

Total Quality Management in the African business community of Burkina Faso: a change in perspective on knowledge development

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Abstract

During the 1990s Total Quality Management (TQM) became diffused to Burkina Faso. The overarching logic of privatization due to Structural Adjustment Programs prepared the ground for far-reaching changes in management practices. TQM became exhortated as a new way of manufacturing. This new management concept was presented as a crucial part of new corporate success and put strong emphasis on empowerment of employees, customer service and charismatic leadership.

Interviews with top and middle management in a range of Burkinabé companies showed a willingness for mimetic learning but it turned out that translating the concept into specific new practices by way of new routines remained a complex matter. Although this management concept sometimes became part of the dispositional practice of managers – a new habitus – company practices could be better characterized as improvisation on quality improvement.

“It is not only the academics who are interested in finding some answers to puzzling questions about African organisations and how they work. African managers are themselves daily confronted by such questions; trained primarily in western management theories and practices and frequently having western managers as their only role model, how are they to answer such questions?”

(Blunt & Jones, 1992: 107)

As long as lions do not have historians,
hunting stories will glorify the hunters.

(African proverb)

Introduction ¹

Humans experience the world through a set of cultural beliefs, values and concepts that are expressed and reaffirmed through a variety of root metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In what follows the authors will use the ‘journey’ metaphor to describe how their views and experiences of knowledge development in Burkina Faso changed over a period of ten years.

The focus on knowledge development started during a project of cooperation between the University of Ouagadougou (capital city of Burkina Faso) and the University of Groningen (the Netherlands). The purpose of the project was to strengthen the Department of Management and Organization within the existing Faculty of Economics of the University of Ouagadougou. Initially, some Dutch lecturers were attached to the department and, as supervisors, we lectured and trained African students in organization theory and research methods during visits once a year. During the period 1994-2004, the project provided opportunities for Business Administration students from Groningen to do a half-year internship in Burkinabé organizations.

During our ‘journey’, we underwent a profound change in perspective on Management Science. Initially, the students as well as ourselves took a mainstream perspective and tried to apply a set of predefined and reified concepts from Management Sciences. We shared the conviction that Western organizational theories and management concepts, which had taken the form of definitive and abstract knowledge, could travel easily from North to South. The

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management concepts we might apply were viewed as self-contained packages of knowledge that could be cut loose from their particular defining contexts and be applied in other contexts. (Fincham & Roslender, 2004) We embraced the New Institutional Theory, in particular the concept of mimetic isomorphism, to explain the enormous increase and diffusion of fashionable management concepts and related techniques (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). From this perspective, we considered the internships as opportunities to strengthen knowledge development in Burkinabé economic organizations. We assumed that, like the Burkinabé society, these organizations needed knowledge development to achieve increased productivity, effectiveness and resource-utilization objectives.

However, during the initial years of the project, we began to notice that our journey was exploratory, rather than one of applying established knowledge. Initially, we had assumed the universal applicability of the cognitive frameworks: our projects would automatically strengthen incremental improvements in the management practices of Burkinabé organizations. This presupposition was based on the objectivist perspective that regards knowledge as a commodity that people possess and that can exist in a codifiable form independent of the persons expressing it. The objectivist perspective looks at knowledge as existing in a textual form, expressed in a language that has fixed and objective meanings, and expressing a direct equivalence between words and the entities they denote. This perspective also assumes that knowledge and understanding can be developed free from individual subjectivity.

However, we developed doubts about the presupposition that African companies should adopt our cognitive frameworks simply because they were assumed to be rational and efficient and to embody progress. Learning from the mediocre effectiveness of our initial approach, we decided to change our focus and divert our journey in a *process-orientated* direction (Inns, 1996). Instead of

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focusing on the *diffusion* of particular management concepts, we became interested in the *adoption* of such concepts in a particular African context and in how local management knowledge might transform specific organizational routines.

We had observed that particular African cultural patterns are conducive in the African workplace and boardroom, but we actually did not understand why. Initially, we even assumed that African cultural patterns might hamper the applicability of Western views on management. Little by little, we began to recognize that “African societies have built up a wealth of indigenous knowledge in response to dynamic changes experienced in their environments. This knowledge must be taken into account when one is trying to improve the way an African organization is managed, how it is structured, and how decisions are made” (Thairu, 1999: 267). We felt an urgent need to reconsider the epistemological framework that we ourselves were using in order to better understand local practices.

First, we explored the fads and fashions in management knowledge and the way management concepts are manufactured and transferred (Abrahamson, 1996). Second, we directed our attention to an analysis of the reception of management knowledge by African managers. We noted that, rather than being passive recipients, they are *actors* who shape their views on management issues, translate management concepts, and convert them into applicable approaches.

In other words, our perspective changed from one that conceived management knowledge as a set of predefined, reified objects that can easily be transferred to African organizations, into one that conceives management knowledge as constructed by processes of translation. In the first perspective, the manager is portrayed as a monologist who defines the objectives of the firm and forces company members to behave accordingly (e.g. through Management By Objectives). In the second perspective, knowledge is not regarded as a discrete entity that can be codified and separated from people. Knowledge is

seen instead as the uniquely human capacity to make sense of information. Although knowledge involves the mental processes of comprehension, understanding and learning which take place in the mind, knowledge only becomes relevant as ‘knowing how’, which is associated with the ability of an actor to perform activities based on this knowledge. The practice-based perspective views knowing and the development of knowledge as ongoing, through the routine activities that managers and employees undertake. Through dialogue and improvisation, existing knowledge is adapted to new situations. Mangaliso (2001) notes that, particularly in the African context, managers have to be dialogists who look for conversation and who shape discourses, sharing with other participants in the organization the relevance of particular management knowledge.

We embraced this second perspective and decided to explore the impact of Total Quality Management (TQM) in Burkinabé organizations. The reason for this focus was the popularity of the concept in Burkina Faso, as well as the stress within TQM itself on the aspect of dialogue. During our research projects in Burkinabé organizations, we had noticed a tension between the teachings of TQM and actual management practices – the processes of translating the concept of TQM into new routines within the economic organizations was an ideal case study of contextualized knowledge development.

The objective of this paper is to describe and analyze the two different phases of our ‘journey’ and to show how research on knowledge development can learn from African experiences. In doing this, we use Bourdieu’s (1990) concept of habitus to clarify what is involved in the practice of applying management concepts in particular contexts.

