can be found which are connected to what is called 'managerialism'. Increasing efficiency, the introduction of modern technologies, production oriented civil servants and the possibilities of government manager to manage, are important features of the discourse. It essentially portrays the issues related to the transfer of models, tools and techniques from the private to the public sector. The second pillar covers issues as decentralisation and delegation, quality control, and the emphasis on contracts and markets. This second pillar is more outward oriented and contains the discourses around the introduction of markets and other co-ordination mechanisms of activities towards citizens and other organisations. In terms of the themes that were discussed, the discourses in different countries had more or less similar contents. An increasing rise in costs of the government raised the need for efficiency and effectiveness discussions, citizens are more and more demanding in terms of product quality and a global shift in the ideas around the position of the government stimulated these discourses and experiments. The solutions to the issues differed and the labels that they received in different countries differed too. They range from New Public Management and Public Entrepreneurs to Local Self-Government.

The international development had only a marginal effect on the local developments in the Dutch municipalities. Each municipality seems to have a strong internal and dynamic discourse. The Tilburg Model was, however, a label that was given to the developments in the city of Tilburg in the 1990's. There were many other cities that showed similar developments and almost at the same time. As a result, Tilburg might be well documented compared to other municipalities though is not unique in itself.

In Tilburg, the organisational problems started to become apparent in the nineteen seventies. The Municipality had a Secretary Model, which was quite common those days. It implied a strict separation between decision-making and policy development and operations with hardly any delegation to lower levels in the organisations. The result was an enormous complex and divided system. The Town Clerk[13] of Tilburg wrote a few 'bottle neck reports' on the enormous complexity and the related problems in the organisation. In 1977, a Study Group Municipality Organisation was installed. Their tasks were further specified in 1979. Although the Study Group was also appointed to study the relation with the inhabitants, they mainly focussed on the internal problems. Their work culminated in a report that mentions 1000 (!) problems that can be subdivided into 4 groups:
- The secretary is doing double work;
- Political and civil service management are uncoordinated;
- Management is absent or fails;
- Horizontal liaisons do not operate.

This report was presented to the Mayor and Aldermen in January 1980. They decide to return the assignment to the Study group with a suggestion to develop more detailed solutions. The complicated situation made it a rather difficult issue for the Mayor and Aldermen. In April 1981, they organised a conference where they also invited the elected council members and important civil servants probably in an attempt to increase the support for far reaching reforms in the organisation. From this point on several teams have been organised and step by step new initiatives are developed in order to reduce the observed problems. In March 1984, the real reorganisation started and was supposed to be finished in February 1985. For the reorganisation, others who were seen as more change-oriented replaced some civil servants. The initiative was, however, for a very large part developed internally with the use of available internal experts. Outside interference of consultants was very small and mainly focussed on technical issues.

This change process was stimulated by similar topics in the public discourse on a national level. Combined with the necessity to cut the budgets, Tilburg was confronted with a situation in which they could make some rather quick steps. The Council demanded a clear financial picture of the situation in the municipality. The Mayor and Aldermen consisted of characters that had a vision on a future government largely inspired by their background in Economics and their experiences in the private sector. On top of this, a majority in the council that shared their ideas backed them up. The goals of the operation were:
- to reduce the bureaucracy and to increase transparency and to stand closer to the inhabitants;
- to increase flexibility, effectiveness and efficiency in order;
- to realise high quality service to society with a clear view on the costs.

For the success of the process in Tilburg, speed was very important. This was stimulated by management-by-speech: *'In numerous lectures, articles and interviews, the Financial Aldermen Krosse and the successive 'Resource Managers' were stressing that Tilburg Inc. was a holding with independent units, which can make profits by using the new budget system and which is based on sound financial arguments.'* (Van Vugt 1998: 19). In an interview, a former Resource Manager of Tilburg adds: *'we were really one of the first examples who actually used the ideas, but not in terms of a kind of blueprint of a consulting firm. Tilburg basically had the dowry from Utrecht because I took all my documentation when I left it. These documents contained all kinds of examples of things*

that worked or did not work.' In this period a stepwise process was started which lasted for years. The first years, steps were bigger, but the changes continued later (Banner 1992b). In 1987, contract management was introduced which led to a new phase in the ongoing change process (see also figure 2).

