Harold Itkin – Miklós Nagy

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL USE OF METAPHORS IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEYOND

Metaphors are useful and powerful communication devices used in our daily conversation and in academic research. They are conceptual tools that we use to make sense of the world and interpret meaning (Ortony, 1975; Oswick, Keenoy & Grant, 2002; Pepper, 1942; Smith & Simmons, 1983). By using analogies, metaphors create mental images that assist in interpreting the world. Morgan (1998) believes that by creating certain types of realities within our minds metaphors help us to contextualize the world in ways that we may not have imagined before (Hussain & Hafeez, 2009). Just as metaphors are helpful in understanding the point of a conversation they can also bring clarity to the nature of an organization, or enterprise. Morgan provides eight perspectives of organizations; machine, organism, brain, culture, political system, flux & transformation, psychic prison, and instruments of domination. These metaphors help in understanding organizations, making sense of organizational structure, leadership style, management control and behavior by associating meaning to them. They provide different perspectives and allow multiple dimensions of organizations to emerge. By offering a multi-layered, multi-dimensional view our knowledge and perspectives expand. By expanding our perspective we open the way for innovation and creativity as well as provide the organizational change practitioner additional communication channels to convey the message and achieve the desired goals in organizational transformation.

A diagnostic reading and analysis of organizations

The purpose of this study is to draw attention to the power of metaphors in organizational development. The presented organizational images offer examples of slicing the organization from a particular angle, which potentially reveals hidden dimensions and offer diagnostic tools that deepen our understanding of organization behavior and consequently assist in building an effective strategy. By offering a multi-layered, multi-dimensional view our knowledge and perspectives expand. Expanding our perspective opens the way for innovation and creativity as well as providing the organizational change practitioner additional communication channels

to convey the message and achieve the desired goals in organizational transformation. In the first part of the study the authors present various images of organizations based on Morgan's (1998) work. We introduce two new organizational metaphors as refinement of the culture perspective. After presenting the various viewpoints practical applications of the organizational change management tool will be introduced using two researched companies; SAS Institute and SAP. The research is based on extended review of academic literature, interviews with employees and the author's research and observations. The diagnostic reading will be presented from a management practitioner and from a social critic's perspective. The authors' goal is to present a tool and engage the academic community to further advance management sciences. The perspectives are not static in nature, they are simply examples of various view points, which can be advanced, challenged, and further developed as needed. Additional metaphors can be developed that may fit better to a particular organization. The use of the Morgan method is not limited to business enterprises; the concept presented can be applied to political, government, and non-profit organizations. The authors view it as a beginning, or opening of a new frontier rather than an end or a final destination.

The power of metaphors in organizational development

Metaphors are particularly useful in communicating broad and abstract concepts such as organizational mission and strategy as well as in situations requiring innovative concepts and approaches (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995). The objective of using metaphors in management is to increase understanding of complicated and intangible concepts through alignment with simpler, more tangible concepts and objects. "The use of a metaphor serves to generate an image for studying an object. This image can provide the basis for detailed scientific research based upon attempts to discover the extent to which features of the metaphor are found in the subject of inquiry." (Morgan, 1980) This enhanced and amplified view of an organization allows the members to become more enlightened as to how their organization is impeded and therefore how it can become unburdened and more effective. Metaphors are complex packages of meaning with multiple interpretations and implications, which must be carefully examined for the message they convey (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001). However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the purpose of organizational metaphors is to simplify the explanation of the workings of an enterprise in order to bring increased understanding by delimiting the mind, essentially, encouraging practitioners to think outside the box. Any one metaphor alone can only aid understanding of certain aspects of an organization, and even then only imperfectly. At the same time it can obscure, or misinterpret the majority of

organizational reality. We decided to include multiple images, rather than allowing a single perspective to dominate when reading organizations. Most organizations require a set of metaphors to paint a true picture. A metaphor is a figure of speech, a tool as well as a lens through which the observer can obtain a multidimensional view and by which he/she should gain a better understanding of organizations. Seeing though the lens enables filtering of information. However, when looking through a lens the original picture does become distorted. A "way of seeing" becomes "a way of not seeing." (Morgan, 2006) Gareth Morgan's Images of Organizations (2006) utilizes the concept of metaphor in order to introduce a better understanding of organizations. Metaphors add additional insight to organizational understanding, but it comes with limitations ("a way of seeing is a way on not seeing"). The metaphor itself is a tool, a means to an end, but not an end by in itself. There must be something "behind the curtain" for the metaphor to be meaningful. In the following paragraphs we present an overview of different images of organizations.

Images of organizations

Organizations as machines

A classic view of organizations uses the image of a machine, which serves as the foundation for bureaucratic organizations and the for the scientific management method. The machine metaphor places priority on increased efficiency and maximum utilization of labor. In order to accomplish these tasks organizations usually need rigid hierarchical structures, a shift of responsibility from the worker to the manager, determination the most efficient way of work, and work-tasks that are designed according to the above principles. These 'machines' have increased efficiency and allow production capacity to multiply; they have rigid structures, which prevent quick adjustments and adaptations to change. The operations are engineered by surgical precision, the work is broken down to its smallest parts, efficiency maximized, and specialized tasks are simplified and assigned to trained people. The human element is virtually eliminated from the picture and workforce simply plays the role of a machine operator. "Men and women were no more than "hands" or "manpower": the energy or force required to propel the organization machine." (Morgan, 1998) The machine metaphor requires a special class of leadership as well. The manager's job is to make sure that the clogs and wheels operate smoothly and the place runs according to plan. Mechanical, machine-like organizations are closed systems, not open for internal learning and self -adaptation and generally suited for companies with stable product structure and relatively steady market.

Organizations as living organisms

In contrast to the closed-loop, closed-system approach such as the 'machine metaphor', the open-systems approach enables the observer to view organizations within the environment it exists. They allow for understanding organizations as inter-related subsystems. The idea of organizations as living organisms shifts our attention from the lifeless machines to a living organism. The mechanical system is replaced with a living one, which brings the observed organizations to life. They can be born, the can grow, become diseased, and even die. The organism has a definite structure and an order to it. Its growth depends on forces that may, or may not be controllable. The organism must survive and needs to adapt to its environment. The open systems theory emphasizes adaptation, flexibility and the importance of the environment in which the organization exists. Organizations in the open-system theory are seen as sets of interrelated subsystems. Furthering the open-system approach is the contingency theory, which looks at the alignments between different (sub) systems of organizations. In its core is the identification and mapping of various organizational subsystems to

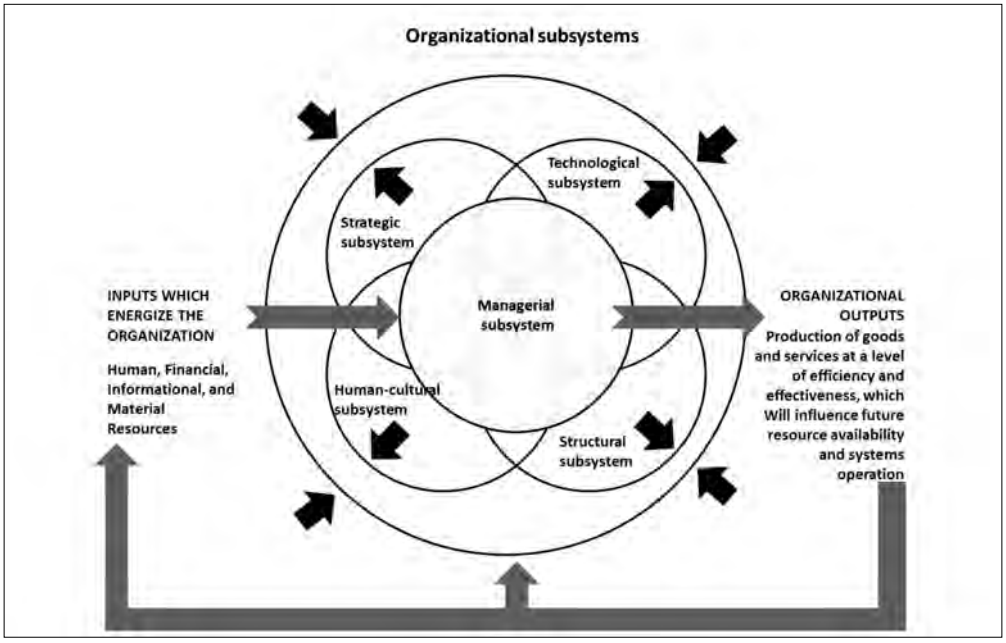

Figure 1. Contingency views of Organizations and Management
Source: Kast, F. Rosenzweig (1973)

the environment where the organization exists. The emerging picture allow for corrections and adjustment to the misalignments to eliminate potential dysfunctions. The contingency theory allows effective visualization of various organizational characteristics to analyze the relationship between the organization and its environment (see Figure 1).

Congruent characteristics are in balance with environment, the ones that are not in harmony need further attention. Organizations are open systems that need careful management to satisfy and balance internal needs and to adapt to environment circumstances. There is no best way of organizing. The appropriate form depends on the task or environment with which one is dealing with. Management must be concerned, above else, with achieving alignment and 'good fits'. Different approaches to management may be necessary to perform different tasks within the same organization and different types or 'species' of organizations are needed in different type of environments (Morgan, 2006).