The paper is divided into five sections. We start by exploring the changing context of management thought, practice and teaching in Burkina Faso in the era of structural adjustment (section 1). Next we sketch our initial orientation and

the research conducted within that framework, followed by an explanation of our changed orientation and the research that we conducted in that phase (sections 2 and 3). We then describe our analysis of the introduction of TQM and the way this concept was implemented in Burkinabé economic organizations (section 4). In the last section (5) we draw some conclusions concerning management development by stressing the role of dialogue and improving management curricula in African business schools.

Changing context of management orientations under Structural Adjustment Programs

Located in the heart of West Africa, Burkina Faso is a land-locked, resource-poor, Sahelian country with a population of about 12 million people. About 92 percent of the working population is active in agriculture. Burkina Faso has experienced rapid rural and urban population growth; increasing exploitation of arable land, vegetation cover and water resources; continuous struggles with erosion and reduction of soil fertility, and a constant threat of desertification.

In the early 1980s, the World Bank began to pay increasing attention to institution-building in Sub-Saharan Africa as a means to strengthen economic development. It insisted that management and technical reforms of state-owned enterprises were needed. After the debt crisis in 1982 and subsequent economic recession, a period of Structural Adjustment Programs was started in Africa. Programs containing privatization components made up half of the World Bank's loan portfolio at the end of 1987 (Dijk, 1994). The World Bank (1995) stressed the importance of management in the economic development process by suggesting that better management of public and private organizations was a prerequisite for sustainable economic development. In 1989, the Burkinabé government drafted a Policy Framework Paper, which announced plans to

improve the productivity of public investment and encourage private sector development. In 1990, a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), which aimed at boosting public finances and reviving the economy, was introduced. The IMF granted subsequent loans (1991-93; 1993-96) to support economic and financial improvement, such as the devaluation of the CFA franc by 50 percent in 1994. In 1991, Captain Blaise Compaoré, who had seized power after a military coup in October 1987, initiated a gradual liberalization of the military regime, with the adoption of a multiparty constitution promulgated by referendum in June 1991, and the legislation of political opposition. Presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections followed in December 1991, May 1992 and February 1995 (Santiso and Loada, 2003). The economic policy of Burkina Faso also became linked to sub-regional developments through its involvement in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Efforts were undertaken to liberalize the economy. A change from social solidarity to individualism, with a subsequent weakening of the role of the State as 'bienfaiteur', could be noticed in the region. The informal economy began to grow and privatized firms were visited by consultants, who provided assistance in making the transition (Tidjani, 2000).

The impact of this Structural Adjustment Program was reflected in developments at the University of Ouagadougou, which had been officially inaugurated in 1974. In order to respond to the needs of the changing economy, the College of Economics (ESSEC), which had been set up in 1985, was reformed in 1995 and established as the Faculty of Economics and Management (FASEG), with a separate department specifically created to pay systematic attention to issues of management development and organizational improvement in the private sector. Following long strikes organized by students, which were related to the national political crisis caused by the death of the journalist and chief editor of *L'Independent*, Norbert Zongo (13-12-1998), and to students'

demands for improved conditions for their studies (Hagberg, 2002), there was a massive failure of the first-year class and, in November 2000, the university was reformed. It adopted a new structure to promote the professionalization of its faculties (Guenda, 2003). Although FASEG was reshaped into Unité de Formation et de Recherche (UFR) en sciences économiques et de gestion, this had no impact on the content of the curriculum.

When the cooperation between the universities of Ouagadougou and Groningen was initiated in the late 1980s, its focus was on strengthening the institutional capacity for higher education (library, computer facilities, printing facilities, transportation) and increasing the teaching capacity (participation in courses and seminars by Groningen lecturers). This approach fitted Dutch government policy as formulated in *A World of Difference* (1990), published by the Minister of Developmental Cooperation Jan P. Pronk, which stressed that development by, for and of the people is a key element in combating poverty and promoting sustainable economic growth, equitable income distribution, satisfaction of basic needs and involvement in the socio-economic and political domains of society for as many people as possible. A subsequent Reverification Report (1996) on development cooperation introduced ownership as a central concept. The outcome was a flexible approach in which participation played a key role (Schulper and Hoebink, 1999; Van der Veen, 2004). For the first time it was admitted that the cultural identity of the receiving country should be the starting point of cooperation (Nekkers, 2000: 55), but not much attention was paid to the development of the private sector.

Phase one: Research on knowledge transfer

The cooperation between the universities of Ouagadougou and Groningen started within this context. One element of the program was the opportunity for

several business administration students of the University of Groningen to do their internship in Burkinabé economic organizations (1993-1997). These internships had to be focused on organizational issues relevant to the local managers, and before students left for Burkina Faso we had discussions with them on the relevance of the Contingency Approach and on issues of cultural difference. The Contingency Approach, an outgrowth of systems theory, states that managers act and decide, depending on the particular situation. Thus, it rejects the idea of universals, the idea that there is one best way. This approach recognizes, for instance, that organizations within highly unstable environments organize differently from firms in stable environments. The most successful companies are considered to be those best adapted to their environment.

Despite this contextualism, the management knowledge that should be applied is hardly questioned within this approach. Managers are seen as professionals who are expected to be able to apply abstract knowledge to particular cases (Abbott, 1988). We believed that even with their different cultural background, Burkinabé managers, while cooperating with expatriate managers and having had Western-style education, would imitate the success of others and follow the examples of the West. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have called this ‘mimetic isomorphism’ and we supposed that this attitude could be linked with the Contingency Approach recognizing that what may constitute good management in one situation may not in another (Jaeger and Kanungo, 1990; Blunt & Jones, 1992).

Concerning cultural differences, we opted for the approach of the Dutch researcher Hofstede (1993), who stresses that particular cultural values operate in ways in which organization members’ discursive practices contribute to the development of shared meaning. In his empirical research, Hofstede introduces several dimensions to describe the culture of a country. West Africa is thus seen as an area that ranks high in power distance, low in individualism, and has a long-term orientation, while scoring ‘moderate’ on the dimensions of both

quality of life and uncertainty avoidance. We reminded students of Nzelibe's (1986: 11) statement: "whereas Western management thought advocates Eurocentrism, individualism and modernity, African management thought emphasizes ethnocentrism, traditionalism, communalism/collectivism, and cooperative teamwork". We also discussed with students the tensions between the 'emic' (from the insider's point of view) and the 'etic' (from the outsider's point of view) understanding of organizational phenomena.