At end of the eighties, a large number of different reports are written on the different issues that municipalities encounter when they start these change processes[14]. Issues that where discussed are for instance contract management, the necessity to use internal suppliers, the analysis of unexpected product performance, quality of personnel, organisation and service, screening models and so on. More and more output criteria for government organisations, such as effectiveness and efficiency, replaced the traditional budget oriented input criteria. Given the public discourse, the local developments in Tilburg seemed not very unique within The Netherlands. The elements can be traced in many different municipalities. What was unique is the speed in which Tilburg worked on this and the coherence of the different elements (Van Vugt 1998). Other municipalities also developed themselves in similar directions such as Delft and Eindhoven that are mentioned as examples, just as Tilburg.

It took up till the end of the eighties, before the developments in Tilburg were seen as a distinguishable and defined management concept. Interestingly, this idea of defining a *Tilburg Model* was not a Dutch, but a German idea. This definition started when German municipalities encountered similar problems as the Dutch around 1980. The German KGSt (Association of German Municipalities) organised a small fact-finding trip to The Netherlands in the summer of 1989. The president of the KGSt, G. Banner, and two of his assistance visited a number of Dutch municipalities. They talked to many people involved and visited all kinds of meetings. Banner (1992a) concluded *'Alle Niederländische Städte, die wir besuchten, schienen in die gleiche Richtung zu gehen. Aber keine tat es auf dieselbe Weise. Überall war man sich bewußt, in einem Lernprozeß von Versuch und Irrtum zu stecken. Keine der Städte hatte das Idealmodell gefunden.... Was uns an Tilburg 1989 faszinierte, war die Tatsache, daß man dort die finanzielle Steuerung am konsequentesten verändert und met den übrigen Elementen verknüpft hatte.'* With this observation, Banner perfectly described how the discourse around these issues developed in The Netherlands in the nineteen eighties.

Back in Germany, the KGSt organised a conference in Karlsruhe. Theme of the conference is the introduction of the 'Tilburger Modell' as a prototype for the renewal in the German municipalities. There are over 2000 top civil servants and local politicians present at the conference. Banner describes the bad situation in German municipalities and suggests solutions that are almost totally based on the Tilburg experience. Schrijvers and Krosse are also speakers. This conference was the starting point of a public discourse in the German context. Articles were written, experiments conducted, workshops were organised and so on. Banner and his companions travel all over Germany. Dutch speakers are also very welcome, especially from Tilburg. 'Das Tilburger Modell' became a popular concept especially in the years up till 1995. Schrijvers concludes: *'I travelled all over Germany as a kind of missionary. I think I gave hundreds of speeches and workshops as Herr Doctor Schrijvers of the Tilburger Modell.'* Starting from 1993 the term Tilburger Modell was often replaced by the German term *Verwaltungsreform*. At the end of the nineties, the financial situation started to improve in Germany. This implied that many municipalities stopped thinking about their organisational structures. The issues were less pressing and many of the earlier attempts seemed to have disappeared from the management agenda's.

The fact that the developments in Tilburg were not totally unique and emerged in an international trend can also be illustrated with the Bertelsmann price. The Carl Bertelsmann Foundation gave this price to the best-governed city in the Western world in 1993. Banner, Schrijvers and Krosse were again involved in this contest. Seven criteria were used to judge the competitors:

1. efficiency combined with democracy;
2. citizen orientation;
3. innovation and policy renewal;
4. division between governance and civil service ;
5. mandating of the civil service;
6. central holding function;
7. effective human resource management.

Ten different municipalities were nominated from countries. Here, we see Phoenix (USA), Christchurch (New Zealand), Braintree (UK), Delft (NL) and of course Tilburg (NL). Phoenix and Christchurch won the price. The officials in this contest decided that these two were best in balancing the internal and external demands of the organisation combined with a clear policy and financial governance. Delft was especially good in the way it involved its citizens in its operations and decision-making. Tilburg was exceptionally well developed in terms of its financial governance. This shows again how the discourse contained similar elements, which were in line with the fact that the actual developments in different municipalities differed.