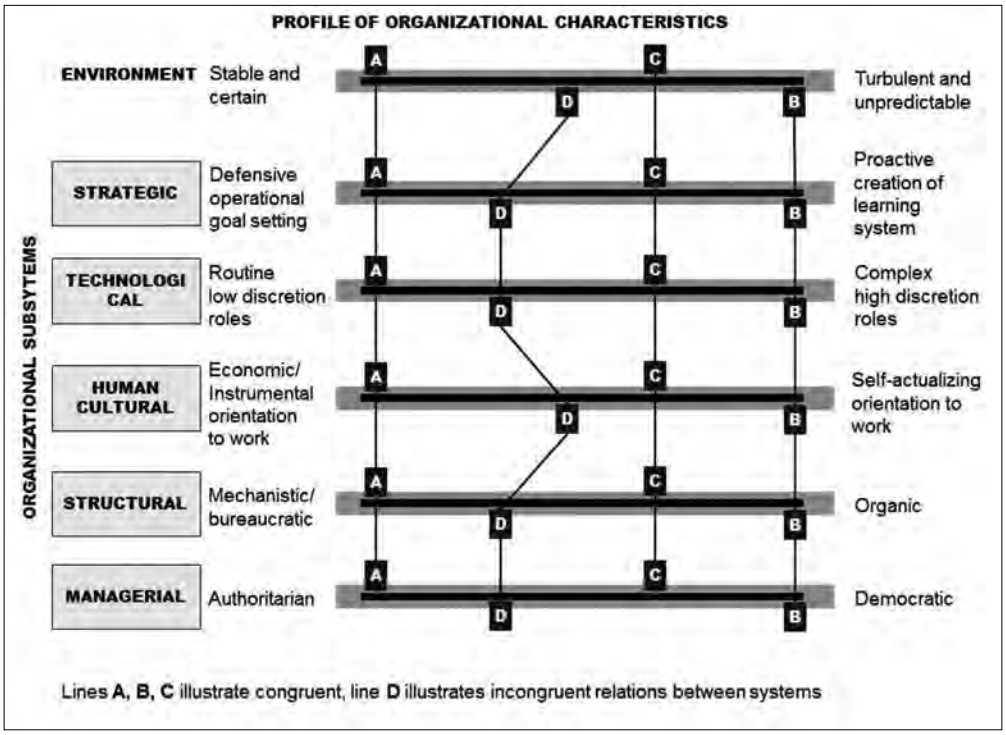

Figure 2. Profile of organizational characteristics
Source: Morgan, G. 1998. p. 54.

The contingency theory in practice

Four different organizations have been reviewed along five dimensions (sub-systems) and their contingency profile mapped in the example below (Figure 2). Each reviewed organization has been assigned a letter (A; B; C; and D). Five dimensions (strategic-, technological-, human/cultural, structural-, and managerial) subsystems have been evaluated for fit with the organizations environment.

Organization 'A' is an organization in a stable environment adopting a defensive strategy to protect its niche. It can be an organization commanding a secure market on the basis of good quality product produced in a cost-efficient way. The organization uses mass-production technology and is structured and managed mechanistically. Employees are content with their narrowly defined roles and the organization operates in an efficient and trouble-free manner.

Organization 'B' represents a company with in a highly dynamic, turbulent environment, where products and technologies are constantly changing and they often have a short life span. This means that the organization has to continuously search for new ideas and opportunities. The company is in a constant search for the next opportunity. It relies heavily on its technological advantage, and on being the first in innovation, recognizing that other type 'C' organizations might move in with a competitive product. Innovation is the core foundation and lifeblood of this organization. It employs people who are prepared to make mass commitments to their work and who are motivated and managed in an organic way. This type of organization is balanced both internally and in relation to its environment.

Organization 'C' is an entity encountering a moderate degree of change in its environment. Technological developments are occurring at a regular pace, and markets are in a constant state of transition. The organization has to keep up with these developments and analyze emerging tendencies and trends, update production methods, and creating a flow of product modifications. It is not on the cutting edge of innovation. Its competitive advantage rests in being able to produce the same or better product in cost-effective way. The organization adopts an effective project-drive matrix organization and commands the required flexibility and commitment from its employees.

Organization 'D', on the other hand presents an example of a series of organization-environment relations where the strategic dimension, technology and the approach to organization and approach to management are incongruent with the nature of the environment and the general orientations of the people within the organization ("Create and Protect").

The contingency theory suggests that, while organizations "A", "B", and "C" display alignment to between their various sub-systems and the environment, example "D" is at a clear

disadvantage. "D" is an ineffective setup for an organization and therefore represents an under optimized environment. This situation is typical of a bureaucratic organization that is more inclined to defend its own position on the market than to seek out new opportunities. Organization 'D' could be a frustrating place to work as the employees are searching more challenging, demanding and open jobs than the strategy, technology, organization and managerial style allow.

The brain metaphor

The image of the brain metaphor offers further insights to our understanding to organizations. From the brain metaphor the paradox of holistic and specialized systems has led to the development of viewing organizations as complex, holographic entities combining centralized and decentralized features, information processing brains and complex learning systems. Ashby (1960) formulated the theory of requisite variety in which he suggests that the internal diversity of any self-regulating system must match to the complexity and variety of the environment in which it exists. In other words any control system must be just as diverse and complex as the environment being controlled. An interesting phenomenon is how the principal of cybernetics has led to our understanding of the single and double-loop learning (Figure 3).

These systems have a holographic design in which the DNA of the whole is built into each cell. Learning organizations have the ability to regulate and to self-adjust. The ability to question, challenge and change operating norms makes learning and advancement possible. Innovative and open organizations with lean structure and democratic leadership style encourage transparency and allow for challenging operating norms, thus open to additional feedback and double loop learning. Organizations that fit to this description (i.e. Google) have a holographic design. They allow space for growth and have built-in extra capacity for innovation, reorganization and adoption. This access capacity is needed to support development and creativity. Vision, openness, learning to learn, and evolving culture of the 'information processing brain' is critical for survival. "Cultures that embody closed visions and self-sealing values tend to die (Morgan, 2006). The brain metaphor is a powerful image; its' strength are: its ability to identify the requirements of learning organizations, to include an open an adaptive view, its ability to self-regulate, adapt and develop. There is a limitation of the metaphor; it is self-referencing.

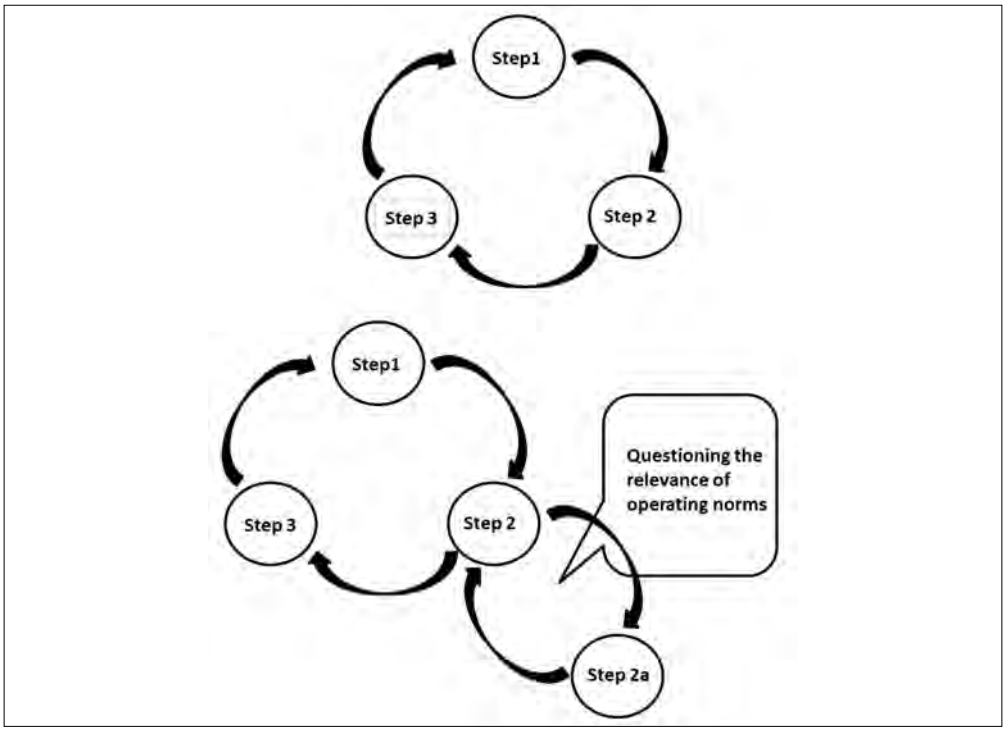

Figure 3. Single vs. double loop learning
Source: Morgan, G. 1998. p. 80.

Organizations as cultures

When one looks at organizations as cultures, he/she might see them as microcosms with distinctive values, shared beliefs, ideologies, languages, rituals and attitudes. Leadership's role in company culture can be best demonstrated by observing at the roles that contemporary business executives and CEOs play in shaping and influencing the life, norms and customs of an organization, or even on a particular industry (i.e. Richard Branson, the Virgin Group). As leaders have greater influence and power in corporate life, their impact is significant. According to Morgan (1998) "Shared values, shared beliefs, shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sense making all different ways of describing culture. In talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive

ways." This reality construction is what leaders are responsible for. It is the acceptance of shared values, beliefs and meanings that drives the transformation of an organization. Bryson (2008) writes "because organizational members do not see the past of the organization in the same way, they orient themselves to different futures. This is a key point to appreciate in understanding multiple perspectives within an organization." The change of culture involves the internalization and action on shared values, which enforces the idea of leaders rule on the reality construction process due to their position and power on the organizational hierarchy. The organizational change process has been viewed as a challenge of changing technologies, structures, skills and motivation of employees. An effective change comes from the successful transition of views, images and values which drive action to success. This is why it is not uncommon for American companies to have foreign bred leadership (Liam Kelly at Teleflex, various CEO's at the Coca-Cola Company, or for foreign based companies to have US Leadership (SAP and Bill McDermott). It is important, however to emphasize the limits of managements culture. It is self-evolving, holographic and cannot be completely controlled. Management is limited to encouraging, or shaping values, beliefs, language and norms. This is most effectively accomplished through the consistent alignment of leadership's actions with the stated values of the enterprise. In short leadership should demonstrate that "they do as they say." A final note on culture and politics: culture often has a political dimension as a construction of reality involves a hidden agenda with a strong bias, a political flavor. If there are hidden agendas they can be confusing and detrimental to the balance of the organization and be counterproductive. As a special case to the culture metaphor we included two additions, the sport team perspective and musical group/Rock Band metaphor. Sports teams are driven by passion and skills. In this team environment there is a clearly defined goal along with a reward for its achievement. On successful teams each member of the team has an assigned role usually aligned with the player's set of skills. The team has a unique hierarchy in that the coaches are the recognized managers of the team but they may not be the actual leaders of behavior. Members of the team can by actions or performance become the "de facto" leaders. Younger players will often mimic the persona of these leaders. These "de facto" leaders often can be a positive force in attaining the desired goals of a team but they often can be the barrier to success. Effective use of these players by the appointed leaders is paramount to success. No matter what image and values management wishes to cascade throughout the organization if these de facto leaders resist the effort is doomed unless they jettisoned from the organization before their impact becomes systemic or viral. Music groups and bands are much more fluid than most organizations. They have to balance the wants of the target audience with their own creative desires. They have to move with societal trends and thus they have

an inherent flexibility about them. Organizations that follow this metaphoric reference are highly creative and innovative. Software companies that have survived several waves on the technology journey fit this metaphor. Businesses such SAP and Microsoft display many of the characteristics of the musical group. On the other hand "one song wonder bands" like Siebel flamed out after they rode their song to the top of their genre. Actually we can stretch the metaphor to include the entire Information Systems industry. DEC, Wang and Compaq are companies of the past as they did not have the innovative juice to continue leading the charge.