The first research projects started with the presumption that larger firms within the formal industrial sector of Burkina Faso, still having expatriates on their boards, would function with fairly conventional Western management tools and work practices. Furthermore, it was assumed that transfer of knowledge, which itself is formulated in terms of management concepts that are firmly rooted in Western thought about *planning* and *control*, could enhance the performance of these firms as long as the concepts and consecutive techniques were balanced with local indigenous Burkinabé value systems. Cultural patterns such as a respect for elders, consensus decisions, respect for authority, family orientation and collectivism would simply have to be integrated in the design of the research without interfering with the *objectivist* perspective of the research projects.

At this point it is illustrative to review several of the initial research projects on Burkinabé companies and assess the fruitfulness of the approach taken in this first phase of our journey.

A review of research projects²

– *Faso Fani: cotton fabric manufacturer in Koudougou*

Due to the combination of high quality cotton and suitable infrastructure

(railway and motorways), in the 1960s the Burkinabé government decided to build a textile factory, named Vortex, north of the capital city. The first spinning machines started to run in 1969; weaving machines and a printing department soon followed.

In 1984 the company changed its name to Faso Fani and produced yarn, textiles and in particular ‘pagnes’, which represented 75 percent of the total turnover. While the results did not meet the expectations (Martens, 1989: 190), serious attempts were made to rationalize the production process. Foreign investment was attracted for technological improvements but part of the factory continued to produce with the old equipment. Nevertheless, the company became one of the pioneers in quality control circles. Due to the process of privatization, the company was forced to rationalize its sales, and this became the focus of the research. The wholesalers, who invented new designs and placed orders with Faso Fani to produce them, had a strong influence on the firm. Distributors kept stocks that were financed by Faso Fani and the products were sold at prices which were still fixed by the government. Hofstede’s framework concerning cultural differences was applied to assess the impact of local policies compared with Western practices. This provided a setting to propose a change in Faso Fani’s perspective on the market and to make it into a more efficient one, based on Western concepts. For that purpose, a Porter (1980) analysis concerning strategy was applied. The analysis showed that cheap textiles from Asia aggravated the competitive situation and that local wholesalers selling Faso Fani products were confronted with mounting stocks of obsolete designs. Faso Fani, however, carried the burden. Ties between the company and the wholesalers had to be unbundled, but it was unclear how top management would translate this issue into a new company strategy. Privatization was on its way but the Burkinabé board of Faso Fani was unable to develop a new strategy and, in 2003, the company was dissolved.

² An overview of all studies is given in appendix 1.

– *Sosuco: sugar manufacturer in Banfora*

Sosuco (Société Sucrière de la Commoé) was created in 1972 with the support of a French company SOMDIAA (Société de Management des Industries Alimentaires et Agricoles) and nationalized in 1985. The company managed an agribusiness complex consisting of about 4,000 irrigated hectares of sugar cane, a sugar refinery and a cubing plant. Sosuco produced about 30,000 tons of sugar a year, which was insufficient to meet the demands of domestic consumption, estimated to be 45,000 tons a year. During the (agricultural) campaign (November till April) some 2,000 people and staff were employed and 4,000 casual workers were involved in harvesting.

In the context of the Structural Adjustment Program, Sosuco and the Burkinabé government signed a contract to promote efficiency and effectiveness. Top management had to strengthen its ability to understand and control both the volatile external environment and the internal dimension. Management was tasked to improve productivity, gradually reduce production costs and increase the rate of sugar extraction. The World Bank had put pressure on the government to speed up the privatization process, which was practically implemented in 1990. Sosuco decided to develop a cost leadership strategy and compete on sales prices.

The research project focused on the improvement of the cost structure of the production line and on the design of a new strategy for the liberalized market. It turned out that their cost of sugar production still remained too high compared with the cost of sugar production in a similar firm in Ivory Coast. Using the Activity Based Costing (ABC) management technique, the actual cost structure was analyzed. ABC focuses on the drivers of the various cost types and assumes that these costs are caused by various activities that must be controlled. Detailed descriptions of the accounting system and an extensive collection of data were not available due to a weak management information system. The

implementation of this technique through cost reduction management met quite some resistance, and reducing production costs by firing people was not an option due to particular socio-political circumstances. In order to help design a new company strategy, a *scenario approach* was elaborated to study a range of consequences of liberalization. The results suggested that Sosuco should develop a strategy focusing on consumer prices as an instrument of competitiveness, decrease the number of employees, accept lower profit levels and focus on competitors from neighboring countries. Liberalization of the market would force the firm to change and relate its corporate social responsibility for the region with the building of a commercial firm. In this field of market developments, technological improvements and corporate social responsibility, it was not easy for Sosuco to survive. It turned out, however, to be difficult to understand how top management would design a vision to sustain its business through technological improvements and carry out its social role.

– *Local Credit Bank in Manga (Region of Zoundweogo)*

The Cellule Epargne Crédit et Commercialisation (CECC) located in Manga was initiated by the Burkinabé government in 1983 and financially supported by the Dutch government. The small bank provided microfinance facilities for women's organizations. From 1995 to 1997 research was focused on the capacity of the bank to survive the withdrawal of the Dutch involvement and introduction of local management. The aim of the research was to assist the management of the bank to improve sustainability, focusing on treasury management, micro finance and savings. The bank needed an analysis of the external environment and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis was conducted to design a management strategy. Options varied from concentrating on attracting new customers, stimulating people in the region to create cooperatives (attracting new customers), and a search for new partners. The alternatives seemed to provide some relevant input for

management to expand the project. An immediate impact could not be observed but the bank is still in operation.

– *A cereal bank in Kaya (region of Sanmatenga)*

The development of a cereal bank was initiated by the Burkinabé government in the late 1970s to strengthen the economic development of regions in an integrated way. The Dutch government began to support this project by focusing on soil fertility management. The research concentrated on the operational functioning of the cereal bank by looking at the maintenance of stock and purchasing of fertilizers and pesticides.

The stock of fertilizers was distributed in the region through small depots in different villages but proper management of these depots was lacking. In 1997 the current Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, Ernest Yonli, had stated that one of the weak points within the functioning of the cereal banks was their management: “Les banques de céréales n’arrivent pas à attirer vers elles une grande partie des producteurs/consommateurs” (Yonli, 1997: 184).

Based on various Western marketing tools and organizational principles focusing on efficiency improvements, the research intended to assist farmers in finding appropriate ways to finance fertilizers without the powerful mediation of wholesalers who did not support the individual small farmers. For that purpose, the depots had to be organized in a more efficient way, but it turned out to be difficult to relate the interests of the individual farmers and the common interest of the region. Subsequent research by Elshout (2001) established that the different interests of individual farmers and those of the region (community) had still not been settled.