In The Netherlands itself, the Tilburg Model was never an explicit and popular management concept. The city was an example for many other municipalities and the city was often mentioned in the discourse besides a few other nice examples. But it was only seen as one possibility on a map in which many roads led to the demanded outcome. There was however a late attempt to create a real management concept and introduce it as such in the public discourse. In 1993, a commercial organisation was established which had the title: Centre for Governance Renewal (= Centrum voor Bestuurlijke Vernieuwing BV). The City of Tilburg owned 40% of the Stocks, Deloitte and Touche 40% and former Alderman Krosse 20%. This initiative never really took of and was stopped after a while.

Half way the nineteen nineties, the public discourse developed itself into new directions. The Tilburg Model was replaced by a new discourse under the label of POP, the permanent development process. The Tilburg Model itself was more and more criticised for being to internal oriented. Van Oorschot, the Town Clerk of Tilburg in 1997, says: *'The Tilburg Model was not wrong. But it did not solve all the problems. It attacked traditional problems of bureaucracy and helped to restructure the organisation. But it was never meant for strategic issues nor issues related to the integration of policy and service'* (Van Der Lans 1996). Municipalities started to focus on issues that are pressing in relation to the citizens. The internal organisation seemed to disappear from the management agenda. The present Mayor J. Stekelenburg describes this as follows: `*When I talk to colleagues, I realise that our organisation is working properly. But we still need a large cultural change. To say it in a rude way: the civil servants determined how the city should develop. Now, we try to work this out in a dialogue with society. But that is not realised yet.'* (Van De Vijver 1998). A local politician mentions that: *'The power of the Mayor and Aldermen has increased considerably since the Tilburg Model. It has put pressure on our local democracy.'* (Kleijwegt et al. 1993). Others share this opinion. The Model was a success in terms of its technical, mainly financial, criteria and increased the control over the organisation by the top, but it created a distance with others involved.

4.4 The analysis of the Tilburg Model

The way the concept of the Tilburg model developed itself institutionally is completely different from MANS if we interpret it in terms of our framework. The most interesting aspect is the difference in the way local and public discourses are organised. Essentially, the developments in the field of municipalities are mainly taking place within the isolated local management discourses where management teams try to work on their own problems and try to find their own solutions (level 1). However, the problems they face are rather similar especially when we look at the development of municipalities. As a result, there are networks of individuals who discuss the issues (level 2). The similar institutional environment of these municipalities create a breeding ground for intensive

local discourses within management teams, but also on level 2, the networks of managers. The public discourse on level 3 is, however, less pronounced than the one in the private sector and is a much more open discourse in which questions are raised, experiments conducted and were is room to express differences of opinion. There are, for instance, a large number of studies about problems and descriptions of possible solutions. However, these are often part of the public and ongoing discourse around the issues involved. There is no real polished management concept that is both describing the problems and suggesting the solution.

As a result, the Tilburg Model is basically an outcome of a permanent discourse in the nineteen eighties in which the local discourses and resulting experiments are leading. The concept is basically constructed and defined *afterwards* in an explicit attempt to label the processes and formalise them. This attempt took place when the interested German networks of managers defined the Tilburg Model as such. As a result, the concept never took off in The Netherlands itself, although its content is well known and traceable in the organisational structures of many municipalities. As a result of the way the Tilburg Model developed itself institutionally, the bell-shaped curves in the printed media do not exist and the consulting firm which was supposed to spread it, disappeared quickly. It had nothing to add to the widespread and intensive local discourses that continued within management teams and local networks.

The continuing collective search within the municipalities for new ideas can be clearly seen if we focus on a few sub concepts of the Tilburg Model. If we trace *Zelfbeheer* and *Contract Management* as concepts, we see rather interesting curves emerge. Each of them is cited rather frequently and a rather similar number of times a year. Only slightly, a bell-shaped curve can be observed. If we compare this with the overarching label of the Tilburg Model, we see that the *Zelfbeheer* and *Contract Management* (figure 2) concepts reflect the ongoing discourse even better than the *Tilburg Model* concept itself. But the discourses around these labels have a low but ongoing publications rate which lead to low peaks and large standard deviations. The Tilburg model was meant to be the fashionable concept and this was probably true in Germany. But in The Netherlands, the structure in which the discourse developed itself did not leave room for a regular fashion process, as the standard literature on this topic would suggest.