The 'Plato's cave' allegory

Plato's classic description of Socrates' allegory of cave addresses the relationship between perceptions, knowledge and reality. Plato's cave provided an example for how a way of seeing becomes a way of not seeing and how myopic, self-limiting thinking can become psychic prisons and limits to knowledge and advancement. Further, the Freudian theory suggested a new type of contingency theory where organizations are shaped by their environments and by the unconscious of their members. The role of subconscious and its influence on corporate culture offers great help in understanding rational and irrational forces. We prefer to call these distinctions as conscious and subconscious forces. The unconscious serves as a double-edged sword. It is a creative, but potentially destructive force if not used wisely. "The challenge of understanding the significance of the unconscious in organization also carries a promise: that it is possible to release trapped energy in ways that may promote creative transformation and change and create more integrated relations among individuals, group, organizations and their environments." (Morgan, 1998) This ambivalence is in harmony with the metaphor of the psychic prison where a vision of confinement is accompanied by and carries in itself the vision of freedom. The message of Plato's cave metaphor is the power and potential of the un- and sub-conscious.

The psychic prison perspective

Leaders need to be aware of this powerful tool in leading, characterizing, shaping and making their organizations. The psychic prison metaphor encourages the leader to manage and integrate competing forces and tensions. The understanding of the power of conscious and subconscious helps to integrate and balance between the rational and irrational. The metaphor offers a 'hidden reservoir of energy and ideas for mobilizing constructive change."

(Morgan, 1998) It also presents a significant risk if the tension created by the competing forces is not managed and spins out of control. What was initially viewed as an atmosphere to stimulate innovation through competing ideas can quickly turn to a self-destructive, ill-conceived war of survival among the authors of competing thoughts. These potentials meet some limitations as well as the focus solely on the unconscious may blindside the leader, critical thinking still applies here. The metaphor's promise of liberation from psychological constraints can lead to utopian speculation, discrediting and critique. Finally the question is whether the role of unconscious can be managed in organizations. Certainly this can be influenced to a point, but by its nature, the unconscious is uncontrollable. This carries further challenges and potentials in itself. Being knowledgeable and sensitive to the role of unconscious and to the power of harmony and integration between irrational and rational forces of an organization can help leaders and managers to reach to desired achievement and good for all involved.

The flux & transformation metaphor

The ideas presented in the flux and transformation metaphor chapter discuss the new discipline of self-reference, chaos, complexity, paradox, contradiction and crisis. Maturana and Varela's (1980) idea of a system based on self-production through a set of closed system relations challenges the traditional idea that change originates in the environment. The theory of autopoiesis adds a new dimension and interpretation to the open versus closed system debate. A new characteristic of systems appear, the ability to reproduce themselves by having autonomy, circularity and self-reference. Self-producing systems see the environment as an extension of themselves and they project themselves into their environment. This carries a self-limiting and insular property endangering its own existence. Self-reference and the relation of the autopoietic systems to their environment shows limited focus, myopic vision and ignorance. The logic of chaos and complexity explore the concept of order in the chaos, where complex systems fall under the influence of different type of attractors which push, or pull them into a particular stage. A new attractor can push the system out of chaos back into equilibrium just as a new attractor can pull it into a new position. A new order is evolving in the pattern and the pattern of chaos gives way to order. "Chaotic systems tend to be deterministic systems that evolve though a particular phase of instability and eventually achieve another threshold where a new relationship is established between its internal and external environments and itself". (Lorenz, 1993) Change and emergence seem to become a natural state of affairs in complex systems. The logic of dialectical change offers a solution to this seemingly

contradicting phenomenon. Chaos and order, yin and yang, organization and disorganization goes though and endless, self-promoting and self-evolving cycle. In spite of the seeming chaos a natural process of spontaneous self-organization appear. Chaos can breed order. When complex systems reach the necessary degree of internal complexity, diversity and randomness they can become resources for change. A higher quality new order evolves out of chaos. The new order is a natural outcome.

Organizations as tools of domination

Morgan introduces the dark face of organizations 'the face of domination'. Weber (1965), Marx (1976) and Michaels (2007) focused their research on the domination aspects of organizations. Weber discusses various forms of domination such as domination by threat, or force; imposed domination under a charismatic leader, and rational domination where laws, regulations and procedures guarantee the leader's rule. Marx's (1976) theory of dialectic antagonism of classes used the domination metaphor as foundation. The concept of domination is prevalent in government and military organizations, where a rigid top-down approach is required to run operations smoothly. Many times this domination is accompanied and supported by a bureaucratic and machine-like framework. The world economy is dominated by global organizations. Radical organization theorists draw close relationship between global economic dominance and political impact, and vice versa. One of the strengths of the domination perspective is that it helps us understand how domination may be embedded in the nature of organizations. The realization that the intrinsic nature of domination is built into organizational structures and systems should raise the concern of responsible managers. Domination is not simply an unintended side effect of organizations, and - while to some extend their control is limited, - management and leadership does carry responsibility for corporate actions and its consequences. "The metaphor creates a new level of social consciousness and an appreciation of why relations between exploiting and exploited groups can get so polarized. It invites managers to a deeper sense of the ethical dimensions of their work and its social impact." (Morgan, 1998) The metaphor paradox shows that organization are multi-faceted entities, reading and interpreting organizations is a complex process; requires not only active participation reading, but also authoring the information. "But the reader also brings his or her personal perspective to the reading, and this plays a vital role in determining the meaning the text conveys (Morgan, 2006). Seeing and understanding needs an active participation and the awareness that organizations can be understood in many different ways.

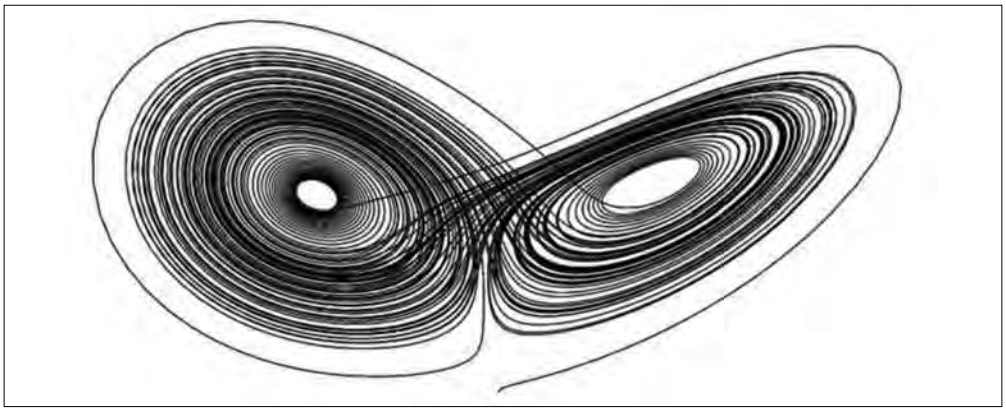

Figure 4. Flux and Transformation - The Lorenz attractor
Source: Lorenz, E. (1993)

Diagnostic reading of organizations (a practical application of the theory)

Introducing the SAS Institute

The SAS Institute was founded in 1976 and currently it is the world's largest privately held software company with annual revenue of $2.31 billion and with over 11,000 employees. The company is headquartered in Cary, North Carolina. The company invests twenty-three percent of its revenue into research and development indicating that innovation is one of the key success drivers at the organization. SAS is not only one of the world's largest privately held software company, but also the paragon of perks. When Google – a SAS customer – was putting together its own campus benefit program it decided to use the company as a model. The company has been on Fortune's list of 'Best Companies to Work For' for thirteen years. In 2009 SAS took the first place. The average tenure at SAS is ten years; three hundred employees have worked twenty-five years or more. Annual turnover was two percent in 2009, compared with the average twenty-two percent in the software industry. Women make up forty-five percent of the company's young U.S. workforce with an average age of forty-five. When Goodnight, the CEO cofounded the company in 1976, SAS stood for Statistical Analysis System; a software created earlier by Goodnight and several colleagues at North Carolina State University. Realizing that academia was too limiting for the potential reach of his software, he left to start the business. His sophisticated software initially was designed

to analyze agricultural data in order to increase crop yields. These days, SAS software is used by seventy-nice percent of the companies in the Fortune 500. In a company of elite quantitative analysts, the firm devotes more than a fifth of revenue to research and development. For thirty-three straight years, the revenues have gone up, reaching $2.3 billion in 2009, nearly doubling in seven years. Profit margins are double-digit. According to the CEO, the 2009 numbers are a point of pride in a difficult year in which there were no salary increases, but also no layoffs. It may be that such stability and success allow Goodnight to be so free with the goodies, particularly when there are no shareholders to carp.

