Assessing Capacity And Maturity For Change In Organizations: A Patterns-Based Tool Derived From Complexity And Archetypes

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Abstract

In transition times leaders should be aware of the hidden and intangible assets of their organizations or communities. While linear—analytical assessment tools face major difficulties in meeting this challenge, we suggest that the use of archetypal models as knowledge systems can be of help. A new tool, based on the use of geometrical patterns and aiming to reveal and assess a system’s capacity and maturity for change, is presented here.

Introduction

Our era is characterized by increasing complexity, interdependence, fuzziness and instability. Yet, although change is inherent in every living organization, is often perceived by stakeholders as ‘going too fast’ and beyond their consensus. Strategic goals are interpreted variously, according to their interests or needs and when this multiplicity of meaning cannot be bridged or synthesized centrifugal forces emerge and create polarization and resistance. The mainstream attitude of dealing with such polarities and contrasting worldviews through imposition of power leads almost unavoidably to intense conflict and then, very often, to policy failures. The latter magnify the existing intractable problems instead of resolving them. Indeed, in many cases the problem occurs because of the wrong way a certain difficulty is dealt with; it is the attempted ‘solution’ that creates the real problem (Watzlawick et al., 1974; Tsoukas, 2005). Eventually, this results in a growing sense of powerlessness and anxiety among governments, organizations and individuals (Peat, 2008).

In many change initiatives at this point there is a crossroad for the leaders: a) to abort the initiative, ‘downsizing’ the need that created it until it returns more aggressive and uglier or b) to ‘declare war on the organization’ (Holder, 2003), to attempt to eliminate diversity and polyphony for ‘emergency reasons’ and to establish a new reductionist order. As Kahane (2004) indicates, ‘tough problems’ either get stuck or solved by force; but the ‘solution’ imposed cannot last for long. Meeting such challenges is not just a matter of intellect or authority but of talking, thinking and acting together (Senge et al., 2004). Yet, there is a third option, which will be examined further below.

As an organization (or community) moves away from stability and order, it becomes crucial for its leaders and change agents to adopt a more inclusive picture about the starting point. This depends on one’s viewpoint and the transition path, which is almost never the same as before or elsewhere. This is especially so in turbulent times.
and in cases of higher order or large scale changes (Tsoukas & Papoulias, 2004; Pelagidis, 2005), when the dominant interpretive scheme of the organization is challenged and change involves a shift from one dominant archetype to another (Greenwood & Hinings, 1993). In such cases, people usually sense a threat to the system’s autonomy and values and retreat to their deeper beliefs to seek certainty. This kind of reaction, commonly known as ‘resistance to change’, is natural and results from the impact another attractor, which already exists and is different from the desired or the emerging one (Goldstein, 1992).

However, the structure of this attractor is not always known to leaders or change agents. Being accustomed to the established way of doing things or empowered by their own vision, they generally neglect those aspects of the collective reality that do not fit with their assumptions or vision. Thus, they cannot make sense of the whole picture, especially its emerging elements; on the other hand, they cannot ‘see’ their own blind spots. Most of the times leaders aim to ‘change the other’s mind’ (manipulation) and ‘make them understand’ (propaganda), in order to fall in line with the leadership decisions (conscription). But, fortunately, meaning imposition is impossible and synergy cannot be conscripted (Snowden, 2002). In fact, this ‘preacher’s (or missioner’s) attitude’ normally results in even greater resistance on behalf of the population.

The third option mentioned earlier has to do with the leaders’ choice to dispute and disrupt the dominant patterns that may be of no use anymore, in order to allow the emergence of new ones. For that, leaders should estimate: a) whether the implicit qualities and collective priorities of the system are compatible with their vision and b) the level of readiness for, or resistance to, change within the system. This knowledge will help them choose and prioritize among contradictory ideas and plans on a safer basis. It will also enable them to decide which of the existing patterns should be strengthened, which should be reduced and which new patterns should be introduced. In this way, they can probably avoid some crucial, recurrent and sometimes irreversible mistakes that usually activate the system’s ‘shadow’, which is its collective non-conscious and often neglected or rejected side. On the other hand, they might find and ignite the proper catalyst for the transformation process.