Learning from the research projects

Reviewing the outcomes of these research projects in four different organizations, we concluded that one of the principal weaknesses of the projects was the objectivist assumption with which the research was undertaken. Although the Contingency Approach was applied and cultural differences were acknowledged, the young researchers were themselves approached by local management as *experts* who would – based on their acquired management knowledge – be able to advise on particular organizational issues. In all cases, the research projects did not show how the managers made strategic choices nor what strategic options they had. The researchers characterized the behavior of management in these organizations as one of muddling through. The limiting factor in this kind of research was that the managers were perceived only as *agents* who were in a position to smoothly apply explicitly formulated and systematically elaborated Western management knowledge in their specific organization.

We had hardly any information about the way these concepts were translated in the Burkinabé context. Was the difficulty of adopting these concepts related to the lack of clearly defined goals and a rational approach to attain those goals? Was local management well equipped to relate to the meaning of Western management concepts? Did the meaning we attach to these concepts really make sense in the specific setting in Burkinabé organizations? Hernandez (1997) notes that the main reason for failure in applying the Western concept of Management By Objectives – or in francophone countries, Direction Par Objectifs (DPO) – was that it had not been properly translated within the local African management style. Particular African cultural patterns and values determine issues such as the time-frame and goal setting in a fundamentally different way. Hernandez also notes that the presence of a large hierarchical distance between management and employees in African companies prevented

negotiations about the processes of goal setting itself. To implement DPO properly, the traditional African system of decision taking by unanimity ought to be given its appropriate place in African firms because the need for harmony and consensual unity is very strong (Hernandez, 1997). Hernandez concludes that both the economic and the socio-cultural sphere should be integrated if DPO is to be successfully implemented. For instance, the strong link between private and professional life is a common phenomenon in Africa and should be respected more: “il faut souhaiter qu’a terme la dimension communautaire survive pour permettre comme au Japon, la naissance d’un management à l’africain dont l’efficacité resultera de solidarité des membres de l’entreprise” (Hernandez, 1997: 106). Hernandez’s warning and the results of our research projects made clear that we had only looked at these organizations as adaptive systems which were concerned with the development of capabilities (i.e. appropriate knowledge, experience and skills, as Richardson coined it for the first time in 1972) to manage new situations by making improvements and amendments to existing practices. But how were these linked to the local circumstances?

In courses on research methodology, we used the master theses of the Dutch students to discuss with the Burkinabé Business Administration students ways of improving research on the transfer of Western-based knowledge. They considered it naive to reject foreign concepts in the way that defenders of the radical disengagement theory do (Shahidullah, 1999). They pointed to the fact that industrialization and globalization will influence market developments in Africa anyway and that Western management concepts will seep into African management education. On the other hand, we confronted them with the following statement of Blunt and Jones (1992: 31): “whereas African organizations may find that they can apply Western management concepts and practices to their technical core with few major modifications, these imported ideas and practices are generally found to be inadequate and/or inappropriate for

the organization's relationship with their environments".

Were we to conclude that Sub-Saharan African economic organizations are suffering from mismanagement, poor management or inappropriate management? We turned the question around and asked ourselves what kind of management knowledge is transferred and how it is translated. On the basis of the discussions we had with the Dutch and Burkinabé students and our own visits to Burkinabé companies, we decided to study how African managers interpret modern Western management knowledge based on their own habitus. What about that preference of African people to sit together and start conversations about community topics, while never taking final decisions until all points of view have been expressed and shared (Ayittey, 1991)? Had not the history of Africa shown that Africans have their own ways of organizing their world of work (Reader, 1998)? Had 'modernization' by the colonizers not neglected the native cultural traditions too much and transferred too much of the ready-made Western management views to traditional African soil? Admitting that some of the African management practices might indeed be hybrid – in the sense that a Burkinabé management style could not be clearly defined – we turned away from an approach where management knowledge is only dealt with in a universalist way. We began to appreciate Weick's (1995) view on the issue of the organizing process itself ('sensemaking' and 'enactment') and decided to look at Burkinabé economic organizations willing to implement Western management knowledge and explore the *dialogue* between the dominant Western logic and a novel African logic (Giroux and Taylor, 1995). What kind of dialogue could that be?

Phase two: Exploring new orientations in our research by way of epistemological renewal

In the first phase of our journey, the research projects had taken management knowledge as a set of predefined, reified objects that organizations could adopt. It was furthermore presupposed that prescribed procedures could be adapted, implemented effectively and become integrated within existing local management practices. Based on a perusal of other literature, we decided to fundamentally change our perspective and look at management knowledge as constructed by managers who are interested in its *meaning* and relevance to the improvement of existing organizational practices.

Managers are henceforward seen as actors (Hollis, 1996) translating management concepts that circulate in the literature as idealized, de-contextualized accounts of other organizational c.q. management practices. In our new view of knowledge development, the conception of the role of the managers shifted from that of target-setters, who impose management concepts like MBO onto others, to social persons, who appreciate the meaning of a concept as related to its practical use. Managers cannot know the meaning of words without knowing the environment within which the word is used (Watson, 1997). We explored a new field of interest in the management literature that focuses on organizational discourse, narratives and dialogue (Czarniawska and Sevón, 1996; Linell, 1998; Grant, Keenoy and Oswick, 1998). Barry (1997) indicates that the focus on language itself has an interesting impact, for example, on the way a strategy is being shaped. “If story telling is the preferred sense-making currency of human relationship among internal and external stakeholders, then surely strategy must rank as one of the most prominent, influential and costly stories told in organizations”. The key success factor in changing organizations and guiding them through translation into new directions is the capability of managers in sense-making (Weick, 1995). Good

managers can move the members of an organization towards a shared understanding while acting jointly with them. Instead of telling others what to do, good managers are those who talk with the employees about what could be done.

We therefore decided to embrace this new epistemic perspective and to look at organizations as *learning* sites of plural rationalities, rival sets of rules for ‘closure’ and models of content, which, as social collectives, they produce, reproduce and transform through ongoing, interdependent and goal-oriented communication practices (Cf Mumby and Clair, 1997). This perspective fits with Granovetter’s view (1985) that action and context are mutually and intricately embedded in one another. Individual managers function within institutions like the family or the firm, and they embody, realize, reproduce and change those institutions through their daily activities. The focus on communication intends to perceive the manager as someone who is stimulating the development of shared thinking, which evolves from effective communication during collaborative activities. Partnerships will construct a collective vision which guides action (Stewart, 2001).

