

IMAGES OF ORGANIZATION

Chanida Jittaruttha

Department of Public Administration,

Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

E-mail: chanida.jittaruttha@gmail.com

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In this revised management classic, Dr. Gareth Morgan; professor of organizational behaviour/industrial relations at the Schulich School of Business at York University in Toronto, contributes to our understanding of organizations by suggesting that it is vital to view organizations through multiple metaphors or images, as a means to that end. Morgan notes that effective leaders and managers possess the ability to approach complex situations with new ways of thinking. In several updated chapters (4 and 8) he explores the major contributions chaos and complexity theory which are making to a deeper appreciation of the nature of change in organizations and develops practical steps leaders can take to tap these new insights.

Introduction

Current images are now the images of new organizations which are getting along with progress and rapid change of knowledge-based society in technology era such as Shamrock organization¹, Consent organization, Right Brain organization, Starfish and Spider organization²,

Professional organization, Collective Intelligence organization³, etc. Innovation of 'new' metaphors created by imagination and unlimited creative thinking of human asserts that organizational definitions which are made in terms of organizational patterns existing restrictions, are more inadequate to explain the phenomenon that occurs in organizations today. This book provides organizational

¹ Shamrock Organization Organizational structure where a core of essential executives and workers are supported by outside contractors and part-time help. The term was invented by Irish academic and management guru Charles Handy. Shamrock organizations have an organizational structure with three distinct parts. The first part, or leaf, represents the core staff of the organization. They are likely to be highly trained professionals who form the senior management. The second leaf consists of the contractual fringe and may include individuals who once worked for the organization but now supply services to it. These individuals operate within broad guidelines set down by the organization but have a high degree of flexibility and discretionary powers. The third leaf describes the flexible work force. These workers are sufficiently close enough to the organization to feel a degree of commitment to it, ensuring they maintain a high standard of work. (<http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/shamrock+organization>)

theorists, executives, managers, and students a deeper understanding with new perspective to consider and revisit organization. Morgan highlighted that our way of thinking controls our way of practicing. In other words, how we feel controls how we practice. Therefore, if we look at the problems of organizations, it also has other views and diagnostics more than one way. Each of metaphors is quite valuable because it allows us to see a new fresh

² The Starfish and the Spider *The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* is a 2006 book by Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom is an exploration of the implications of the recent rise of decentralized organizations such as Wikipedia, Grokster and YouTube. The book contrasts them to centralized organizations, such as Encyclopedia Britannica, using compendiums of knowledge as examples. The spider and starfish analogy refers to the contrasting biological nature of the respective organisms, starfish having a decentralized neural structure permitting regeneration. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Starfish_and_the_Spider)

³ Collective Intelligence A shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration and competition of many individuals. Collective intelligence appears in a wide variety of forms of consensus decision making in bacteria, animals, humans, and computer networks. The study of collective intelligence may properly be considered a subfield of sociology , of business, of computer science, of mass communications and of mass behavior—a field that studies collective behavior from the level of quarks to the level of bacterial, plant, animal, and human societies. The concept also frequently appears in science fiction as telepathically linked species and cyborgs.

The above definition has emerged from the writings of Douglas Hofstadter (1979), Peter Russell (1983), Tom Atlee (1993), Pierre Levy (1994), Howard Bloom (1995), Francis Heylighen (1995), Douglas Engelbart, Cliff Joslyn, Ron Dembo, Gottfried Mayer-Kress (2003) and other theorists. Collective intelligence is referred to as Symbiotic intelligence by Norman L. Johnson. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_intelligence)

perspective, releases us from getting stucked on 'one best way' view, and broadens our mind to understand organization. Since there is no correct answer to manage organizations.

'Images of Organization'

This is the most recent edition of a book, first published in 1986, and it reflects the significant changes in the corporate world over the last two decades. Since its first publication over twenty years ago, 'Images of Organization' has become a classic in the canon of management literature. In the first edition, Gareth Morgan provided a rich and comprehensive resource for exploring the complexity of modern organizations internationally, translating leading-edge theory into leading-edge practice. Morgan's metaphors were based on different images that help theorists and managers understand the nature of complexity and conflict of organizational life in a way that they never thought before. Morgan believes that one can better understand organizations by recognizing that organization and management theories are based on images or metaphors that prompt one to view organizations through a particular lens. Some metaphors in which Morgan offered are familiar to our thoughts. However, some images are not only odd metaphors but also help develop a deeper understanding and give new perspectives to both theorists and practitioners.