In its inaugural year, the company established flexible 35-hour workweeks and profit sharing, as well as fresh fruit on Mondays and other employee perks. Company-sponsored child care started four years later, prompted by an employee who planned to become a stay-at-home mom after her maternity leave. And when SAS had revenue of barely fifty million in 1984, it began creating the infrastructure of the current culture with the recreation-and-fitness center and the first café. "Contented cows give more milk." as the CEO told once. He also liked the idea of reinvesting would-be profits back into the company. "I'd rather spend the money on my employees than send it to Washington as taxes." Goodnight says his values produce constancy and continuity and commitment; the boom-and-bust cycle is a foreign concept at SAS. The company considered going public in 2000 during the high-tech bubble. It would have brought in billions in liquidity, turned many employees into millionaires, and it would've made Goodnight one of the richest people in the country. He set the train in motion - for example, bringing in Goldman Sachs as advisors, but put on the brakes well before pulling into Wall Street. He concluded the price would be too high - that he'd be threatening SAS as sanctuary from the madness of public markets. "Matter of fact," Goodnight says, "most public CEOs wish they were private." Few at SAS look back. Most see their boss's calm reaction to the rolling economy of the past 18 months as proof that he was correct to stay private." (Kaplan, 2010)

Reading and understanding SAS

There are multiple relevant metaphors applicable to the SAS case. To make a thorough and comprehensive reading the reader and interpreter must be open to allow different perspectives to emerge before making the final evaluation. The company will be explored from two different angles to gain a deeper, fuller and richer insight to the organization; from the *social critic's* viewpoint and from a *management consultant's* perspective. In our analysis we have chosen a *dominant metaphor* and *supporting frames*, or images that we believe serve as

core component of our diagnostics adding further refinement and better understanding to our study.

Relevant metaphors

The machine metaphor: SAS, a successful and innovative software company has been continuously growing in size and in revenue. The company, which is the golden standards of passion, purpose, quality, constant innovation and employee satisfaction, has been established in 1976 and SAS has been on 'autopilot' even since. By deciding to remain a privately owned company it was able to isolate itself from external investor pressure and semi-detached its internal dealings from the environment. The machine metaphor applies to the constant relentless pursuit of quality and employee satisfaction, which seems keeps the company growing and developing quality software products.

The 'organism' framework: The organism metaphor is one of the dominant relevant metaphors in the SAS case. The company is an open system with constant awareness to its customers, its employees' and its own needs. SAS has been able to successfully integrate the needs of its customers, employees and its own. Many relevant concepts of the open system approach can be applied in the SAS case. The 'open system framework' has already been covered in the previous few chapters. The decision not to go public in 2000 can be seen as homeostasis where self-regulation and the ability to maintain a steady state kept the organization on the original path. After examining the various subsystems of SAS such as the environment, strategic, technological, human/cultural, structural and managerial systems a high level of congruency can be observed (Figure 5).

The organization's different subsystems are in close alignment with each other and with the environment. The democratic leadership style, the organic internal structure and empowering work culture are in line with the dynamic nature of the environment.

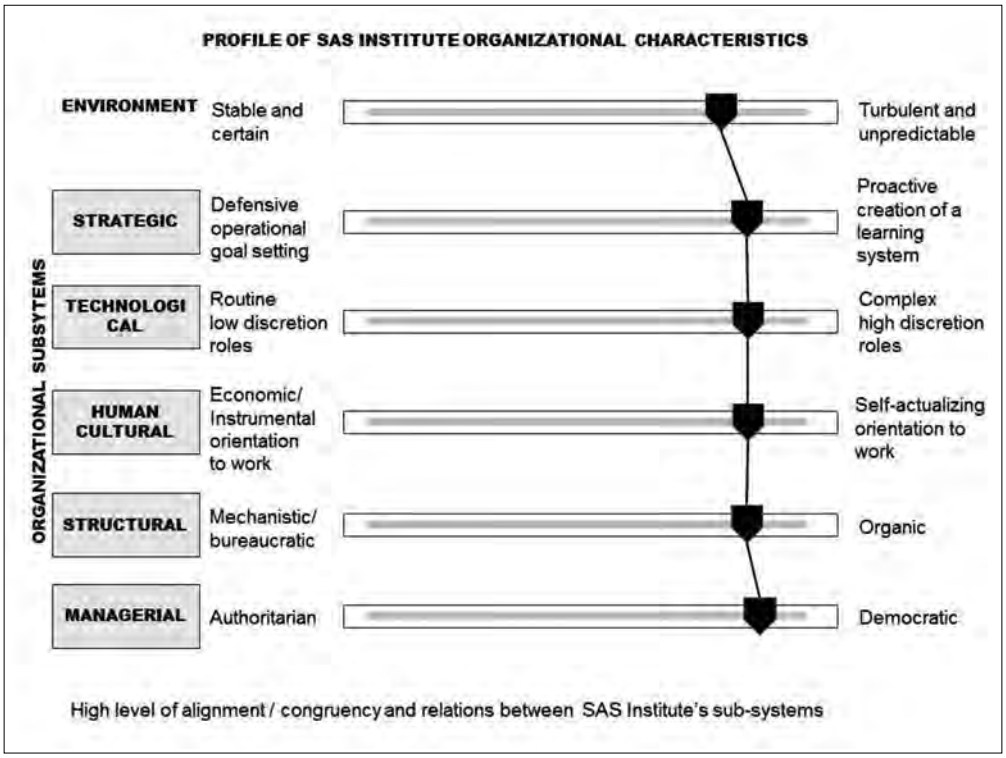

Figure 5. SAS Institute Organizational Characteristics
Source: author's own construct adopted from Morgan, G. (1998)

Organization as information processing brain: SAS as an organization much resembles to the brain. The first few years of the company when the foundations of culture (thirty-five hour work week and the company's core values) have been laid down resembles the wiring of the human brain in its infancy. "Yet the SAS egg came before the chicken. In its inaugural year, the company established flexible 35-hour workweeks and profit sharing, as well as fresh fruit on Mondays and other employee perks. Company-sponsored child care started four years later, prompted by an employee who planned to become a stay-at-home mom after her maternity leave. And when SAS had revenue of barely fifty million in 1984, it began creating the infrastructure of the current culture, with the recreation-and-fitness center and the first café." (Kaplan, 2010) The above is a good example of learning to learn and the evolving intelligence. The feedback confirmed that the initial investment in employees has been paying off and the organization took employee perks to another dimension by adding recreation

and fitness center and cafe. The careful reader cannot help but to realize The "Minimum specs" principle of holographic organizations in the flexible hour approach where employees are free to choose when they show up at the office as long as they deliver. The brain is self-correcting, self-adjusting, evolving and carries powerful innate abilities. The firm has evolved from a small software company into a $2 billion organization. SAS has evolved into true learning organization that is in constantly in touch with its environment, adoptable and has huge unused potential to tap into when needed.

The 'culture' metaphor: The cultural framework works well for SAS, because it helps to explore the patterns of organizational culture and subculture between and within organizations and shows how patterns of culture are created and applied. The company is consistent in the application and acceptance of corporate culture. The culture at SAS is based on shared values, common goals, strong cohesion between management and employees. "Shared values, shared beliefs, shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sense making all different ways of describing culture. In talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways." (Morgan, 1998) The democratic style leadership at SAS is closely aligned with the corporate culture and seems fully aware of their role and responsibility. Hidden depth and strength of culture is evident.

The political framework: The idea of organizations as political systems does not seem to have strong relevance in the SAS case. It can be argued, however that the impact of leadership in defining corporate reality has a political dimension. "The democratic leader's influence is far more subtle and symbolic. He or she spends time listening, summarizing, integrating, and guiding what is being said, making key interventions and summoning images, ideas, and values that help those involved to make sense of the situation with which they are dealing." (Morgan, 1998) Goodnight, the CEO set the tone, listened to SAS's customers, partners, employees and let the corporate culture evolve creating an innovating learning organization.

Flux and transformation perspective: SAS is drawn into different attractor patters. As the turmoil of the highlights of the year 2000 technological boom has pushed the organization into a new pattern. This was the time period when the firm was considering going public. At his point however, a stronger attractor pattern pushed the company back from the edge of chaos into stronger, more streamlined new-old- pattern. We recognize the concept of mutual causality in empowerment of employees, which results in increased loyalty, tenure with the company and better quality work. Satisfied employees perform better, provide high quality service to the firm and to its customers keeping the books and leadership satisfied. Another feature of existence of the flux and transformation framework at SAS is emergence as natural

state of affairs. How a small software company has grown into the organization that SAS became by today. Positive feedback has helped SAS confirming the corporate strategy and justified and reinforced its core values. Based on our previous work of reading the organization and establishing dominant and supporting metaphors we now move onto the next step; the visual representation of our findings.

Method. Our research included extensive review of the academic literature, structured and unstructured interviews with current and former SAS employees. We supplemented our findings with secondary research and visited the SAS campus to gain first hand personal experience. Our sample size was relatively small (n=5), but since our goal was to reintroduce the metaphor matrix in OD and to offer areas of additional use and improvement we felt that this size was adequate to meet our objectives. To express the scale and extent of metaphoric attributes of the institute we used a number scale of 1-100. By assigning numeric values (1-100) to the dominant and supporting frames - 1 representing the lowest, 100 the highest score - we can display the number scheme alignment of the actual frames and the diagnosed organization. We also provided space to assign the future and ideal organizational alignment value on the same 1-100 scale. At this juncture what is important is the scale and rate of the individual images/metaphors and to the other dominant images and supporting frames so that the resulting visual maps can be created. These visual images will also enable to establish the current (as-is) and future (to-be) enterprise map. This distinction between current and ideal organizational image allows the OD (organization development) practitioner to identify the direction and magnitude of change required to move the entity to the desired direction. Table 1 displays the results.

Image-metaphor	Current alignment (1-100)	Ideal alignment score (1-100)
Machine (dominant)	**65**	**50**
Brain	**45**	**65**
Culture (dominant)	**55**	**75**
Flux and transformation	**30**	**25**
Living organism	**55**	**58**
Political	**20**	**20**

Table 1. SAS Institute – Metaphor matrix
Source: authors' own construct

Weick (1989) argued that 'theorists depend on pictures, maps, and metaphors to grasp the object of study' and 'have no choice, but can be more deliberate in the formation of these images and more respectful of representations and efforts to improve them'. Visual cues aid organization practitioners and further refine our understanding. A better understanding of what the various metaphors and characteristics of the presented organizational images mean can assists OD practitioners in moving the organization in the desired direction. The ideas presented in the research for images of organizations utilize the concept of metaphors in order to introduce a better understanding of organizations (businesses and governments). With the completed reading, diagnosis and mapping of the enterprise we now conclude our work by developing the SAS storyline from the social critic and from the management consultant's perspective.