5. Conclusions

The reason for writing this paper is our dissatisfaction about the central element of fashion theory. It was argued that the traditional conceptualisation of fashionable management concepts leads to inductive reasoning and a lack of attention for variations between fashions. A framework was developed which contains three different but related levels at which discourses take place and which can be used to understand the underlying processes. Level 1 consists of the local discourse within a management team of a particular company. Level 2 contains a discourse within personal/local networks of managers who share similar interests or problems and discuss their plans and activities on a regular, though unstructured basis. Level 3 consists of the public discourse and all the actors who are professionally involved in the establishment, the distribution and application of new concepts. This three-level framework makes it possible to get a clear vision on the differences and similarities. Subsequently, we described and interpreted the different institutional expressions of two Dutch management fashions: MANS and the Tilburg Model.

On a number of points, we observe that the genesis of management fashions is rather different than one would expect from the usual fashion theory. From figure 1, it was already clear that the bell-shaped curves differ in terms of their volume, standard deviations and timing. The further exploration of two Dutch management fashions in the nineteen eighties and nineties showed that the way these fashions came about are totally different. Several conclusions can be drawn from these observations. First of all, the genesis of the two concepts showed that in both cases, hardly any professional

communicators (such as consultancy firms) were involved in the development of the concept. In the case of MANS, one might argue that the Foundation was a professional actor. However, the Foundation was an initiative of a network of managers that shared experiences and ideas on the issues involved. Even worse, the need for more assistance among the MANS members turned out to be a fundamental problem within the Foundation and led to the question if the Foundation should be changed into a real consultancy firm itself. In the case of the Tilburg Model, it was even worse. It seems as if the local discourses are mainly operating on level 1 and 2 of our model that is within management teams and in local networks of managers. This rather intense discourse created a situation in which an attempt to create the concept of Tilburg Model found no audience. Level 3 was never reached except maybe when it was transferred to a German audience were these standardised discourses were rather new. These observations lead to the conclusion that the genesis of a fashion is indeed embedded in an underlying social process in which different outcomes are possible. This does not imply that other concepts develop in an other way and sometimes follow the more traditional fashion setting process. It does however show that it is not the fashion itself that should be leading in the analysis of these processes within the management world. It is the ways in which managers and management teams set their local agenda's, communicate and learn from each other in local networks. And only in some of these situations, their local concepts turn into real management concepts that have the potential of being a real management fashion. However, when this happens and how this happens is strongly determined by the way managers operate together in their field.