In the current edition, Morgan has updated some factual data on the role of multinationals in the global economy, contemporary issues and developments, the references, and bibliographic notes, to ground the book's thesis in some of the most recent literature, but still remain the basic structure, arguments, and illustration unchanged. The book is divided into three sections: a brief introduction (chapter 1); an extended section (chapter 2-9), in which various metaphors are introduced

and explained; and a final section (chapter 10-12) that examines the implications of using metaphors in practice. This last section also includes a useful case study in which several metaphors are used to better understand an organization in the midst of a significant cultural change.

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION: On the Nature of Metaphor and Its Role in Understanding Organization and Management

Nowadays, creativity and innovation are most required in organizational management. Leaders must stimulate ideas and potential solutions from every level of their organizations. Morgan proposed the diversified images of the organization through various metaphors which lead both theorists and managers to get deep insight and new intuitive in considering organizations. He suggested the following images of organization which are like: 1) Machine, 2) Organism, 3) Brain, 4) Culture, 5) Political system, 6) Psychic prison, 7) Flux and transformation, and 8) Instruments of domination. Morgan has explored and developed the arts of reading organizations out and offered us to comprehend the conflict and complexity of organization. His basic concepts of organization and explanation of organizational life relies on the foundation of metaphorical description. By different ways of thinking, we can thus see different natures of various organizations which have their own conflict, complexity and ambition of organizational life. Understanding organizations through Morgan's metaphors allow us to manage and design organizations in ways that we may not have thought they're possible before.

Chapter 2 - MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND: Organizations as Machines

This metaphor allows us to understand that how 'bureaucracy' or public organizations have been

supported by this image. When executives think that the organization is like machine, the way to design organization and manage organizational behavior thus is as the same way to build up machines, which is necessary to connect all the sections together. Each of organization part must play a role that was clearly divided. Organizations in this picture are vividly demonstrated high performance but have been also attacked on 'dehumanism' matter and 'mechanism' methods in which were deep in thought of most people. This metaphor is most applicable to organizations that are highly mechanized and routinized and where machines are reliable. This image impedes the other different ideas of organizational design and management. However, 'organizations as machines' is a mainstream concept in organizational theory. It is the beginning of an idea opened to other pictures which are new optional metaphors.

In this edition, Morgan emphasizes how the classic machine model of organization continues to underwrite many franchising systems worldwide and the methods of low-cost manufacturing and outsourcing systems, in developing countries, re-creating the old industrial revolution in a new twenty-first-century form.

Chapter 3 - NATURE INTERVENES: Organizations as Organism

This metaphor, which is popularly mentioned and applied to describe survivable organizations, lets us see organizations as the living units. Morgan emphasized the important of managing concerned to organization's 'needs' and that of 'relationship' between organization and its environment. Form of organization illustrated in this metaphor is quite different from that of bureaucratic organizations. The difference of both forms of organization is suitable for each one to face with various demands, influenced from its environments. This metaphor help us

develop effective study on organizational environment and comprehend the life cycle of organization that how organization is borned, growable, developed, declinable, dead, or how it is adaptable to changing environment. Moreover, it allows us to determine the relationship between different kinds of organization and patterns of evolution which were emerged in the ecology of inter-organizations. In this edition, Morgan also illustrated to us the increasing use of teams and '24/7' models⁴ of global operation which are going rise to new 'species' of organization.

Chapter 4 - LEARNING AND SELF-ORGANIZATION: Organizations as Brains

The symbolic meaning of this image, organizations as brains, allows us to imagine of organizational design. This metaphor illustrates an organization that is similar to the brain, which can be implied to information processing, information systems, learning, wit, and intelligence of the organization. It helps us to see the proposed conceptual framework, based on understanding and evaluating

⁴ '24/7' models The Multi-shore™ global delivery model underscores 24/7 Customer's commitment to continuously exceed customer expectations. This delivery model enables the company to bring the following benefits to outsourcing engagements with existing and new customers: a) Site redundancy across various global centres, b) Seamless operation of multiple processes across various geographies, c) Optimal access to resources like talent, language skills and infrastructure, d) Multi-country sourcing strategies, and f) Faster implementation time of processes. The Multi-shore™ global delivery model enables 24/7 Customer to deliver enhanced value to its customers. 24/7 Customer today handles over 6 million customer transactions per month across verticals straddling financial services, technology, telecom, retail and services. (<http://www.247customer.co.uk/thewaywedoit/multishore.php>)

modern organizations by these features, and to visualize another picture of the brain, viewed as a hologram which was written. The second image of this metaphor provides principles of organizational design for a better quality, by emphasizing on the importance of dependable self-organization, high levels of flexibility organization, and innovative organization. In this edition, Morgan asserted how the internet and other forms of information technology supporting instant networking and continuous learning are making the image of this metaphor, more and more of a reality.