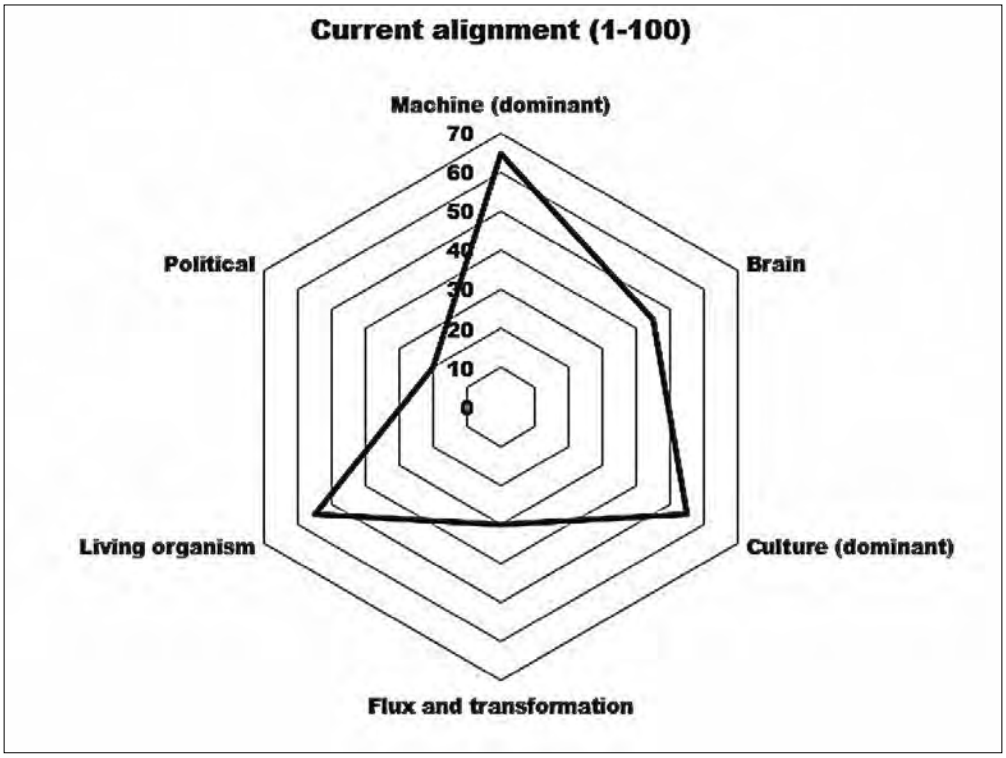

Figure 6. the status quo (SAS)
Source: authors' own construct

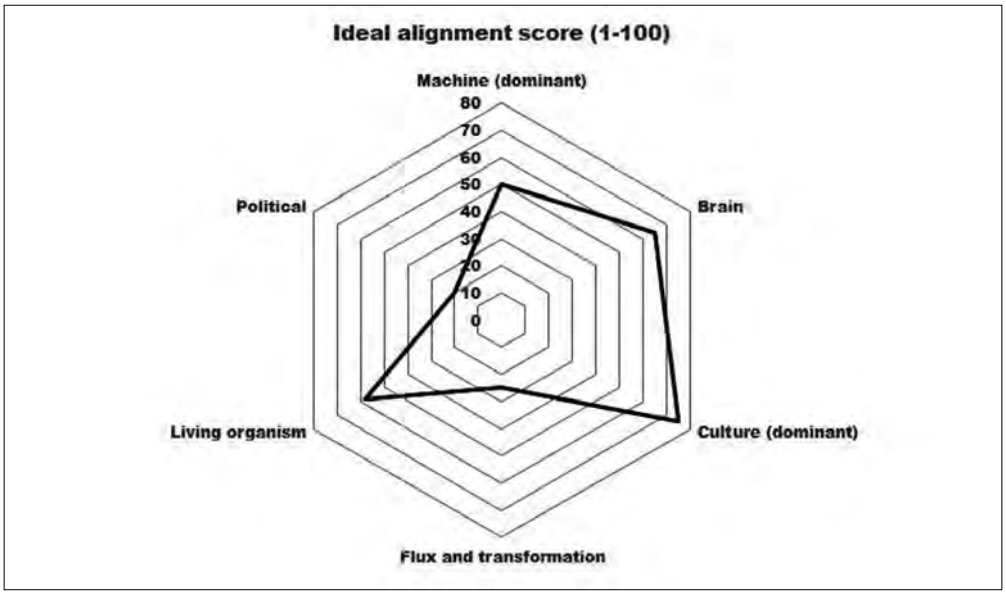

Figure 7. Desired organizational layout (SAS)
Source: authors' own construct

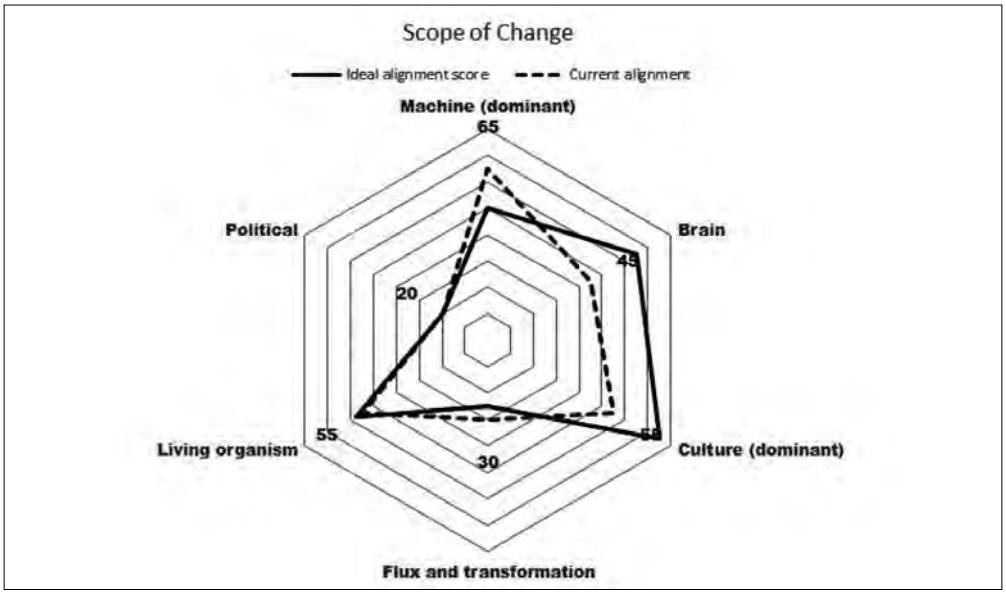

Figure 8. Scope of change (SAS)
Source: authors' own construct

Developing the storyline

The developing storyline have an unfolding character; it is neither fixed, nor absolute. The story changes with the writer and perspective of the reader. Through the eyes of a social critic the SAS story will be viewed from its impact on culture, society and potential on various social and economic systems. The focus will be on the political, cultural, brain and the flux metaphors with the transformation metaphor being the dominant frame supported by the cultural and brain and political frameworks.

The social critic's perspective emphasizes SAS as a positive example for managing successful organizations in the midst of a chaos, a role model for employee satisfaction and conscious business. SAS has reached the bifurcation point in 2000 at the height of the dot com area when it was considering going public. An emerging pattern (IT craze of the late 90's) pushed the organization out of alignment, but a stronger newly emerging 'old' attractor pattern (see Lorenz attractor) pushed it back and up into a newly evolved higher level path. Management and employees set up an environment at SAS where they can exercise autonomy and influence. The new form of autonomy and decision making provided a stronger attractor pattern which seems to keep the organization in balance. A key feature of the flux and transformation pattern is the management of paradox, where the dialectical principal is played out in the form of shifting viewpoints from not making mistakes to innovation, from instant gratification to strategic goals and thinking, from retaining control to decentralizing, from autocratic leadership style to democratic management, from cutting cost to increasing morale, from reducing staff in case of crisis to improving teamwork and innovation. The concept of autopoiesis reveals the evolving pattern of innovation, satisfaction, quality, and employee empowerment at SAS. The dominant framework of flux and transformation is supported by the culture metaphor. Common goals and shared values provide the foundations for the metaphor. The relationship between culture and organization involves the definition of the purpose of the business, a mission statement, shared beliefs, common values, common goals and common language. The idea is to skillfully apply the concept of culture and politics in the organization to make a successful enterprise. The culture includes sharing a common language, the idea of the voluntary exchange of good and services for money, defining the purpose of the business and defining a business model where the value exchange happens between the key business constituents, or stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, the community and the environment. The SAS culture and business environment includes all key stakeholders as partners. This partnership in and of itself is politically motivated, but servers a common (noble) purpose to establish a long term business relationship, where each party wins. A note and rec-

ommendation to management is to maintain the paradox of change. That is to keep the status quo of constant learning and innovation, but open and flexible organization. SAS will need to continue to be successful in avoiding 'corporate', which is a political and domination dimension of organizational frameworks. Culture will need to be encouraged, supported, but not controlled. "You don't design your culture, you can't have someone come in and create a culture for you. Culture is the way we demonstrate things by actions, it's the way we communicate by words and by documents. We didn't set out to create it it's just the way it is (Bryson, 2008). As we have seen earlier the storyline changes with the writer, but also change with the perspective of the reader. The reader brings his or her interpretation into the situation. Our second perspective will explore the situation from the viewpoint of a management consultant and will provide alternatives and recommendations.