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Figure 1: The ebb and flows of management concepts
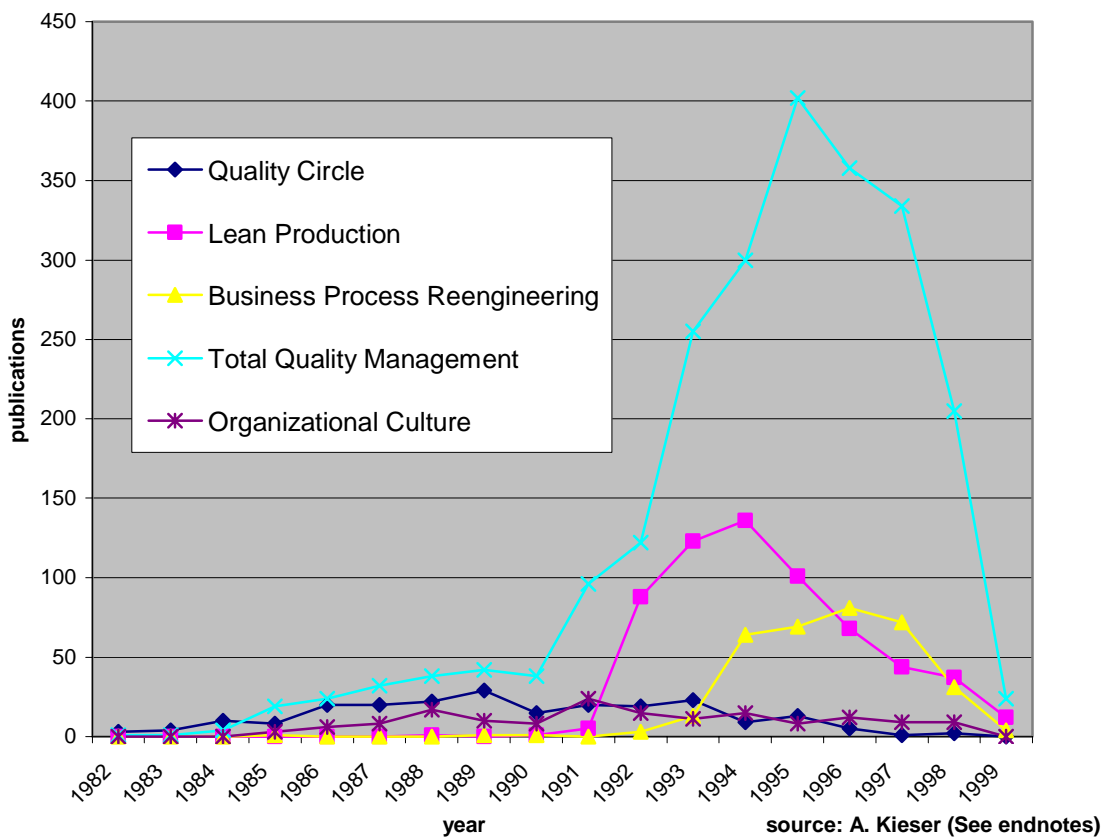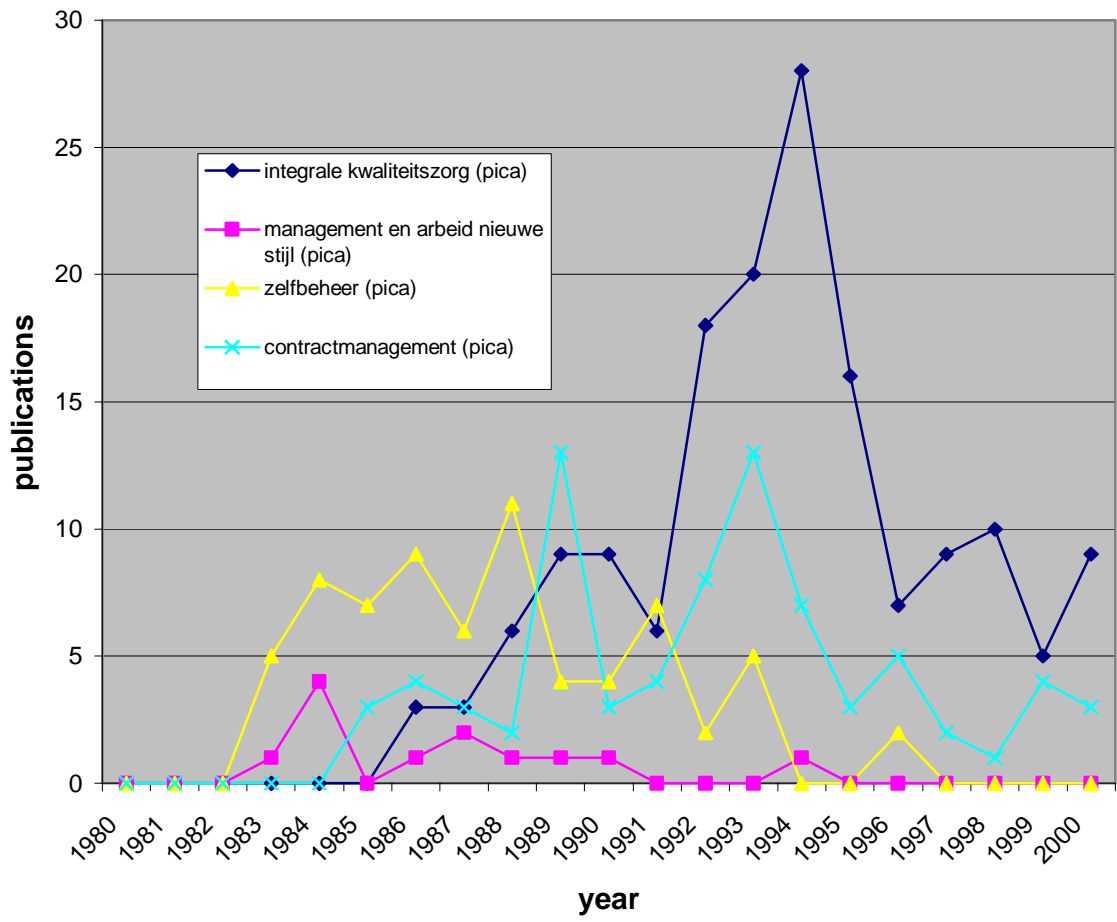
Endnotes:

[1] Note that we restrict our definition to a concept and that no activities or actors are involved yet.