Arbnor and Bjerke (1997: 187-188) stress that, with the focus on communication and language, the *actor* perspective takes central stage and “is guided by what language means to people’s way of life as a means of expressing and intermediating knowledge and information in the form of language [...]. What goes on in organizations can therefore be seen as a language game. The actor’s approach thus postulates that the use of language is controlled by more or less visible rules that give meaning to the symbols and the actions. We can talk of language games as containing ideological symbols, language referential and ideological rules in which different language games also reflect different live practices”. Instead of looking at managers from a purely individualistic point of view, where intention is the focal point and monologism the action, we turned to a perspective based on *interaction*, in order to understand how

concepts make sense in a communication process. In this new view, managers are perceived as acting persons who, with a set of particular dispositions, are able to implement particular management knowledge.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus

Thus, management becomes a social construction, which, through dialogical acts between participants in conversations, establishes agreement on the applicability of a particular management concept. This approach is similar to what the French philosopher/sociologist Bourdieu labels 'habitus'. He introduces this notion to overcome the pernicious dualism between objectivism and subjectivism. "These two moments, the subjectivist and the objectivist, stand in dialectical relation. It is this dialectic of objectivity and subjectivity that the concept of the habitus is designed to capture and encapsulate" (Bourdieu, 1988: 782). He notes that both points of view have something valuable to offer but aims to move beyond the incompatibility of the two views and find a perspective that can reconcile them. He looks at an actor as a subject who is, above all, a doing person, active in and interactive with the world around him; a person who thinks because he does, rather than the other way round. "Habitus is a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without predisposing a conscious aiming at ends or an expressed mastery of the operations necessary to maintain them" (Bourdieu, 1993: 5). Habitus is composed of embodied dispositions, aesthetic perception and appreciation patterns, as well as cognitive and normative interpretative frameworks. "These dispositions and templates provide an individual with a habitus which provides a 'feel for the game' ('sens du jeu'): it enables an infinite number of moves to be

made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations which no rule, however complex, can foresee” (Bourdieu quoted in Margolis, 1999: 70).

In other words, habitus embodies the idea of people's habitats and habits, and highlights the deeply woven tapestry of individuals in the social context. This system of dispositions inclines actors to act in particular ways acquired through internalized knowledge of all the dispositions that the rules of the game offer them as players. It can produce an infinite number of practices that are relatively unpredictable but also limited in their diversity (Bourdieu, 1990: 55). A manager can produce a variety of demeanors that belong to a certain class of demeanors underlying the lifestyle of a particular group. This practical sense will tell him (or her) what to do and when to do it. This is not informed by a set of hard and fixed rules but by a set of embodied dispositions which together make up the habitus. The habitus does not come with a precise set of rules, since rules belong to the conscious mind, whereas habitus is internalized, hidden beneath the surface, in the unconscious and in the body. It enables the actor to produce subjective and individual responses. He can liberate himself from the necessity of sticking to the rules and regulate improvisation.

With the habitus as point of reference, we decided to approach the manager as a subject who, above all, is a doing person, active in and interactive with the world around him. The manager does not experience an organizational culture as a mental program (Cf Hofstede) but as a set of habitual practices which enact a meaningful world.

Individuals interact with each other in a field in which practices become constituted. These practices consist of dialogic actions. The language used in these interactions serves to set up spaces of common action (Taylor, 1999). A field presents itself to each actor as a “space of possibles” (Bourdieu, 1993: 64). A field is a network or configuration of relations between positions actors take in that field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). Bourdieu does not deny that, in such a field, power relations play a dominant role. Unequal positions are

determined by a variety of power structures, which, in their turn, depend on the background and status of the actors, i.e. their socio-economic positions. These power relations, however, do not prevent interactions between members of an organization in terms of a field that is open to communication and dialogue. The relationship between habitus and field can be described as the interference of dispositions (the feel for the game) and the position (the game itself). Bourdieu sometimes uses examples from sports to illustrate his point of view. While having a sense of the game, actors behave like football or tennis players who do not apply a priori principles to their play but rather, with their intimate understanding of the object of the game, have the practical flexibility to know when and how they should behave. This “sense of the game” refers ultimately to a sense of one’s relations with others and what these other actors will regard as correct, given certain broadly shared but not definitive understandings (King, 2000).

With Bourdieu’s formula, “habitus + field = practice”, at hand, we embarked on a new approach to understanding Burkinabé management practices, recognizing the fact that the habitus of a manager can reflect a reactionary attitude as much as a progressive one.

The case of Total Quality Management in Burkina Faso

Through interesting conversations with our Burkinabé colleagues and the Burkinabé business community, we learned about a growing interest in management concepts such as quality circles, continuous improvement and, more recently, Total Quality Management (TQM). Since 1961, Quality Control Circles (QCC) have been introduced in Japanese firms as a bottom-up management strategy. QCC are small groups of six or seven people, organized to help solve job-related quality problems in the company. “The Japanese Union

of Scientists and Engineers (JUSE) had relentlessly advocated the circles through their many chapters in the country. Top management got involved early, so did middle management and foremen. The JUSE created a corporate association with a mass constituency which explains its success” (Locke, 1996). QCC gained popularity in the 1980s due to the success of the Japanese economy. Locke (1996) even sees it as one of the concepts that led to the collapse of the American management mystique with its pretension of providing universally applicable knowledge.

In 1984, the Burkinabé government took the initiative through a governmental body, the Direction de Controle et de Suivi des Societes d'Etat (DCSE), to explore the applicability of QCC (Sawadogo, 1993). After some field studies, a QCC project was launched in 1989. A Japanese engineer from JUSE, Miyauchi, was invited to explain to an audience of one hundred and fifty Burkinabé businessmen and civil servants how QCC had changed management practices by reflecting Japanese cultural values and norms of social interaction. Five Burkinabé companies decided to implement QCC. The World Bank agreed to financially support the initiative.

During 1991, other Japanese engineers paid visits to Burkina to train local trainers and assist in the dissemination of the QCC concept. The concept obtained its own translation in ‘groupe progres permanent’ (GPP). Five other Burkinabé firms and civil service departments decided to implement this approach. In January 1992, the Association Burkinabé des Cercles de Qualité (ABCERCQ) was launched, with financial support from Japan, to propagate and diffuse the new approach. A delegation of Burkinabé businessmen was invited on a study mission to Japan to learn on the spot about quality circles. An expert from the World Bank showed that the implementation of quality circles had obtained some success in Africa (Dia, 1996). In 1998, the Burkinabé government created the national standardization unit to disseminate information about standards, technical specificities and codes of practices, training on quality

and certification of companies, conforming to these standards.