The focus of the management consultant is the business organization and the sustainability of SAS's success. The dominant frameworks are the organism and brain metaphors supported by the political, cultural and transformational frameworks. The key elements of the company's success are great products, the market position of SAS, employee empowerment, and the establishment of a SAS culture, the spiritual environment within SAS. The organization has found its niche in business intelligence software application. SAS has been open to its environment and realized the need for a data mining tool and the need for constant innovation. The democratic leadership style, technology, strategy, corporate cultures are all closely aligned with the environment (contingency theory, organism metaphor). Customers will likely to generate demand for the company's products. Innovation has been part of SAS since the beginning and SAS will likely to innovate in the future. This product will continue to generate demand and it is likely that competing products by other software companies will enter to the market. Innovation and constant awareness of the economic, social and political environment are crucial to the future success of SAS. These features are typical characteristics of the organization as brain metaphor. Leadership has realized the huge potential in human resources and created policies, corporate culture that supports this idea. As CEO Jim Goodnight says "My chief assets drive out the gate every day. My job is to make sure they come back." Happy employees make happy customers and through happy customers they make a happy and prosperous company. Employees have accepted and appreciate the SAS culture. This 'building the whole into the parts' concept serves as Principle 1 of the holographic design, which is the core of the organization as brain framework. Additional elements of the framework such as 'minimum specs' in the free working hours, and 'learning to learn' as in innovation and in expanding employee perks when financial situation allowed support the dominant organism framework.

The management consultant's advice to leadership is to keep maintaining its integrity in realizing its core values and commitment to its employees, which is one of the major drivers of success. In addition maintaining the 'privately held' status proved to be a good choice to eliminate shareholder pressure so that the company can keep its eyes on the ball and execute a long term strategy. "The ongoing economic and financial crisis has put even healthy and well-managed companies under severe stress. The crisis itself is beyond the experience of most managers: Few have seen or worked through an event of this magnitude. Many are struggling to chart a way forward. In order to do so, companies are finding that it is necessary to return to old values like trust and fairness." (Witzel, 2009) This is the political flavor in the relevant perspectives. One of the strengths of the political metaphor is that all organizational activity is interest base, as Morgan writes, but this also is a weakness as it keeps rationale from going beyond the limits of a particular interest, or interest group. In the SAS case congruence among the various interest groups within the organization and shared value system balances out this weakness. In addition to maintaining the status quo we recommend introducing an executive mentoring program though which future generation of leaders within the organization can be nurtured who share the SAS principles. In addition the CEO will need to consider a successor who will be able to define and execute the successful strategy and relentlessly pursue the founding principles and yet remain an open and democratic leader. The author is convinced that a successful corporate strategy needs internal focus and supports the decision of maintaining privately held status even in the time of chaos.

Relationship between culture and organization involves the definition of the business purpose, a mission statement, shared beliefs, common values, common goals and common language. The idea is to skillfully apply the concept of culture and politics in the organization to make a successful enterprise. Culture includes sharing a common language, the idea of the voluntary exchange of good and services for money, defining the purpose of the business and defining a business model where the value exchange happens between the key business constituents, or stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, the community and the environment.

The SAS culture and business environment includes all key stakeholders as partners. This partnership in and of itself is politically motivated, but servers a common (noble) purpose to establish a long term business relationship, where each party wins. Management's role in the company culture can be best demonstrated by looking at the roles that contemporary business executives, CEOs play in shaping and influencing the life, norms and customs of an organization. Because leaders have greater influence and power in corporate life their impact is quite significant. According to Morgan (1998) "Shared values, shared beliefs, shared mean-

ing, shared understanding and shared sense making all different ways of describing culture. In talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways." This reality construction is what leaders are responsible for. It is the acceptance of shared values, beliefs and meanings that drives the transformation of an organization. Bryson (2008) writes "because organizational members do not see the past of the organization in the same way, they orient themselves to different futures. This is a key point to appreciate in understanding multiple perspectives within an organization." Researchers Martin and Frost (1996) and Riad (2005) offer a solution where the acceptance rests on credibility and not of the perceived truth. "This, it is suggested indicates a need for more emphasis on dialogue, process, co-creation, and credibility building in studying cultural change in organizations." (Bryson, 2008)

While we argue for the current status quo at SAS we need to emphasize that the change of culture involves the internalization and action on shared values that enforce the idea of leaders' rule on the reality construction process due to their position and power on the organizational hierarchy. This is not an opportunity, but rather a responsibility of management. "This is a major strength of the metaphor because it makes people own their impact on the way things are and shows that it is their responsibility to change when appropriate". (Morgan, 1998)

The organizational change process has been viewed as a challenge of changing technologies, structures, skills and motivation of employees. An effective change comes from the successful transition of views, images and values which drive action to success. We would like to point out to the limitation of management in this regard as culture is self-evolving, holographic and cannot really be managed. Management is limited to encouraging, shaping values, beliefs, language and norms.

The Metaphoric Evolution of an Enterprise

The SAP Story

The second case will demonstrate how metaphorical images can be used to display the transformation of an enterprise, changing forms, directions, but keeping its core values constant. One common attribute in the lifecycle of the researched company is the flux and transformation. Organizations experiencing radical growth must also go through an evolutionary process that will create and destroy a variety of metaphorical examples while evolving into a mature enterprise. In our second example we focus on a well know company that has strong presence in the USA and in Hungary as well. SAP is the world leader in enterprise applica-

tions in terms of software and software-related service revenue. Based on market capitalization, it is the world's third largest independent software manufacturer. The SAP story began in Germany in 1972 with five entrepreneurs, a vision for the business potential of technology and an idea about real time integrated information; a single product and one customer. Today SAP generates over sixteen billion euro in revenue from more than a quarter of a million customers and employs close to seventy thousand employees to develop, sell and deliver a broad range of technology products. The company's continued growth over four decades is attributable to their focus on innovation, a broad portfolio of software technology and business enablement products, and its' ability to stay close to customers and anticipate, understand their needs. The firm's stated vision is to help the world run better and improve people's lives. Its mission is to help every customer become a best-run business. The software company does this by delivering technological innovations that address the challenges of today and tomorrow without disrupting its customers' business operations. SAP has strong ambitions for sustainable business success. The company believes that the most important indicators to measure this success include both financial and non-financial indicators: revenue, margin, customer loyalty, and employee engagement. We tell SAP's success story by reviewing the realization of a vision that was fuelled by passion and purpose. An evolution that can be best chronicled through a variety of organizational metaphors.

The evolution of an enterprise

Early years: The Rock Band In the beginning five former IBM employees started developing their idea for an integrated software solution on a new client that would give executives access to real time data and revolutionize computing forever. In its early years SAP was fluid in terms of the flow of ideas and the entrepreneurial development spirit. The focus was on the innovation of a new "sound" in the world of enterprise computing. Ideas flew forward and were rapidly spun into the reality of useable code. The common welfare of the band superseded the individual well-being but not at the expense of individual creativity. People didn't leave SAP to join other similar companies. They only left to strike out on their and to join someone else in search of a new frontier.

Into the new era. The Sports Team period. As SAP grew Hasso Plattner emerged as the singular ultimate authority, or the Head Coach, but he had assistants that were responsible for the performance of teams that developed functions. These teams were encouraged to be creative and communicate among themselves and make decisions between them. The CIO determined the direction and measured the results. SAP remained the ideal place to work

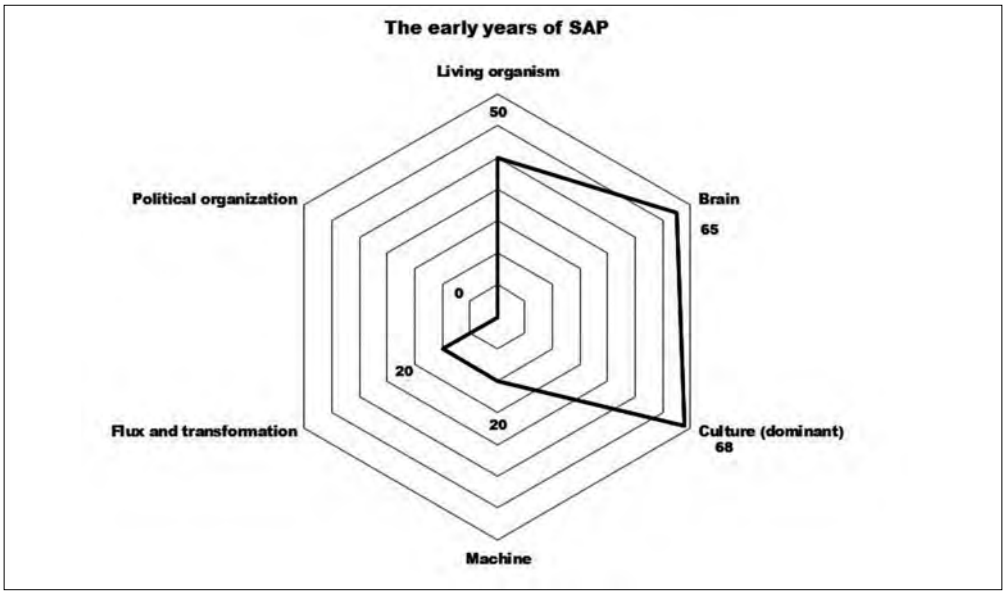

Figure 9. The early years of SAP
Source: authors' own construct

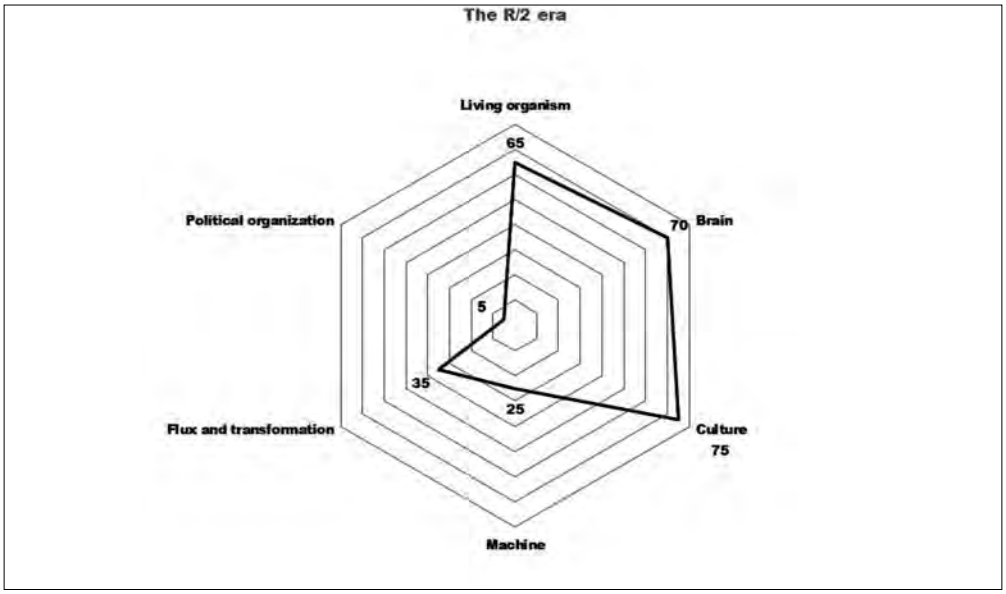

Figure 10. The R/2 era
Source: authors' own construct

for high performers. The team started to become an international success. Their relentless pursuit of the corporate vision along with innovation, high quality standards, and value creation to their customers lifted the organization to international sphere.

