

# IESE Business School Research Seminar

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# Presentation's goal

- To share with academic community a method for understanding the mindset of a class of individuals
- I called this method HEMG:
  - HEURISTIC METHOD FOR ELICITING GROUP METAPHORS
  - Main tool: collective drawings (group made)

# Context of “discovery” for this method

- 19 years of experience in corporate training in Ethics & Compliance Programs
- (Latin-American branches of 8 MNC)

1. What is an ethics & compliance corporate training
2. And why I do not use case method....?
  - a) Argentinian context and cognitive bias of business executives
  - b) Non conscious nature of shared mindset

# 1. Elements of a corporate ethics & compliance program

- Ethics code or conduct code
- Safety, antifraud, anti-corruption policies
- Hotline/whistleblowing
- Risk categorization for different likely events
- Investigation
- Whistleblower protection
- Training
  - Goal: to increase awareness and responsibility about likely corporate wrongdoing

## 2. Why do I not use case method?

- A. Personal low success in case method discussion
- Argentinian way
  - Low respect to authorities
  - Generalized distrust (in institutions, in knowledge....)
  - Skeptical attitude, cynical attitude
  - Do not listen very much/interruptions all the time/overlapping of ideas

# Case method

- B. Case method do not address underlying emotions which influences ethical behaviour within organization (i.e. resentment, envy, etc.)
- So many literature which address the failure of ethical trainings because they do not address the possibility of rationalization (psychological process to justify bad deeds for the sake of something: i.e. safety, job, family, etc.)

3. How do I define shared  
mindset?



# Shared mindset (SM)

- SM is the deepest underlying assumption of an organizational culture.
- SM does not include behaviour.
- SM is a shared organizational *Weltanschauung* (= a way of seeing and judging the day to day organizational reality)
- SM can be applied to a class of professionals who do not work together, but belong to the same profession.

# Shared mindset: main content

- SM entails
  - The implicit power size of the individual within the organization
  - The place that the individual attributes to her/himself within the organization
  - Is a broader “feeling” than emotions, is an existential standpoint
  - The “idea of order” shared by group members.
    - their vision about how things actually works within that organization,
    - the true order that moves the organization
- SM includes statements like: “we always do this way”, “you can do this and nobody cares”, “nobody can do it”, “you must .....", “if.....then....”, “this is our way”

# Shared Mindset is relevant to ethical behaviour and teaching because...

- SM It is hold in a non-conscious way; usually is clearer for outsiders
- SM is taken for granted
- SM generates blind spots collectively hold (i.e. “everybody do it...”) or leads to moral silence
- SM carries the organizational influence to the individual mindset and influence personal choices
- SM offers certainty (due it is shared; it is our way, it is a collective habit).
- SM is a short bridge between values and deeds, between mind and behaviour
  - Sometimes, SM needs to be reoriented to get better ethical outcomes.
  - Sometimes SM should be aligned to a new ethics code or to new best practices (usually after a business scandal)

After reading this book, I began to use group drawings in workshops

Gareth Morgan  
**IMAGES OF ORGANIZATION**



Updated Edition of the International Bestseller

1986

**GARETH MORGAN**

Author of the International Bestseller **IMAGES OF ORGANIZATION**

1997

**Imagin·i·zation**

New Mindsets for  
Seeing,  
Organizing,  
and Managing

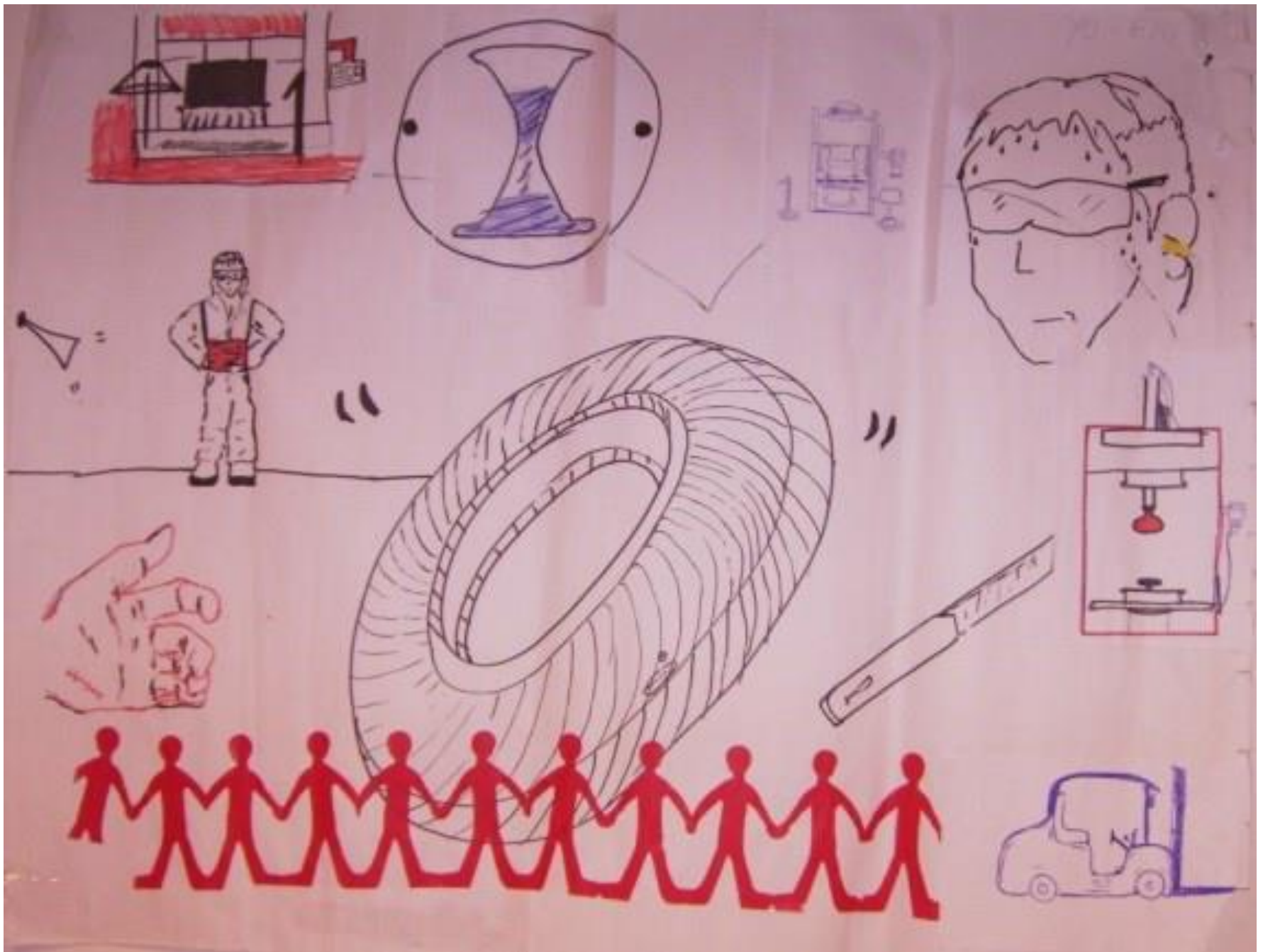
"Imaginization shows that management is as much art form as science, providing many useful ways to tap the most important resource for competitiveness: brainpower."

—Rosabeth Moss Kanter  
Professor, Harvard Business School, author of *The Change Masters*