The following year, the consultant Lim from Singapore delivered a report that evaluated the ten-year experience with quality circles (Lim, 1999). Although overall the report was positive, it expressed some particular concerns that mainly had to do with a lack of active engagement by top management. It turned out that top management was neither interested in quality circles nor visibly engaged in discussions concerning the needs of the circles to get the approach implemented. Organizations had hardly developed clear visions about the effects of quality circle projects and subsequent strategies. Top management lacked knowledge about the content of quality circles and were not adequately trained to apply quality circle tools and road maps. Leadership and motivation was lacking to implement quality circles effectively.

Transformation of organizations did not take place and necessary cultural changes had not been taken into consideration. Lim advised that quality circle coordinators should ‘engineer’ changes in both rank and file as well as top management. Problem-solving activities should be based on team-based training and experiential learning. The local trainers, however, should learn, try out and improve by adapting QCC to the local context. The foremost issue was that leadership should manifest itself physically by example. He noted that there were only a few managing directors who were driving excellence and quality improvements. Besides the low involvement of top management, he concluded that managers in general manifested a lack of knowledge about the ways to change organizational structures to effectively implement quality.

During the following years, the members of ABCERCQ met annually for a few days to attend workshops and to share knowledge and experiences. In order to strengthen the interest of top management in quality issues and make them responsible for its implementation, ABCERCQ broadened its scope, reached out for a more holistic view and turned its interest to Total Quality Management (TQM). In 2001, WAEMU launched a broader quality program

with the assistance of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the European Union for a period of four years (with a 14 million Euro budget). UNIDO stressed that managers' misconceptions about continuous improvements are the most important source of difficulties. Managers too often expect instant results whereas it takes time before the benefits of quality management become visible. In 2002, ABCERCQ changed its name into l'Association Burkinabé pour le Management des Cercles de Qualite (ABMACQ) stressing the fact that quality management was not just a vision and strategy but had to become the new style of working. What was needed, above all, was a proper translation into Burkinabé management practices.

Beyer et al. (1997) had shown how the concept of TQM could end up with very different results in similar institutional settings. Whereas in one firm management encouraged local experimentation, in another firm a tightly implemented process was embraced and deviations were considered errors. In other words, the concept allowed for rigidity as well as flexibility and creativity. Apparently there was no agreement about the definition of quality. Initially this was one of the great barriers to management's rapid adoption of practices that intended to improve quality. But very soon that negative view changed into a challenge. "Because of the vagueness of the concept and its correlates, firms and industries were free within a certain range to interpret it, position it, and adopt those practices that fit particular corporate traditions and industry imperatives" (Cole, 1999: 11). Its ambiguity provided managers with freedom to determine, in their own language, their visions of continuous improvement. "The rhetorical TQM exploded into a broadly used, ambiguous term with unclear organizational implications" (Zbaracki, 1998: 603). Despite its ambiguity, the goals of (total) quality management are to improve product performance and zero-defect production, which will lead to improved customer satisfaction. Although the migration of this management concept was speedy, Balance (1995: 4) draws the conclusion that "in developing countries the pace of acceptance (of this and

similar concepts) is far too slow”.

Because TQM as a management concept was quite vague (Deming never used the term (Petersen, 1999)), it offered enough opportunities for Burkinabé management to design its own leadership and vision on the topic. The concept certainly gained ground while the overarching logic of privatization – as propagated by the Structural Adjustment Programs – stimulated the urgency for far-reaching changes in Burkinabé management practices. TQM was embraced as a new way of operating Burkinabé economic organizations. The vagueness of the concept opened the way for multiple interpretations and a *constructivist* procedural approach to the implementation of TQM. With a certain pathos, TQM obtained the status of a mantra, which increased its popularity.

Research projects on Total Quality Management in Burkina Faso

Having explored some key issues concerning leadership, professional identities, the position of middle managers, the role of language and the shaping of a managerial habitus in Burkinabé organisations as prerequisites for the study of quality issues, we decided to direct our attention to the *implementation* of TQM. A range of different companies, located in industrial parks in Ouagadougou and Bobo Diaoulasso and operating in agro-industry, food and industrial production, were visited and interviews were held with managers and employees in order to gain an understanding of the actual application of TQM. The young Dutch researchers were assisted by Burkinabé Business Administration students to help overcome language barriers. Topics such as leadership, teamwork, customer service, organisational culture and learning were covered.

Box 1. A review of new research projects

Sodepal (Ouagadougou)

Sodepal (Société d' Exploitation de Produits Alimentaires) was founded by Madame Zoundi in 1978. Besides the bakery, the company has a patisserie and biscuit production. In 1992 Sodepal, in cooperation with a French company, started to produce 'farine infantile' to counter the malnutrition of Burkinabé children. Sodepal recently installed a Service Department to deal with the delivery, promotion and selling of their products. The managing director has a policy to prefer women as employees. She indicated that quality control of the products and the production process is essential to safeguard the continuity of her company.

Brakina, beer producer (Ouagadougou)

Brakina is a large brewery with more than 300 employees and production locations in Ouaga and Bobo Diaolasso. It produces a variety of brands of beer, including Brakina, SoBeBra, Castel and even Guinness, and has a licence to produce various soft drinks like Coca Cola, Sprite and Fanta. The company applies strict quality controls to comply with license criteria. Continuous inspection by staff of the laboratory guarantees quality.

SNCitec, chemical plant (Bobo Diaolasso)

SNCitec (Société Nouvelle Huilerie et Savonnerie) is a production plant and a subsidiary of a French multinational. It manufactures various kinds of oils, soap, animal food, peanut sauce and sesame crackers. The French company still plays the supervisory role by regularly sending staff to inspect and assist.

Sofitex, cotton mill (Bobo Diaolasso)

Sofitex is the largest group of cotton mills in Burkina Faso focussing on export. The company has put in place quality control circles and controls the whole logistic channel, from seed to customer, in order to minimize the risk of lawsuits and penalties.

Brafaso, non-alcoholic beverage producer (Ouagadougou)

Brafaso is a new company challenging Brakina, which for years had a monopoly in the beverage industry. Brafaso produces only non-alcoholic beverages but intends to start producing beer as well. The production line is newly imported from Germany and the process is fully automated with local operators running it. The management team is composed of Africans who have long careers and familiarity with the topic of quality control.