The R/3 times. The Machine. The software factory was developed and SAP began to function more like a machine with quality, usability and increased functionality being the drivers. SAP's focus remained on a single product through the mid '90's. Process took the lead away from people and the image of SAP as the "place to be" started to develop cracks. At this stage the most important question is setting management controls that keep pace with the rapid growth, without damaging the organization entrepreneurial spirit for innovation, or commitment to high quality product and customer service. The risk here is that the most creative or innovative members of the organization will begin to yearn for the old days of less uniformity and conformity. As with SAP many talented people began to look to other less established companies to exercise their creativity.

Cultural dimensions. SAP had always been proud of its entrepreneurial spirit but as the machine culture took over some of that was lost. In the 21st century SAP took a strategy of acquiring to grow its footprint and expand its product mix. With this came the loss of a single culture and the growth of a maze of competing cultures. The culture depended upon who

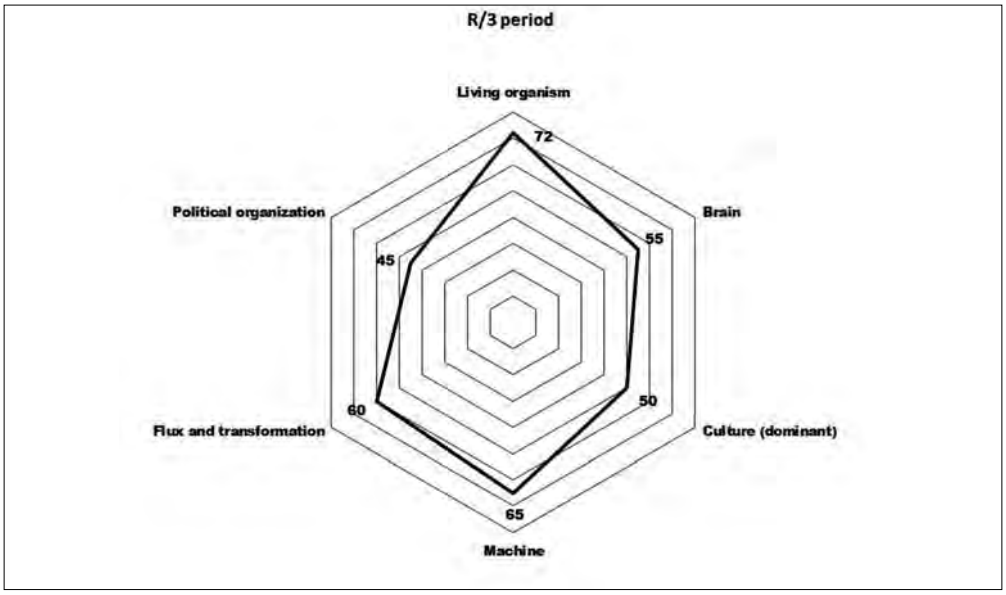

Figure 11. R/3 period
Source: authors' own construct

was looking and where they were looking. It was somewhat counterproductive and the first time people began to leave SAP for other mature competing companies. In the excitement of rapid expansion the firm did make some missteps that put a dent on its credibility. In spite of the Oracle versus SAP lawsuit the company never gave up its mission; delivery of high quality software products to its customers. As this phenomena sorted itself out there were significant battles for the top spot in the company. Henning Kagermann, Leo Apotheker and Shai Agassi all seemed be apparent heirs to the Plattner throne. Yet there emerged from America a smart and aggressive political leader in Bill McDermott.

HANA and 'big data' period. SAP as a Political Place. The software powerhouse continues its growth strategy though organic measures and by acquisitions. As SAP acquired more companies, added groups of new people to the organization and added new products to its portfolio the legacy of entrepreneurial spirit started to fade and silos began develop. Integrating the newly acquired business units (Successfactors, Ariba, Hybris, SyBase and lately Concur), took significant effort and added complexity as well. As Bill McDermott climbed to the top of the ladder as the visible driver of the new SAP he created some order to the old chaos but with this order came the advent of the political era. Management's ultimate responsibility is combining vision and control, stabilization and continuous innovation en-

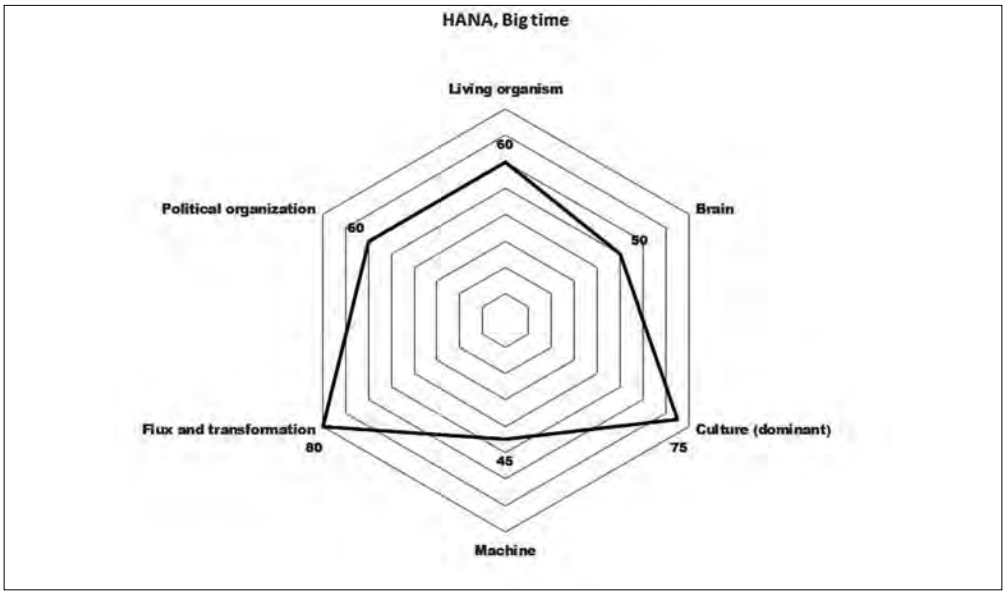

Figure 12. HANA & Big Time
Source: authors' own construct

ablement. Folding the newly acquired complimentary software companies into the SAP mold needs additional effort and time, while the rapidly expanding HANA suite continues to make headways along with the cloud platform strategy. Balancing these needs require careful navigation and focused strategy. Bill continues to do this while improving his credibility internally and externally.

The management consultants' view is that SAP's product portfolio completion should be followed by a stabilization and culture re-building phase. SAP as a living organism is constantly changing. The open systems theory emphasizes adaptation, flexibility and the importance of the environment in which the organization exists. Organizations in the open-system theory are seen as sets of interrelated subsystems. Flattening the organization structure, reinforcing it culture are crucial, as SAP's strong culture creates a bond between the company and its' employees, it further inspires productivity and creativity. Sustaining the strong culture will drive the company, increase motivation and commitment. SAP's stated goal is to increase employee engagement from the current seventy-eight percent to eighty-two percent in 2015. This effort will require establishing the framework for better communication, leaner structure, and most importantly an effective employee retention policy. As base pay and bonuses were noted as the most important contributors to job satisfaction (Williyerd, 2014) at high performers at SAP the proper compensation strategy can help keeping high performers from looking elsewhere in the marketplace. SAP needs it high caliber consultants to deliver an outstanding service for an outstanding product.

Applying the contingency theory. In order to give the correct 'diagnosis' we need to review the ideas presented earlier about SAP's environment its organizational attributes so we can analyze the relationship between the software company as a whole, its subsystems and its environment. Our analysis and evaluation was based on extended review of the scientific literature and the publicly available corporate information. We also consulted with management & employees and relied on our personal work experience with the firm (Table 2).

Our analysis revealed the both the congruent subsystems that are in balance with environment, and the ones that are not aligned. These will need special attention (Figure 13). Managements' main concerns need to be alignment and good fits among SAP subsystems and the environment. Given and rapidly developing nature of the current software industry, new promising technologies such as HANA, cloud technology platform and real-time computing provide promising outlook for the company. As the IT industry is transforming businesses next generation applications will differentiate of a consumer like interface and data beyond process improvement, SAP is well positioned to capture this opportunity. These growth prospects are somewhat tempered with the cost and efforts of fully bringing the new

Nature of environment	Technological subsystem	Organizational sub-system	Managerial subsystem	Communication System	Cultural, human
High degree of change, dynamic technological and market conditions, rapid technological development (HANA, cloud, big data)	Innovation driven, need to take advantage of rapid technological changes, HANA and SAP' cloud strategy offers additional opportunities	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities, newly acquired companies and employees need to be accommodated, freedom to move and deliver within	High degree of flexibility within own authority. Authority vested in people to solve problems at hand. Moderate level of departmental division	Open communication. Free, continuous knowledge transfer opportunity and consultation. Good level of cooperation within and across division	High level of commitment, but needs slight improvement to be able to provide consistent high quality. Culture innovative, but somewhat siloed thinking. Great place to work, good support and continuous education.

Table 2. Contingency view of subsystems at SAP

software companies into organization. Innovation and learning will continue to play an important role for the software company. Customers' product experience will benefit from business transformation efforts and SAP's flexible open platform.