Within the second half of the twentieth century, System Dynamics and Systems Engineering aspired to understand the constructing components of a system; describe the relationships between its parts; and improve their functionality. However, what works with artificial and ordered systems cannot always work with living ones, for humans most of the time are complex and self-adapting, while in the next moment or in another context can be simplistic or chaotic (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003). Moreover, whatever is tacit or subliminal (i.e., hopes, dreams, ideas, talents, emotions, tensions, jealousy, power struggles) is usually ambiguous too and at the same time very real and powerful (Mindell, 2000). However, the linear—analytic assessment tools have been proved quite poor to work with the non-measurable aspects of a system, because of their fundamental assumptions, among which one could mention the perception of a fragmented world (Dimitrov, 2005), the belief in the rational causality and choice (Snowden, 2002), the inability to handle ambiguity and paradox (Lane, 1998), and the loss of balance between what can be measured and what cannot (Senge et al., 1994). Moreover, experts are often unable to assess the human factor in an ‘objective and accurate’ way, beyond power or conformism, and beyond their own ‘lens and authority’ because of insufficient attention to informal relations and the pattern-based character of human behavior (Michiotis, Cronin & Devletoglou, 2010).

**The Contribution Of Archetypes**

To explore and respond to the dynamics of collective behavior, it is useful to consider the role of archetypes. Archetypes are both properties of the collective unconscious and at the same time inherent patterns common to all humans that can be expressed in different ways, according to the given personality or context. Archetypes have an emerging and dynamic nature, expressed through evolving images over time. They possess both positive and negative aspects, light and darkness; they are able to unite opposites within themselves and thus, to
incorporate contradictions and integrate ambiguity (Jung, 1940, 1968). This is something that linear models (simple or algorithm-based) fail to do. The official indicators for measurement and comparative evaluation of innovation could be a good example for this case. They calculate and sum tangible assets, such as R&D expenses, number of patents, PhDs, new end products etc, but they cannot catch the emergent character of innovation. They fail to estimate ‘accurately’ the dynamics of synergy or competition that evolve, beyond rational choice or cost-benefit criteria, among the parts involved.

Archetypes are only relatively isolated from one another; they often mix with each other in a network of relations (von Frantz, 1975) and strive for balance in a given situation or system (Pearson, 1998). When, in a given context or personality, dominant archetypes leave no space for others to manifest, the latter turn to a shadow mode, which corresponds to unconsciousness. Shadow includes whatever is too painful to be consciously recognized as one’s own and therefore is rejected or discharged on others, as well as the undeveloped parts or skills (in potentia) that seek to manifest. However, most of the time, encountering with a shadow issue generates a negative reaction, as it ‘reminds’ us that this issue is still unsolved. In this way, archetypes can express and represent different facets of a collective life, such as the organizational culture, elements of a community’s tradition, trends of a society or a market or a successful brand mixture, for example.

The significance of archetypes lies in the fact that human experience is structured on and around these preexisting principles (McDowell, 2000) which profoundly influence how we perceive and experience the world and underpin our behavior. Indeed, the more deeply one understands the archetypal elements present and their meaning, relation and influence to oneself, the freer can one be in dealing with them and use their power in one’s own favor (Stevens, 1982; Pearson, 1998).

Several theorists have referred to archetypes as psychic or strange attractors, basins of attraction, and energy patterns of potential that can create unpredictability and raise entropy (Jacobi, 1974; Rossi, 1989; Van Eenwyck, 1997; Matthews, 2002). Such key characteristics have been also identified in the complex and chaotic systems. Adopting Jung’s concept of archetypes, Matthews considers them as loosely defined rules of a game that vary according to circumstances of time and place; they operate as a ordering or organizing principles and probability rules in the landscape of management and social life, indicating feasible journeys of human behavior in a given context.

Being abstract, archetypes cannot be observed directly or understood in a rational descriptive manner but can only be experienced and recognized through their effects that are imprinted in diverse images and patterns. These are encountered mainly in narratives (Edinger, 1972; Jacobi, 1962; von Frantz, 1975). An archetypal image can have an abstract or geometrical form (square, circle, wheel, etc or their combinations in symbols) or possess a figure of real or fantastic creature, plant, natural element or planet (e.g., mother, father, child, hero, god, fair lady, dwarf, giant, lion, dragon, tree, bush, fire, sea, river, sun, moon etc). Each archetypal pattern has certain elements (the goal, the characters, the turning points or thresholds and the treasure earned through trials), which constitute an archetypal story, myth or metaphor. Each time such a story is told or thought by someone, it adds meaning to the exact data (facts) of a specific event. It is like a theatrical show that is performed in different places; each time the local actors dress up in local clothes and perform the same play known in advance to everyone (Campbell, 1989). Although the story seems particular, its evidence is general. Thus, allowing different interpretations and accepting deeply the individuals’ right for free will and choice, archetypes enable a ‘holistic’ perspective and facilitate the expression of a system’s complexity.