[2] This way of arguing fits rather well in the discussions around the professionalization processes. One of the most important characteristics of a profession is the application of rather abstract knowledge to particular cases (see Abbott 1988). However, Schön (1983) pointed out that professional thinking in action is a rather dynamic process in which the person reflects-in-action. A professional: … becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case (Schön, 1983: 68). Of course, one could ask here if management is a real profession. However, we think that the answer to this question is not relevant in this context. The only thing that counts here is that the management task does require similar reflection-in-action processes as are described by Schön (1983). In fact, the permanent local management discourse can be seen as a continuing reflection-in-action.

[3] How these local discourses subsequently develop is another matter that we will not discuss here.

[4] Abrahamson would speak on this level of a 'fad'. The fad perspective 'assumes that the diffusion of innovations occurs when organisations within a group imitate other organisations within that group' (1991: 597) The third level we will distinguish in a moment is close to what he calls a 'Fashion'. The fashion perspective 'assumes that under conditions of uncertainty organisations in a group imitate administrative models promoted by 'fashion setting organisations' - organisations, outside this group, such as consulting firms or business mass media, whose mission involve the creation of or dissemination of such models (1991: 595).

[5] This idea is similar to the way Benders and Van Veen (2001) explain the disappearance of fashionable management concepts. Once fashionable concepts fuel local discourses, managers start redefining their contents. The new contents affect the public discourse and shifts in meaning and interpretations emerge which for instance leads to a tower of Babel and finally the end of the concept.

[6] There are a number of developments that caused this trend. Van Zanden (1998) mentions shortages on segments of the labor market, slow reactions of the Labor Unions, quick raises in the minimum wages by the kabinet-Den Uyl, rising taxes and social contributions and the indexation of the wages.

[7] Cited from a personal and transcribed interview with Ter Hart in 1998.

[8] These entrepreneurs/managers came from Koninklijke Hoogovens, Van Leer vaten, VmF Stork, Lips-Gispen, Siemens Nederland, Brown Boveri Nederland, Volvo Car and, of course, Nashua Nederland. There were also representatives of 2 smaller companies: Nagro Mechanical Handling and Aarden.

[9] The MANS philosophy matched the ideas of Deming very much. However, there were a few differences. For instance, MANS promoted 'prestatieloon' (individual incentive schemes) while Deming did not like that at all. In an interview, the CEO of the MANS Foundation, N.G.R. Lemmens also mentioned that the MANS ideas also affected the developments in the US by stimulating the softer aspects such as change management and cultural aspects. More details can be found in Bezemer (2001).

[10] These graphs are constructed by using the Picarta search engine on the following files: Nederlandse Centrale Catologus, Netfirst en Online Contents. The resulting lists have been cleaned by looking at the titles and by removing them when they clearly were not related to the concepts that we study.

[11] Interview H.H.M. Vinkenburg.

[12] Interview N.G.R. Lemmens.

[13] This is a title that is hard to translate. This is basically the head of all departments in the Municipality and the one who is responsible towards the elected Aldermen. A kind of municipality CEO without any direct political responsibilities, so to say.

[14] *-Contractmanagement, Dienstbegrotingen nieuwe stijl in outputtermen* (1988); introduction contract management

-Gedwongen winkelnering, Afschaffen of houden?(1988); report about desirability of contracting out internal services.

-Afwijkingenbeleid (1989); report about differences in product performances.

-De kwaliteit van personeel, organisatie en van de dienstverlening (1990); quality report.

-Evaluatie bedrijfsdoorlichting (1990); evaluation report

-Het Tilburgse Doorlichtingsmodel (1990); report about certain budget method

-Tussenbericht Contractmanagement II (1990); progress report contract management