Tan-Aliz, tanning company (Ouagadougou)

Tan-Aliz was privatized in 1992 but, thanks to its two factories, it still has a monopoly in the tanning industry. The general director is very concerned about quality control.

Fasoplast, plastics manufacturer (Ouagadougou)

Fasoplast has installed quality control circles. Members of the management team indicated that the general director encouraged initiatives from the shop floor. Although the management style has changed from an authoritarian to a participative approach, the attitude of cooperation between middle managers and employees did not yet reflect this.

All the companies in these research projects indicated that they were familiar with TQM. In general, the interviewed managers were in favor of TQM but admitted that its translation into practice was complicated and sometimes stagnated in their respective companies. It was difficult to trace the script of routines that reflect new practices based on TQM, which might indicate that TQM has become part of routine and normality and is no longer conspicuously executed except in specifically planned contexts (Mueller & Carter, 2005).

A variety of reasons for the lack of implementation was expressed:

- The level of illiteracy in the firms is high and makes a proper understanding of TQM difficult.
- Access to the internal informal communication within an organization (“ordre de bavardage” according to Etchegoyen (2004: 135)) requires particular language skills (languages other than French are spoken) and makes translation a complicated matter.
- The hierarchical structure in the company prevents the implementation of a participative approach between middle managers and employees.
- Systematic attention to improving worker satisfaction is lacking.
- A system of continuous training is required but difficult to put in place.
- Motivation amongst employees and trust in top management are low.

Even if managers had appropriated the techniques of TQM, it was unclear how far it had become an integral part of their managerial *habitus*. One commercial manager illustrated this by saying: “Bosses in Africa have often been to Europe to learn about cooperation with employees, asking their opinion, but when they get back to Africa they will still act like the boss, and allow no room for opinions of lower ranked employees. This is true for bosses in all

ranks. It seems that cultural assumptions about how bosses should behave are more influential than schools. But of course they will tell you what they have learned in the Western schools”. Apparently, cognitive mimetic learning has taken place but a fundamental shift in the habitus of the Burkinabé manager does not seem to be prevalent yet. The willingness to share a new policy based on TQM with other participants in the organization has not yet resulted in a new management logic.

Does this have to do with culturally specific forms of organizational structures not yet being adapted? The majority of the organizations that have been studied are still coordinated in a hierarchical and bureaucratic way, which keeps managers in a position that requires communication in monologues of *planning* and *control*. If we distinguish four stages in the development of quality management starting with quality inspection (1930s), quality engineering (1950s), quality assurance (1970s) and total quality management (1990s), we may say that, overall, the organizations that have been studied can be positioned between quality engineering and quality assurance.

The one feature most lacking in these analyses was the role of dialogue. During discussions on these outcomes with Burkinabé students during the research seminars in Ouagadougou, the students indicated that they would have difficulties themselves in translating management concepts into particular African realities because training in this kind skill is still missing.

Because the employees spoke Moré or another local language that the Dutch students did not speak, the researchers had support from Burkinabè students in understanding what happened at shop-floor level. But even with this language assistance, it was difficult to determine how TQM techniques were actually embedded in organizational practices. As Falola (2003) indicates, the issue of mastering a foreign language in order to grasp the essentials of the implementation of a particular management concept has yet to be promoted in the African context. This seems to be the case as much in West Africa as in East

Africa. “To some critics, English is the language of domination, colonialization and imperialism. At one level, it allows the West to dominate Africa, at another level, it enables elites to dominate the country. Many defenders of culture and tradition think that the use of English is undermining *the preservation* and practices of *home-grown* institutions” (Falola, 2003: 239). Although Falola does not agree with these critics, he admits that the variety of local languages in African countries reflects a diversity and heterogeneity within the population and workforce which should be explored. Kamoche (1999: 55) notes that “the essence of African culture is in reality a melange of about 2,000 linguistic groups that fall into Bantu, Hamitic, Nilotic, Arabic, Asian, European and other subcategories. Cameroon has over 200 ethnic groups, while Kenya has about 40”. In Burkina Faso about 80 different ethnic groups live together and about the same number of languages are spoken.

During the conversations about the research results, Burkinabé students suggested that the activities undertaken by managers to improve quality issues could be seen as a particular ability to improvise. This was a very interesting comment. The issue of improvisation has recently attracted notable attention in management literature. Improvisation does not refer to a sudden intervention to solve a fluctuation in regular organizational routines, but is “a practice which contains a different vision of work in organizations” (Ciborra 1999 A: 142).

Ciborra further notes (1999 B: 78) that “improvisations are simultaneously rational and unpredictable, planned and emergent, purposeful and blurred, effective and irreflexive, perfectly discernible after the fact, but spontaneous in its manifestation”. Improvisation is not inherently a good thing (Crossan e.a., 2005) but Kamoche (2002: 7) notes that it can restore “a sense of pro-activity in individuals (and teams) and the potential for experimentation outside the often rigid structures of planned organisational change”.

If managers in Burkinabé economic organizations improvise frequently beyond the planned organizational coordination, then the analysis of situated

actions will have to be redefined. One such step is stressed by Mangaliso (2001) who notes that in the South African context Ubuntu embodies the beliefs, values and behaviours of a large majority of the South African population. Ubuntu may guide the development of managerial practices into new forms of TQM that include the capacity to improvise. Ubuntu reflects what people value both in their social life and in their work in economic organizations. Ubuntu is characterized by reciprocity and humanizes social interactions, and in that sense shows a family resemblance with the purpose of TQM. Similar concepts will have to be explored for the West African setting (Karsten & Illa, 2005). The cases studied so far indicate that the Japanese concept of TQM shares features that are cherished in the African business context. The translation process, however, has not yet been crafted into a new approach during the time these research projects were executed.

Conclusions

The journey we have made so far has provided discovery, exploration and personal transformation. It has shaped an atmosphere in which many kinds of transitions and transformations concerning the transfer of knowledge have been experienced (Gabriel, 2004). The adoption of management concepts does not necessarily follow from their scientific credibility and it certainly is not solely determined by economic or technological factors. “For ideas to be adopted in practice, institutional circumstances have to be conducive” (Guillen, 1994: 1). During the years of cooperation with the University of Ouagadougou’s Faculty of Economics and Management, we began to recognize the relevance of this statement. Our journey started as a project with the clear goal of assisting local initiatives in Burkina to become organizations that improve efficiency by diffusing management knowledge as it is acknowledged and formulated in an

explicit way.