As we have indicated elsewhere (Michiotis et al., 2010), the term ‘archetype’ has been used in a different meaning within the organizational context. Senge (1990) introduced system archetypes as generic guiding structures and resulting behavior patterns and suggested ten exemplary cases. These were meant to help leaders recognize the cycles that systems go through and predict what is about to come. Yet, in practice, they have been used by practitioners and man-agers with the (hidden) anticipation of controlling events. The concept has not
delivered the expected results, however, mainly due to the inability of system thinkers to deal with ambiguity and diversity of interpretations; system archetypes could deal most readily with explicit problems rather implicit ones. Recently, a number of models and tools employing archetypal figures have been developed, mainly in the areas of counseling, marketing and organizational behavior (Pearson, 2003; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Neville & Dalmau, 2006). They try to provide a comprehensive view of the overall culture of the brands and organizations and to facilitate transitions. While Senge was interested in procedural and situational archetypes, these models focus mainly on figures that express the different spirits that are mostly encountered in organizations. For that, they have incorporated many years of experience in their structural components and some of them have used archetypal and mythological assets. However, the preset classification of the qualities of these ‘archetypes’ can turn to be non-contextual and in need of specially trained and well experienced facilitators, in order for the qualities of the figures to be properly clarified.

On the other hand, Snowden (2001) insists that organizational archetypes should be contextual and not universal (non-Jungian). He emphasizes that the archetypes he deals with are emergent properties of the discourse within an organization at all levels of it and refer not only to characters but also to situations, values and themes. They can be used as a means for understanding customers, tapping tacit knowledge, designing role-plays or lessons-learned programs, representing the existing culture or introducing different ones, as well as in cases of merger and acquisition. The main limitations of Snowden’s method for archetype extraction is that it can get stuck in tedious rounds of process and that it is difficult to relate the findings of one case to another, as they are purely contextual; especially when comparing the findings of different groups or settings is meaningful (e.g., within the same system).

We suggest in this paper that a number of the above mentioned limitations can be addressed by the use of archetypal models. An archetypal model can be either a typology for the structure and content of a non-linear system or an attempt to model the dynamics of its behavior. In the first case, it uncovers a system’s basic elements and the relationships between them. In a social or organizational context this representation could take the form of key players and the oppositional or collaborative forces among them. Some of the most widely known examples of such models are the Four Elements and the Olympian gods. The former have been used in Greek philosophy, Hinduism, Buddhism, Tibetan and Japanese tradition as a structure to represent the primal energy in nature, the life-sustaining force. Empedocles, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Aristotle and others have considered the Four Elements as principles and ‘roots’, while Jung viewed them as a major symbol of the archetype of quaternity (Jung, 1940, 1968). They can represent different aspects of reality, without reducing the latter to a simplistic description, as each of them can symbolize many different qualities. On the other hand, the widely known model of Olympian Gods consists of twelve ambiguous characters that represent fundamental characteristics recurrently encountered among people, inherent qualities of a system that are active at a given time or waiting to get activated. In the second case, an archetypal model can refer to the life stages and the initiation rituals at the thresholds between these. It is about the maturation process of individuals through society and resembles an inner road map, made by people who have already traveled in those areas (Campbell, 1989). Typical examples of this case are the Hero’s Journey template (Campbell, 1949) and the labors of Hercules (Pitsouli, 2010), at the thresholds of which new perception and behavior patterns are shaped as the old role fades away or is shaken off and a new one emerges through pain and turbulence.

**Geometry And Meaning**

According to Jung (1968, 1940) and von Frantz (1974), geometrical schemes are considered as images of the deepest archetypes. It is also true that all the highly developed cultures of the world have used some geometric constructions as their symbols (e.g., the triangular pattern for trinity, the cycle or square mandala, the cross pointing towards the four directions, the interlacing triangles, the sacred hoop, the world tree, the snake that
swallows its own tail etc). Indeed, across the ages, philosophers and scientists approached the powerful relationship between geometry and meaning. In his work *Timaeus*, Plato presented his cosmology model based on five solids related to the four natural elements (fire, water, air and earth) plus quintessence. His concept was adapted and further researched by Johannes Kepler (Caspar, 1994). Since then, Buckminster Fuller through his work Synergetics (1975) and Arthur Young in his book *Geometry of Meaning* (1976) have, among others, contributed to this relationship. Recently, the geometry of thinking and meaning has been introduced into the organizational and business context. The geometrical metaphor has been extensively used in the articulation of identity and strategy; simple geometric forms seem to help organizational leaders and strategists structure their thinking and planning (Judge, 2009; Keidel, 1994; 2010).

When patterns are expressed through simple schemes or solids, making sense of complex behaviors and (archetypal) dynamics within a non-linear system is easier. This easiness enables a more participatory sense-making, corresponding more to the common sense, even sometimes at the expense of accuracy. For example, a threefold concept or a three-fold of choices, can be represented by the nodes of a triangle, while the relations among the alternatives or the components can be on the sides. Likewise, a four-fold concept or model can be represented by a square or a four-domain scheme. It should be particularly noted that the latest version of the SenseMaker, which is a pattern-imprinting tool, follows a three-fold (Cognitive Edge, 2009), while the Cynefin model follows a fourfold one (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003). In its third version of SenseMaker tools, the conventional dipoles of choice (Cognitive Edge, 2006) have been substituted by triangles, within which one’s opinion, estimation or viewpoint can be marked; the location is meaningful. Therefore, our research has been led towards relating patterns, meaning and geometry, for the latter can enable conceptualization, visualize emergent properties and explore relationships.

**Introducing A New Tool And Process**

The tool described here has been developed as part of a research project by the University of Greenwich Business School in collaboration with a Greek consulting company. It aims to help organizations and communities make sense of the qualities and skills yet needed for the challenge(s) they encounter, as well as the degree of difficulty for obtaining them. More specifically, it aims to enable an organization or a community to:

*Reveal its hidden potential and the patterns though which this can be conveyed and thus understand how the organization collectively reacts when facing significant challenges.*

*Assess the similarities and differentiations among the perception patterns of different control groups and thus assess their capacity to set and accomplish common goals.*

*Estimate the level of difficulty for the system to bridge the current status with the desired one and indicate possible traps and breakdowns.*

*Extract the organizational archetypes in the form of contextual figures, situations etc and indicate their qualities, along with their ‘shadow’ aspects.*

The tool is based on the theory of archetypes and uses self-organization techniques and simple geometrical schemes, in order to reveal and assess the collective capacity and maturity for change. It has been built on the assumption that complex situations and problems are not assessable by an outside expert. These situations exist because people are complex and the dynamics (hidden or not) are difficult to grasp and understand before any
change can take place. Moreover, the experts’ rationalistic logic is not always the same as common sense, which is much stronger and (occasionally) much wiser and has to do with shared patterns in a given context. With this tool, all one needs to do is participate and observe. The patterns that emerge make it clear and easy for every interested party involved to understand these dynamics and their meaning for the organization. Additionally, since the process and the end results of the assessment are based on archetypal images, words, phrases etc, it is easier for the participants to understand, relate and ‘connect’ to the result and eventually derive meaning from it. The tool imprints not only the active but the shadow archetypes as well, revealing the ‘blind spots’ of the organization, which may be active or need to be activated in the system. Thus, people can easily see the ‘whole picture’ (where they stand in relation to others, how they affect results, how they affect the whole organizational scheme) and create the consensus necessary for change.

Making sense of complexity becomes then both a personal and collective thing, conceptualization being the core issue that will lead not only to personal awareness but to a collective one from within the system. It helps them see how they engage with an organizational scheme; or not (Michiotis et al., 2010).

The term capacity is used here to include the sum of the qualities and inclinations that are inherent in an entity (individual, group, organization or community), along with the skills and knowledge that have been obtained throughout this entity’s evolution. So, capacity is actually the sum of the intangible assets that are used as a collective gear by an organization or community to face inner or outer stimuli. Sometimes the system is aware of its patterns and the impact of the stimulus. In other cases the collective awareness is very poor (if any) and, as a result, the symptoms are neglected or the responsibility is transferred to others. Indeed, a system is usually aware only of some of its collective qualities, skills and knowledge, which tries to control consciously; for example to include them in operational procedures, training programs, vision-mission statements etc. The rest of the available assets, of which the system is not consciously aware, will become activated and emerge only when and if will be really needed. What really occurs in every organization is that its conscious knowledge about itself and environment exists only to a certain degree. Challenges and intangible assets are interrelated and interacting. Actually, it is the challenge that activates the system’s capacity, which until then exists in-potentia. Some challenges and needs suit more to certain knowledge, skills and qualities available by the system; others do not. While the former can be faced easier by the system, without spending valuable resources, it is the latter that can become more fruitful, leading to valuable experience and enabling the actualization of hidden potential.

Mapping the system’s intangible assets shows in which way the forces and needs that operate on an archetypal level resonate within the system. This is considered to be of great importance, as the role and impact of the tangibles are more or less denoted in most cases, while the intangibles, being neglected, interpreted differently or even rejected, remain usually in the ‘shadow’. Together, they can depict a larger picture of the current reality and the desired future of the organization. This can provide more meaning and motivation to the organization as a whole. In other words, the system’s collective capacity reveals its ability to make sense of itself and its environment and to adapt to it. However, this map should be contextually expressed, meaning in real personas, real problems and mainly in a language easily understood by everyone in the system.
On the other hand, by the term *maturity* is meant here whatever permits individuals, groups and societies to recognize their problems before trying to confront them. It is not the capability to operate according preset keys, rules and procedures, like traditional assessment tools claim (Curtis, Hefley & Miller, 2009). It is rather the ability and knowledge to discover the ‘keys’ needed for the problems and the will to use them. It is the ability for self-learning and at the same time the commitment to make the steps required towards this. It informs about the ‘lessons learnt’ so far (by the organization or the community as a whole), as well as about the ones yet to be learned. Actually, maturity is the way in which a person or an organization behaves when encountering a potential lesson. It has to do with the space that one makes (or leaves not) for the proper (but ‘unusual’) skill to be used when dealing with a challenge, which has not faced before or remains unsurpassed so far. This tool defines four levels against which the collective maturity is assessed.

The ‘lesson’ is a pattern of meaning that emerges through experience, reflection and conversation. For those who think of evolution in a mainly developmental way, in each stage there are specific understandings to become aware of, missions to be accomplished or lessons to be learned, before moving to the next step; indeed, this is the common sense and belief for the ‘true’ meaning or the word maturity. However, in non-linear systems, lessons are available anytime and in any occasion, according to the existing level of self-awareness and maturity.

When such factors are sensitized enough while struggling with a challenge, they could bring a person or a system to a certain energy level that corresponds to a threshold of linearity. Beyond that threshold, a bifurcation can occur in the existing mental patterns and a new understanding (different from the initially aimed) is possible to emerge. Actually, the more experienced and ready one is for such ‘discovery’ opportunities, the more fruitful the process will be. Some potential categories of the lessons can refer to: a) operational skills or qualities, which can be related to targets, relationships, knowledge etc, b) developmental stages in programs of awareness building, personal development or transformation processes, c) challenges or traps that corresponding to the ‘shadow’ of archetypes (like the ones used in some of the models mentioned earlier) or d) specific capabilities required by particular operational models.

With regards to the scope of this paper, the discussion of the tool will be focused mainly on its structure and the process of the capacity assessment.

**Structure Of The Tool**

It should be mentioned from the beginning that the tool-and-process that has been developed can be adapted to various archetypal models with different structural elements, different relations between them and of course different content; this tool-and-process is rather a meta-methodology. However, for testing it, he had to employ a specific model, which is the Measure Formula model, introduced by Arthur Young (1976), a mathematician, engineer and inventor of the Bell helicopter. It is a model that consists of **twelve elements**, which can be classified in three sets of four (called **tetrads**) or in four sets of three (called **triads**) (Figures 1 and 2). Each tetrad informs and describes all possible modes of structure or operation, such as four psychological operations (thinking, feeling, etc.).
Three Sets Of Four (Tetrads)

intuition, sensation), four personality types or temperaments (sanguine, choleric phlegmatic, melancholic) and four natural elements (air, water, fire, earth). It is used to analyze concepts and forms in their fundamental components. On the other hand, the triad indicates a pathway of transformation (i.e., birth—maturity—death; creation—sustaining-destroy; impulse-inertia—balance; stimulus—reaction—result; or even the transcendence of a polarity or a conflict (i.e., black—white-rainbow).

According to Young, if combined, these two ways of classification can describe all possible situations that correspond to the ways that the fundamental components can express or evolve. For example, an emotional activity or situation can be expressed in an impulsive, controlled or balanced way, while an impulsive and intuition-based (risky) activity can lead to a practical status. Although this concept seems deterministic, it is not. It is the people, not the experts, who choose among existing possibilities and through their choices reveal the existing patterns. Based on the above, the structure of the tool consists of:

1. Twelve elements that constitute the nodes of a regular dodecagon inscribed in a cycle and, at the same time, the content of a $3 \times 4$ matrix. These elements represent:

   The intangible assets of the system’s potential (qualities, skills, intentions, holdbacks etc.), corresponding to the potential ways a system responds when challenged and

   The acquired issues of the collective maturity that correspond to the lessons learned or yet to be learned.

2. A number of stimuli representing fundamental (archetypal) needs, forces or challenges that are encountered in the organizational context (e.g., identity, creativity, learning, risk, success, communication, stability, expansion, competition, etc.). These needs etc endure in time (e.g., the need to survive or to learn or to feel free etc is universal) but in parallel are expressed in various ways, following a typical example within a given cultural context (e.g., regarding survival, the ‘eye for an eye’ concept and practice is alternative to the trickster’s, which is followed in different settings). These forces, needs
and challenges stimulate the energy fields of the system, the collective personality of which is shaped
through their confrontation.

3. A databank of archetypal images, phrases, situations, patterns etc that will be used during the process.

**Capacity Assessment Process**

The process assumes that when people are attracted to a certain *archetypal* image, phrase, pattern, story or
situation among others, they indirectly indicate an influential archetype (dominant or shadow) in their context
and informs the collective patterns of behavior within the group they belong to. This occurs because values are
attached to *symbolic* images that attract or repel our attention through chaotic dynamics. The meaning of these
symbolic images vastly transcends their content; the meaning of a symbol is synonymous to its capacity to
generate a dynamic relationship between the one who interprets and that which is discovered (Van Eenwyk,
1997). As Pearson (2003) indicates, they act like meaning magnets for the psyche and provide a bridge between
the deepest motivations and felt experience that fulfills (or promises to fulfills) basic human needs. Due to this
fact, they are widely used in marketing in order to place and promote a firm among others, either by expressing
more tangible stereotypes and caricatures or by referring to more abstract meanings or needs. For example, with
regard to describe a certain situation, making a choice among a crown (that usually symbolizes power), an owl
(that is generally related to knowledge and wisdom) and a fist on the air (that indicates struggle or imposition)
inform of one’s perception of that reality. Therefore, regarding the process described, such *archetypal* images,
if properly selected by the facilitator(s), can be used as a means for the participants to depict, beyond rational
descriptions, sides of their current or desired reality and bring up some unconscious facets, needs, intentions or
feelings generated by it. Moreover, by spontaneously expressing an archetypal image or phrase in contextual
terms (of their own reality), people provide the elements for a meaningful language, through which messages
can be communicated effectively within the specific context.

Through this combination of archetypes with emergent techniques, different interpretations of reality can be
expressed in a spontaneous and unaffected way and the main factors of system’s complexity can be imprinted.
As choices are made and added (over time or location) in this guiding map, one can see a) how the system
collectively perceives reality and therefore what is capable for and b) which action is feasible or possible and
which is out of the beaten track or difficult. At this point geometrical schemes and patterns are used to organize
the emergent properties, visualize their relationships and enable the conceptualization of the findings of the
process.

The process for the assessment of the organizational capacity is carried out in steps (Figure 3) with control
groups derived from different staff subgroups, management, stakeholders etc.

At first (Step 1), each participant chooses one or two images that in his/her opinion resemble to the current
organizational reality and a desired future. Then, each one expresses the main characteristics of these states in
terms of dominant values or skills or a meaningful phrase; he/she also indicates the main obstacle for moving
from current reality to a desired one. All these get written close to the relevant images or the ‘present-future’
lines. A quantitative analysis of these properties (Step 2.1), which is based on the aforementioned 3-fold, 4-fold
and 12-fold categorizations, provides some initial indicators that refer: a) to the influence (strength) of each
archetypal element or their sets (tetrads and triads) in the given context and b) to the dominant qualities (the
most frequently indicated). Comparing these indicators with the ones derived from other groups(Step 2.2)
aspects of hidden potential and blind spots can be revealed.
Then (Step 3), the participants proceed on a collective basis to discover some fundamental relationships that exist among the emerged qualities. They do this by relating any three of the emerged properties they assume that are encountered in combination within their context. The outcome of this step informs of which qualities can really work together, even if they don’t necessarily ‘fit’ from a first view or even if this is not consciously accepted or stated.

These fundamental relationships of qualities serve as the core of the organizational figures (contextual protagonists) that will be shaped next (Step 4.1); at least as viewed by the specific group, which, if coherent, delivers in this way its

**Fig. 3: Figure 3**

**Overview Of The Process For The Assessment Of The Organizational Capacity**

stereotypes. These figures can be then compared either to other groups’ stereotypes (Step 4.2) or to the mission-vision prototypes (Step 4.3), in order to deliver either the organizational archetypes or some shadow issues and possible traps regarding corporate plans and initiatives.

Finally, by summing (overlaying) the outputs of Step 3 from different control groups, a total graph of the fundamental relationships within the specific context can be created. By transforming this pattern of lines inscribed in the dodecagon to a pattern used by the social network analysis (Step 5.1), we could have a “network of qualities” that could inform in which way (pathway) a certain quality, knowledge or skill can be obtained or cultivated within this particular context. Through iterative runs of the process for different stimuli and by using network analysis theory, we could be led to the structure of the existing (or the emerging) organizational attractor and from there to a safer answer regarding the question which of the existing patterns should be strengthened, which should be reduced and which new should be introduced.

After each step and being aided by some triggering questions, the participants discuss the findings and note whatever they consider unexpected or worthy to mention. Furthermore, comparing their data against the ones from other groups, they may suggest some initial points that could relate to organization’s blind spots. Sometimes, a preparatory narrative gathering can enable the contextualization of sets of the archetypal phrases, images, stages, situations, etc, which are derived from the Databank and correspond to the twelve elements of the tool.

The process of the maturity assessment is more or less similar to the one previously described; it focus on: a) irregularities of the distribution of ‘lessons learned’ that indicate absence of experience or obstacles and b) situations that are dealt by using specific qualities that have been previously identified as dominant.

This tool has been tested as a prototype in different settings. The initial estimation from these pilot tests is that it is quite functional as it enables bias elimination, makes the process dynamic and more intriguing, encourages participation and personal expression, facilitates understanding, and seems to strengthen motivation and commitment. With appropriate clinical guidance, it could be potentially used in a counseling setting as a process facilitation tool, since all its components are based on psychological archetypal principles of personal growth, awareness and limitations, energy localization, shadow archetypes and their expression, etc. Specifically, it may
aid individuals in the realization of dominant or shadow, positive or negative, current or past expression of archetypal figures in their life and motives / patterns of behavior. Another significant advantage of its concept is that it can be easily adapted to models fundamentally different, which follow a different structure than the 12-fold. These models can be simply represented by a different polygon, as long the analogies are kept in the process and the content of the databank. As for the challenges, their number is open to the facilitator’s choice or the context’s requirements (Michiotis et al., 2010).

However, the facilitator requires some skills in employing the process:

- Beginner’s mind: avoid ‘judgment as usual’, notice the bare bones and stay open,
- Moments of truth: challenge conventionality, embrace paradox and exploit tension
- Critical relations: enable what can be spread fast and easily and lead to a critical mass
- Trust the process: let the participants lead, don’t worry about the outcome, be present
- Let go of your “armor”, in order to evolve it

**Epilogue**

It seems that the intangible assets of an organization can be approached, mapped and assessed in a more comprehensive and participatory way by using pattern-based tools. For this, archetypes can be of help, especially when combined with participatory and self-organized techniques, as well as with geometry. Together they can enable the emergence, contextual expression and visualization of contradictions and complex aspects of individual behavior and organizational culture. The latter, being collectively visible, can be more easily comprehended and therefore be made more manageable.

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