Chapter 5 - CREATING SOCIAL REALITY: Organizations as Cultures

This metaphor proposes an organization as a social constructed reality, or as culture. Organizational life was considered that it really exists among the ideas, values norms, rites, beliefs and patterns of practice that sustain the organization. Those important factors are results of the facts, derived from social values, which were given as socially constructed realities. This image of organization has been greatly increased interest over the decade from 1990 onward, by the corporate culture theorists. 'Organization as a culture' provides us how to manage and to design organization through values, beliefs and other behavioral patterns from the shared meaning values of organizational members, which are important indicators for organizational life. In this edition, Morgan proposed that new 'species' of organization (Chapter 3), required new culture forms and practices and in-depth understanding of the links between organization, management and culture.

Chapter 6 - INTERESTS, CONFLICT, AND POWER: Organizations as Political Systems

Visualizing organizations as political systems allows

us to draw a picture of organizations, operated by a set of different interests, conflicts, and acts of power, which are given to the shape of different activities or events in organizations. This metaphor permits us to explore the organization as a system of administration that based on various political principles to legitimize and create different criteria of organizational rules and regulations. We also see how that various factors, in details, portray organizational life politics. Morgan highlighted in this edition the importance of understanding organizational power and politics.

Chapter 7 - EXPLORING PLATO'S CAVE: Organizations as Psychic Prisons

The image of 'organizations as psychic prisons' expressed the characteristic of organizations that is more abstract. In this metaphor, an organization is viewed as a place where its members fall down into their own 'traps' of thinking and believing. This trap is the results of anxiety, stress, or fear of organizational members, derived from subconscious mind which is being taken to control. The models of human behaviour influenced by controlled subconsciousness are a form of 'sexual suppression', a form of 'fear from death', or a form of 'a desire to avoid situations that cause anxiety'.

This metaphor suggests that organizational management is designed for protection human being, as organizational members, from falling into their own traps. Considering organization from this point of view is exploring the possibility of how often we become the prisoner of our own thoughts, confined and controlled by ourselves; or investigating whether it is possible that we are there to become the prisoner of ideology, imprisoned by cage model, and isolated from our lives. Although this image of organization is quite difficult to understand, but it also invites us to examine organizational life and to verify that whether the above assumption is true. If

this parable indicates to a real picture of organization, what has caused, or how we agree to fall down into our trap of thinking by ourselves, from both conscious and unconscious process as well. By this way of analyzing, this metaphor suggested discernment and understanding of organization much deeper, which is vital and relevant to dynamics of mind and characteristics of different patterns of organizational ideology.

Chapter 8 — UNFOLDING LOGICS OF CHANGE: Organization As Flux and Transformation

The longest and most challenging chapter in Morgan's book involves viewing the organization through the metaphor of flux and transformation, the fact that the organization can not be denied. The secret of understanding the organization from this perspective requires understanding on logic or reason of changing the shape of life in society. This image has been verified by three different logics: 1) focus on examining how an organization, as a production system, creates itself in the way it want to be, 2) emphasize on analyzing how an organization has been created as the consequence of both positive and negative feedback from flowing cycle, and 3) suggest that an organization is an output of a dialectic logic since it's a place where phenomena tend to be causes of opposite effects. Depth understanding of the proposition in this image help us understand influenced forces which determine the shape and nature of the organization at the level of organizational sociology. Morgan, in this edition, added the increasing relevance of chaos and complexity science in explaining the unpredictable nature of organizational change.

Chapter 9 - THE UGLY FACE: UNFOLDING LOGICS OF CHANGE: Organizations as Instruments of Domination

This metaphor offers significant characteristics of the PDS (Potential Division Site) of organizations. At this viewpoint, we can see how organizations generally use, take, employ, and throw away their employees whenever they are not wanted any more. At the macro level, this image shows how transnational corporations exploit resources from their 'host' communities or how national organizations achieve their own goals and interests through global economy. Besides, this metaphor also suggests important process that organizations are strongly operated to force their power of domination and to exploit others in order to attain their intention. This picture is an extension of the above metaphor described in chapter 6, 'organizations as political systems'.

Viewing the organization in the form of power of domination allows us to understand the nature of modern organization, which has its relationship of violent labour — management in various parts of the world. This image of organization is directly useful for understanding the organization from the perspective of employee groups that have been exploited and dominated by organizations. We can see the forms of action which are reasonable and rational while considering from organizations' perspective, on the other hand, can be proved that they are used for seeking to exploit organizational benefits from other people. By this illustration, Morgan reminds us to the crises associated with high - profile scandals at Enron, and elsewhere in relation to corporate governance and the role, management, and motivations of large corporations in the global economy.

Final Section: IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE (Chapter 10 - 12)

The book is based on a very simple premise - that all theories of organization and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that stretch our

imagination in a way that can create powerful insights, but at the risk of distortion. The eight images were employed to explore the way of thinking about organization through Morgan's view. He has used case studies to develop the arts of organizational analysis from different images, with 'diagnostic reading' and 'critical evaluation' methods. This allows us to investigate the complexity of organizational life with objective practices. Moreover, its methodological assumptions enhance theorists and managers to increase the ability of creating ideas and imagination, based monitoring in several different ways of organizational life. Thus, Morgan believes that we can find new ways to manage and new ways to solve the problems of organization.

The book concludes with a case study that emphasizes how metaphors can be used effectively to better "read" and understand what is occurring within an organization during times of conflict and change. Here are four key conclusions from the review of organization's images: 1) There exists 'conventional ideas' about organization and management, built on what is called the parable of a picture that we take to remove the assumption or presumption, in particular, the image of 'machine' and 'living units' organizations. 2) An exploration of metaphors and alternative images of organization is a way of seeking, illustrated that how we can create new ways to think and reshape organization. 3) General method of analysis through metaphors can be used as a tool for diagnosing organizational problems., and 4) Analysis through metaphor is a way to find implicit meanings of the organization. An openness to new metaphors will help better conceptualize the task. The skillful use of this common figure of speech can be invaluable for anyone deeply involved with organizational change and leadership.

Conclusion

Morgan advocates using the metaphor as a helpful instrument to better comprehend organizational dynamics. He fully acknowledges its limitations and frequently emphasizes that while a metaphor generates valuable insights it also may be “incomplete, biased, and potentially misleading.” Though the way of seeing becomes a way of not seeing, metaphors give way to other metaphors that generate both competing and complementary insights.

Exploring and synthesizing of these above metaphors, thus, is attempted so as to provide deep insight on their ontology, their epistemology, their underlining concepts, and their power of explanation as well as their situational strengths and weaknesses. It consequently leads to the conclusions which offer beneficial compliments for both academe and professions alike. It will transcend beyond managerial context that is now moving more from collectivism towards individualism approach. The assumptions of these images of organization are helpful in their purpose of balancing in those of traditional

organization theory. The strength of these metaphors is that they help us imagine of another faces of organization we never thought but their weakness is the problem of partial by definition. If the executives can analyze their organizations through these images but cannot find out the solution methods, therefore, these metaphors do not only help us deeply understand organization but also do extend much organizational problems. If the proposition of each metaphor is filled with the realistic concepts that clearly offer solution methods for organizational problems, it will be more efficient and applicable for better organizational management.

‘Images of Organization’ was written entirely from the consultant’s viewpoint, however, Morgan recognises that people within organizations can describe ‘their own’ metaphors and create new ones by developing an ability to integrate the contributions of different points of view. He concludes, “The challenge facing the modern manager is to become accomplished in the art of using metaphor: To find appropriate ways of seeing, understanding, and shaping the situations with which they have to deal.” (p.338)



>> Chanida Jittaruttha

Chanida Jittaruttha was born in Bangkok, Thailand. She received the B.F.A. degree (Graphic Arts) from Silpakorn University, with “Bhumibol Scholarship” (Great Study Award) in 1979, the M.P.A. degree (Public Administration) from Chulalongkorn University in 2003, and the Ph.D. degree (Political Science) from Chulalongkorn University in 2006. Her dissertation was entitled “Congruence Between Organizational and Individual Perceived Culture: The Exploratory Case Studies of Public Sector Organizations, Private Sector Organizations and Civil Society Organizations in Thailand”.

She joined the Public Administration Department, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University as a lecturer in August 2008. She has been a reviewer for some academic journals and international conference for the Organization Development Track, Public Administration Track and Organization Management Track. Her research works is mainly on organizational culture and the impact which culture plays its vital role on organization management, particularly on human resource development perspective.