Midway in this journey, the perspective changed into a *processual* approach for which we needed a new framework. Management became, epistemologically speaking, approached from a *constructivist* perspective. An *actor* dimension together with Bourdieu's habitus provided a new framework. We became critical of unwarranted assumptions about the transferability of management knowledge in the form of Western management concepts, techniques and methods to the African continent.

If concepts that have been developed in the West are to be diffused in Africa, their diffusion will be to the extent that they can offer insights about a range of options available for crafting African organizations. We believe that the framework we began to design during the second part of our journey may help to recognize the tremendous variety in the African management context. African managers, like other employees, bring their indigenous thought-systems to the organization to interpret, construct and ascribe meaning to actions that take place (Kamoche, 1999). Conversations and dialogue may assist accepted customs, beliefs and practices from family life to become respected in industrial work life. A team of authors who call themselves An Afro-centric Alliance (2000:72), representing different African management institutes, warned correctly that it would be meaningless to ask for one single 'Afro-centric' view of the organization and its management. There is simply too much variety to be recognized. In this sense Dia's statement (1991:47) is still relevant: "l'Afrique peut se développer sans perdre son âme, à condition que ses dirigeants y introduisent une forme particulière de management jusqu'à présent trop souvent ignorée." African-ness in management has still to be identified.

Bourdieu's notion of habitus is a helpful guide for exploring the way Burkinabé management actions provide a sense of community that structures the discourse and coordination of the Burkinabé manager and business man/woman. It expresses the embeddedness of management practices in Africa. It also shows

that translating management concepts from the industrialized business world into an African setting will involve a change in the interpretations of these concepts. Coordinating an economic organization based on such a habitus will create a context of discourse that promotes innovation and learning. Above all, it may stimulate interactive rationality amongst actors who prefer to structure their interactions rather than their own way of reasoning. Burkinabé managers may gain from the transfer of organizational improvements and management views as they prevail in the Western world, however, they may gain even more if they promulgate a habitus which is based on interactive rationality. One way to promote the development of that kind of habitus is to design a business school program that strengthens the ability to translate these modern management concepts into forms that reflect a particular African meaning or, in other words, obtain African-ness. This African-ness creates a synthesis between the constructivist perspective, which states that modern management knowledge has to be translated within the African context through dialogue, and the communitarian perspective, which calls for a return to the source and restores the position of flesh and blood communities that comprise Africa.

There is no better way to conclude our own journey than to refer to a wonderful metaphor of the well-known African author, Amadou Hampâté Bâ. It is a nice illustration of what interactive rationality means to us and of how we have become pupils of master Tierno Bokar. In Bâ's novel *Oui mon commandant* (1954), Bokar instructs his pupils that there are three truths: mine, yours and The Truth. He compares the latter to the full moon and then writes: "My truth, like your truth, are only fractions of The Truth. They are the sickles of the moon, located in different parts of the perfect circle of the full moon. Most of the time, when we talk, we listen only to ourselves, our sickles of the moon turn their backs to each other; and the more we talk, the more they distance themselves from the full moon, in other words, from The Truth. We

first have to turn, one towards the other, become conscious that the other exists, and begin to listen to the other. Then our two sickles of the moon will turn towards each other, get closer to each other little by little, and perhaps, finally, meet each other in the great circle of The Truth. It is there, and only there, that conjunction can take place”³.

³ “*Ma vérité, comme ta vérité, ne sont que des fractions de la Vérité. Ce sont des croissants de lune situés de part et d’autre du cercle parfait de la pleine lune. La plupart du temps, quand nous discutons et que nous n’écoutons que nous-mêmes, nos croissants de lune se tournent le dos; et plus nous discutons, plus ils s’éloignent de la pleine lune, autrement dit de la Vérité. Il nous faut d’abord nous retourner l’un vers l’autre, prendre conscience que l’autre existe, et commencer à l’écouter. Alors nos deux croissants de lune vont se faire face, se rapprocher peu à peu et peut-être, finalement, se rencontrer dans le grand cercle de la Vérité. C’est là, et là seulement, que peut s’opérer la conjunction.*” Bâ, A.H. (1994), **Oui, mon commandant**, Arles, Actes Sud.

Appendix 1

List of research projects in economic organizations in Burkina Faso conducted by Dutch business administration students from the Faculty of Organization and Management of the University of Groningen (1994-2005)

	Name	Title	Dissertation approved
1	Steven Stolp	<i>Le marketing au CNSF, une contribution?</i>	1994
2	Ilse H. van der Veen	<i>Le pague de Faso Fani au Burkina Faso, une reconnaissance du marche</i>	1995
3	Ina Konterman	<i>Prendre les renes:La Caisse de Manga</i>	1995
4	Daan Tiernego	<i>La Viabilité de la Caisse de Manga</i>	1996
5	Ingrid van Zutphen	<i>La Caisse d'Eparne, de Crédit et de Commercialisation (CECC) à Manga</i>	1997
6	Maurice J.T.H. Willemsen	<i>Which direction to choose in a liberalized market, the case of Sosuco</i>	1996
7	Doreen Smits	<i>Cost based activity systems; the Sosuco case</i>	1997
8	Esther E. Bener	<i>L'approvisionnement et la distribution des intrants agricoles au Sanmatenga</i>	1998
9	Bianca Kamps	<i>Middle management in Burkina Faso</i>	1997
10	Lucy Kuis	<i>Leadership styles in Burkinabé companies</i>	1997
11	Reinout B. Brons	<i>Leadership in layers, an orienting study on leadership in Africa</i>	1998
12	Aart Jan Zwartscholten	<i>Speaking of African Management</i>	1999
13	Patrick de Lange	<i>L'Habitus du directeur Burkinabé</i>	1999
14	Claudine Koers	<i>The professional in Burkina Faso in cultural perspective</i>	2000
15	Henriëtte S. Scheele	<i>Business Development in Burkina Faso</i>	2000
16	Tessa van de Wiel	<i>Talking Burkina Faso</i>	2002
17	Ilona Pouels	<i>Management of meaning</i>	2000
18	Sharon Becker	<i>Cooperation in Burkinabé management teams</i>	2004
19	Elly Lont	<i>Quality management in Burkina Faso, dialogue or monologue</i>	2004
20	Erik Cazemier	<i>The use of TQM in Burkina Faso</i>	2005

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