Integrating on-line transaction processing (OLTP) and on-line analytical processing (OLAP) in HANA in memory processing will simplify the platform, reduce cost and significantly improve performance and user experience. Customers will continue to require high quality support, service and flexibility. The organization need to be responsive, flexible and adaptable to deliver. SAP will benefit from shifting its organizational structure to the right, making it more flexible and lean.

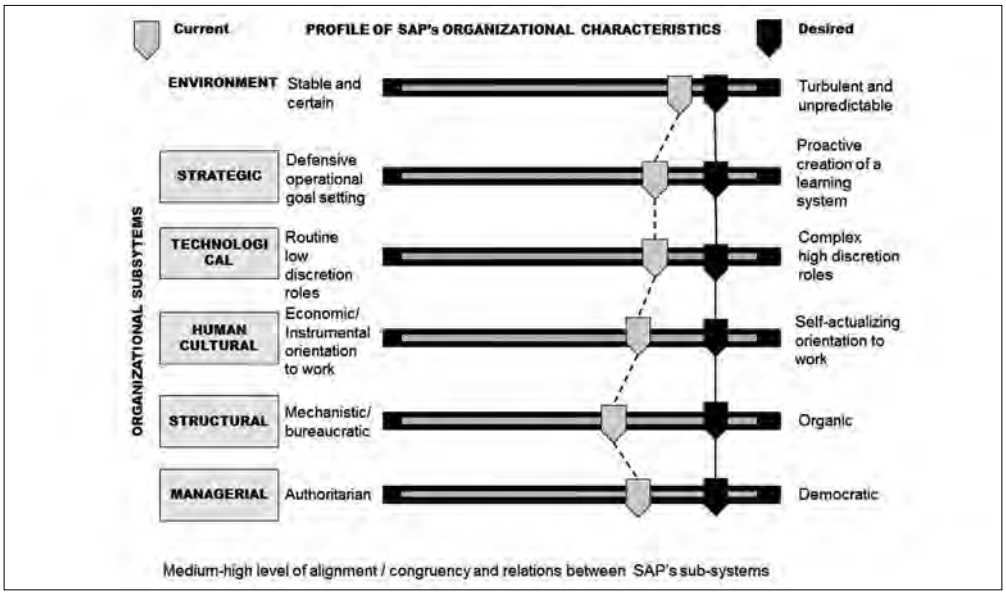

Figure 13. Applying the contingency theory at SAP
Source: authors' own construct

Diagnosing the morphology of the enterprise provided the OD practitioners not only a historical overview, but reveals trends, highlights strengths and weaknesses. Flux and transformation will continue to play a role in SAP's life, but to a lesser degree as the ERP industry market competition has stabilized. Once the integration of the newly acquired companies is complete the political dimension will be less emphasized. Our recommendation would be that SAP starts transitioning toward a culture-driven organic, holistic system, where culture still dominates (see Figure 14 below).

Conclusions and suggestions for future research

The research paper attempted to investigate the power of metaphorical images and visualization in organizational development. Metaphors are now established part of organizational studies (Palmer & Dunford, 1996). The concept of 'images of organizations' in management and organizational leadership can be a valuable tool for experts in reading and diagnosing enterprises, businesses, governments and non-governmental organizations. When metaphors transcend the sphere of simple colorful language and enter into the realm of thought and action they become more than a different way of seeing things. As with any way of seeing things, metaphor is also an equally powerful way of not seeing things (Morgan, 1998). As cognitive representations, metaphors illuminate, and thus lead us to focus on, the similarities between the two juxtaposed concepts while obscuring other features, usually the dissimilarities (Drummond, 1998).

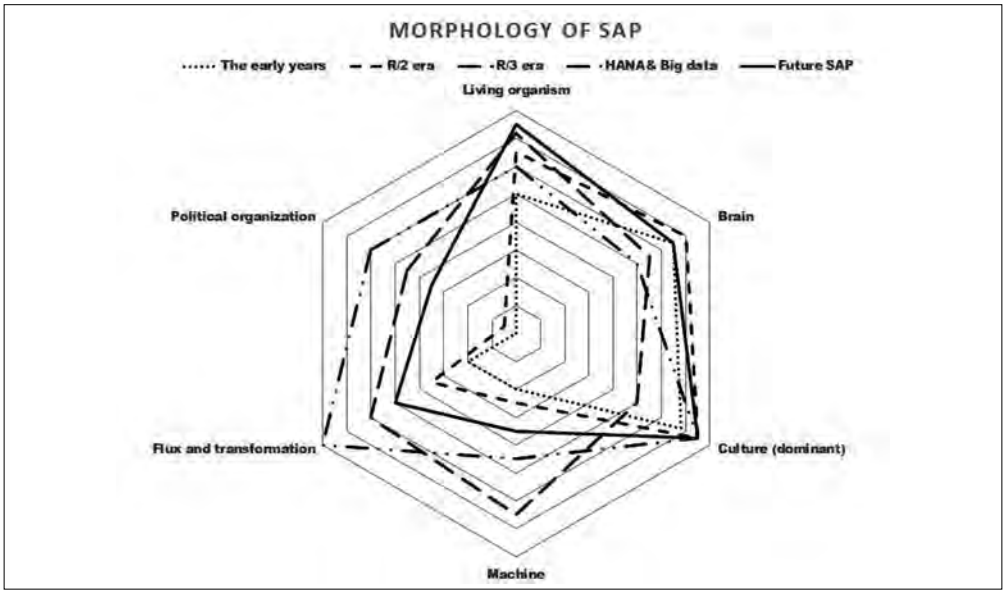

Figure 14. Morphology of SAP
Source: authors' own construct

Limitations of the research. Our objective was not to argue for- and against the use of metaphors and images of organizations, but to present the tool -though theoretical and practical applications - and draw the readers' attention to the power of metaphors in the OD prac-

tice. Metaphors, however, are not indigenous to a community. The metaphor that works in the US may not work in Europe, or Asia and vice versa. This particular area suggests further research into the impact of culture on metaphorical language and the specific images that may enhance the approach to organization development. We believe that the effectiveness of the metaphor approach can be improved by taking local, cultural and language specific dimensions into consideration. This fact carries complexity and the promise that multiple solutions are possible to organizational problems and that managers have the opportunity and responsibility to shape organizational life. The preservation of the figurative nature of metaphorical language is necessary to avoid precarious assumptions based on vivid cognitive connections made using a wide range of concepts from science, literature, history, and an almost endless source of analogy. By taking multiple metaphors as different views and aids to understanding, rather than literal statements of organizational fact, they can be useful in guiding educational theory and practice in the management field (Morgan, 1998). We recognize the risks in using single metaphor in organizational development and presented the matrix approach that mitigates this risk. If any metaphor is taken too literally or in isolation the tendency will be to make unfounded assumptions and extensions of the metaphor that will tend to obscure the reality of the organization (Meyer, Schwartz & Frost, 2008). The authors realize the inherent risks and limits in using a single metaphor. Single metaphors are inadequate for accurately analyzing organizational change and organizational realities. Therefore we argue for the use multiple metaphors in our practice, possibly combining them to minimize bias or misapplication of any number of heuristics (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1992; Palmer & Dunford, 1996). Multiple images are needed to assist OD practitioners and researchers to understand and to comprehend organizational realities that exist in the organizational change process (Palmer & Dunford, 1996). In our approach we used a combination of metaphors; one being the dominant frame supported by other relevant images to aid better understanding the eliminate bias.

Conclusion. We demonstrated how a visual presentation tool can further enhance understanding of organizations. This distinction between current and ideal organizational image allows the OD (organizational development) practitioner to identify the direction and magnitude of change required to move the entity to the desired direction. Using metaphors provides the opportunity to widen the horizon and develop an open minded approach to problem solving. Reading the organization with an open mind will let the different frames, like colors of the rainbow come together in a prism and let them transpire into the pure transparent white light. Seeing through the organization will provide additional insights and reveal hidden dimensions. The multi-dimensional reading of organizations and open minded authoring adds further depth and richness to our understanding, interpretation and

research. The use of metaphors in organization development is not limited to profit driven businesses. Further research is needed to explore how this approach can be extended to NGOs, local organizations (i.e. the city of Budapest), hospitals and universities (i.e. University of Pannonia) Even political organizations can benefit from using the images of organizations for analysis, diagnosis and strategy building. As our final words the authors would like to warn about the traps of psychic prisons, where one can become the hostage to his, or her own ideas and challenge the reader to liberate his, or her own thoughts by adding their own interpretation to unfold the true story and shape his, or her own reality.

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Miklos Nagy holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizations & Information systems from Óbuda University Budapest, Hungary and a Master's degree in Management and Organization Leadership from American Public University, Charles Town, USA. As an SAP certified Application Professional with 17 years of experience, his work focuses on business transformation and change management initiatives utilizing integrated ERP solutions as a lever to accelerate business performance and gain competitive advantage. Miklos worked as Principal Consultant for SAP America as well as Integration Advisor to Coca-Cola. He has also aided the work of McKinsey, Accenture, Lenovo, IBM, Autodesk, Bayer, Dow Chemicals, Teleflex, and Titanium Metals. His current client base consists of Amgen and Rockwool. Miklos is enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Business and Economics at the University of Pannonia in Veszprem, Hungary. He lives with his wife and four children in Cary, NC and in Budapest, Hungary.

Harold Itkin is President of IMS, a Management Consulting advisory group that guides enterprises through significant transformations while aligning business objectives with technology solutions and building roadmaps for future growth. Prior to forming IMS Harold spent six years with Teleflex Inc., a multi- billion dollar medical device manufacturing company, where he was tasked with transforming the IT group from a technology support organization into a high performance solution provider. Earlier in his career he held various leadership roles in the SAP Professional Services group for ten years focusing on turning SAP's most challenging projects and customers into success stories. He has served on the SAP/ASUG (Americas SAP User Group) Executive exchange which influences the direction of SAP development and he currently is the Market Leader for the Professional Services special interest group of ASUG. Harold received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rutgers University, New Brunswick and an MBA from Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. He is an adjunct professor teaching leadership and strategy at Georgia State University in Atlanta. He also taught Globalization and Strategy at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia.