The purpose of this paper is to explore to what extent lean thinking embraces the notions of Stafford Beer’s management cybernetics. According to Beer, any successful organization responds to the laws of management cybernetics. As there are numerous successful enterprises that use lean thinking as a philosophy, this quest seems promising and may offer the opportunity to sharpen understanding of lean practices and possibly identify new concepts that can be incorporated into lean thinking. For this purpose, we first describe the differences of origins and language used in both theories. Then, we discuss the ideas of management cybernetics, with focus on the governing rules this approach to management puts forth. Based on this, a selection of lean thinking rules are described from a management cybernetics perspective. We conclude that management cybernetics can serve as a theoretical background for lean thinking and offers an additional perspective for lean applications.
Theory; Lean Management; Management Cybernetics; Systems Theory; Viable System Modeling

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