# Let's see some drawings made by corporate employees during in company workshops

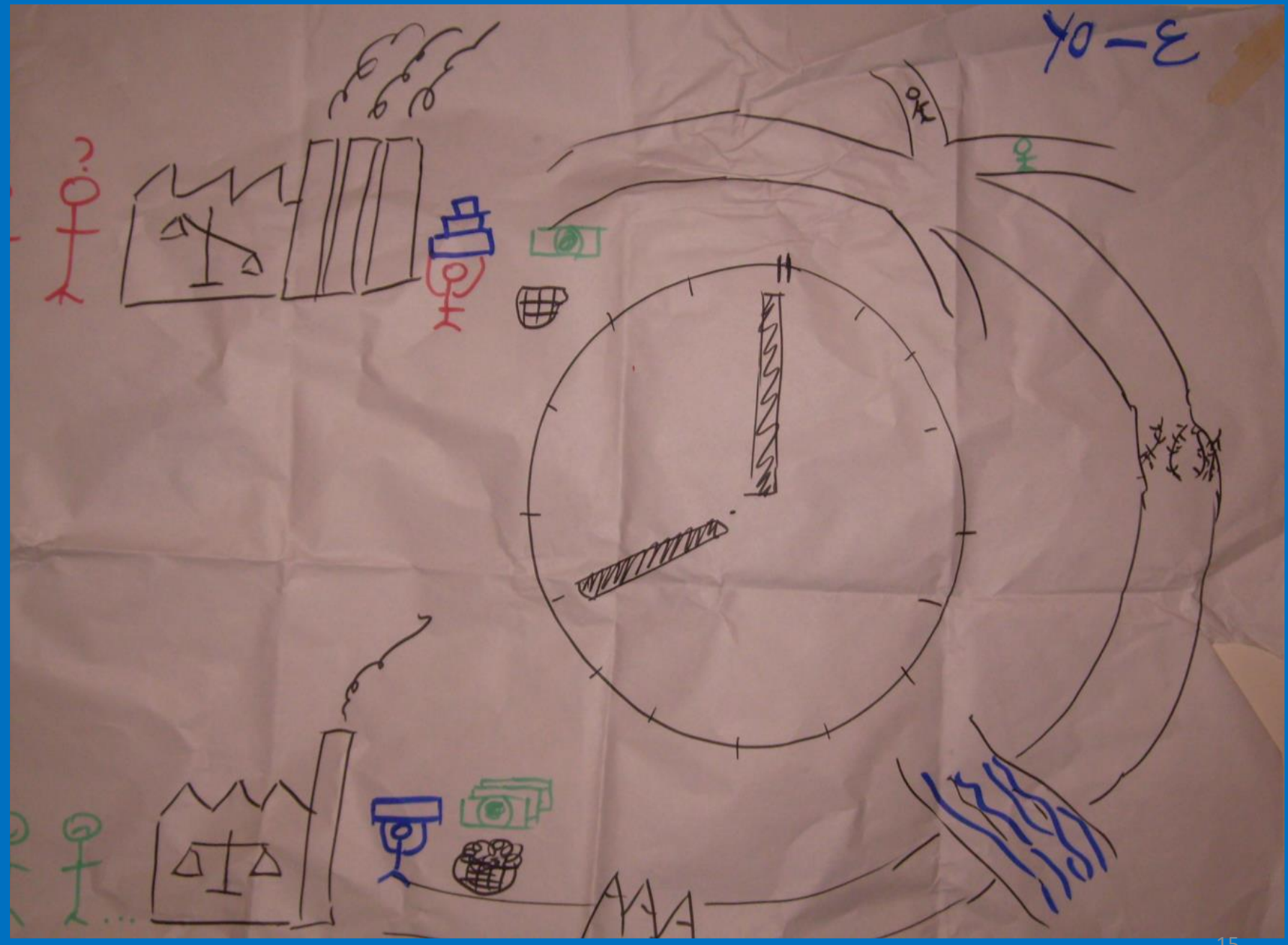
They are team drawings (...then i will explain the process)

Can you see some similarities?



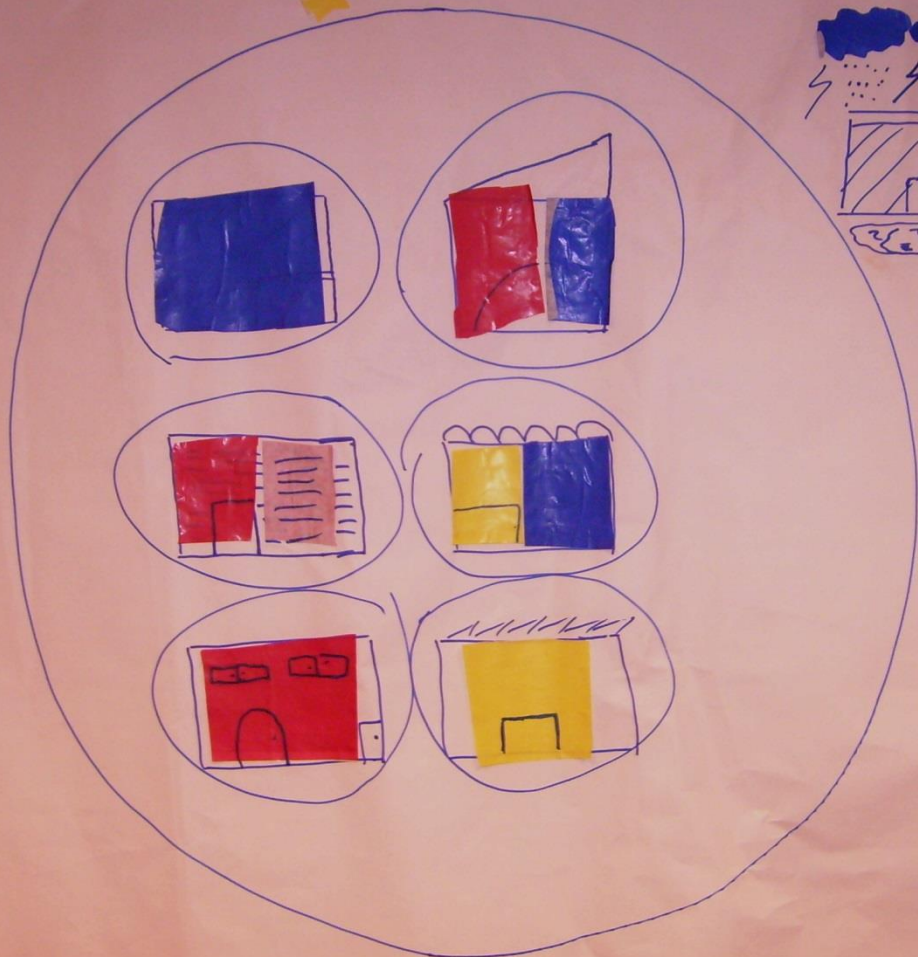


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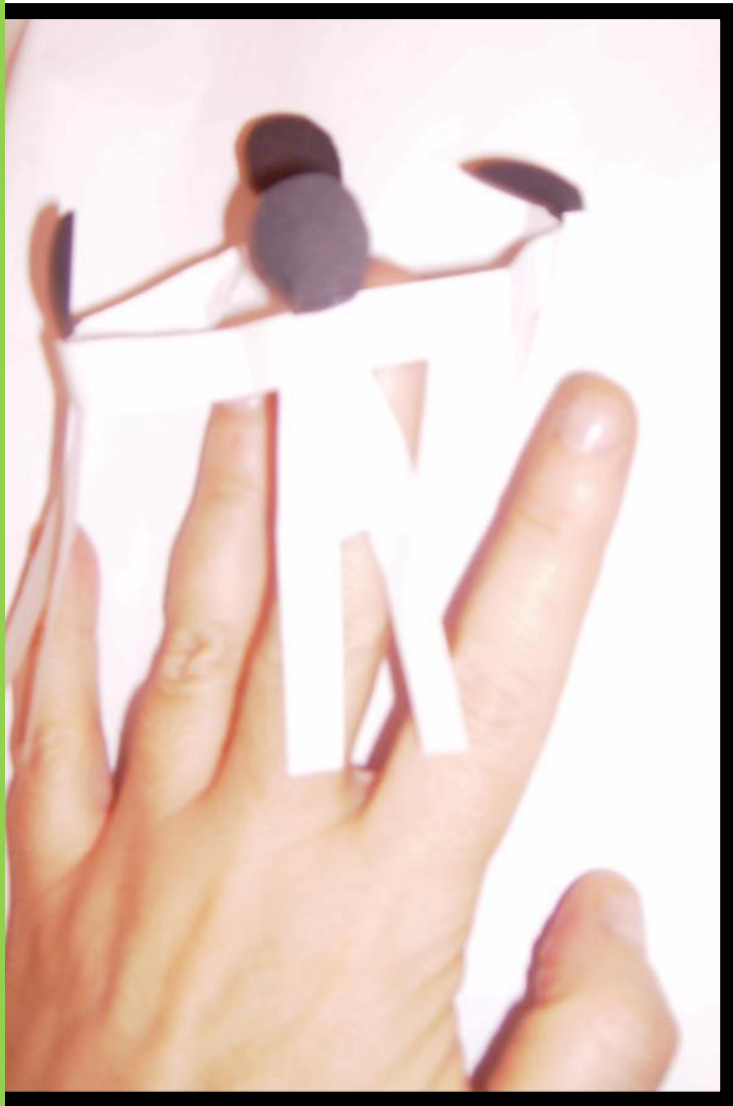




A-A

40-50









## 5. How the drawings are made and interpreted?

- The context is a company workshop on culture, ethics & compliance.
- The whole amount of corporate employees attend to one workshop
- 25 coworkers attend to each workshop
- Each workshop produces 5 posters (one team, one poster)
- Each team = 5 coworkers
- Workshop could lasts 2-3 hours.

# Drawings (cont)

## 1. DRAWING PROCESS

- The drawings are group made and “answer” an assignment :
- For instance
- “Draw this relationship
  - The company myself
  - Myself the company
  - Myself the others”
- Each team draw a different relationship

# Drawings (cont.)

- They are made under consensus (no voting)
- No rational or conventional symbols can be used
- Drawing compel people to go deeper, to find an image (f.i. If they want to use the + (=plus) they should replace the notion of addition with a draw) and allows convergence

# Drawings (cont.)

## 2. READING PROCESS

- People in the workshop, who did not make the poster, read the poster (i.e. they say what they see in that drawing)
- They are asked to describe the relationship, to describe the company, to describe themselves according to that drawing
- The process continues with all posters
- During the reading's process people project their assumptions on the drawings
- All the readings, said at loud, must be recorded by instructor
- These records are the valuable material (ethnographic records) for finding the SM (choosing an interpretation)



# After using these drawings with teaching purposes....

- ....For many years I began to find some patterns
- For example
  - People who work in control positions draw themselves as small ants or without faces
  - People who work with hands use to draw themselves with the whole body figure
- I began to think about this tool as a possible research method, not only a teaching device.

6. Why do I think these drawings mirror a class of individuals' mindset?

- A. Because the PROCESS allow to converge individual meanings to a shared one (already explained)
- B. From the point of view of COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS, the draw captures an essential comprehension of a primarily experience

## B. Go back to previous drawings

I find the following lower common  
minimum content: the CIRCLE

# This lower minimum is called image-schema in cognitive linguistics

- Through 70 collective posters (each one made by 5 employees) (=350 employees from different companies) I have found 3 main image-schemas
- CIRCLE (we did see them)
- WALL
- PYRAMID

## B. Cognitive linguistic, Lakoff

- Lakoff (1980)
- Below the linguistic expressions we can find **underlying metaphors** (= conceptual metaphors) that synthesize and shape our comprehension
- We think “in the flesh”. We think about complex realities in terms of bodily experiences.
  - For instance: organization was always metaphorized as “organism”, “machine” or “net” .....all bodily realities

## B. Cognitive linguistics (cont.)

- For example: under the following linguistic expressions:
  - “the answer is clear” or “you have enlightened me with your explanation”
- there is a conceptual metaphor: KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT
- Knowledge is abstract, light is a bodily experience

## B. Cognitive linguistic (cont.)

- In CL the usual metaphor structure: **A IS B**
  - KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT
  - GOOD IS LIGHT (EVIL IS DARKNESS)
- Under both parts of the metaphor (A, B) we can find a third one: the image-schema (IS)
  - FORCE is an common image-schema under light, under good
  - FORCE has intensity, direction, influence, diffusion. Also light and good.

## B. Cognitive-linguistic (cont.)

- IMAGE-SCHEMA is the skeleton where both parts of the metaphor can be joined
- IS is an structure that can be inferred
- IS captures the structural contours of a bodily experience
- IS can be found underlying many different metaphors as a minimum common content (like the *lowest common denominator* in math).



## B. Cognitive-linguistic (cont.)

- Cognitive linguistic specialists had listed main image-schemas for English language. They think these lists are not closed
- For instance, some of image-schemata:
  - Center/periphery
  - Whole/part
  - Contain/container
  - Cycle
  - Link
  - Road/travel

# Previous factory drawings....

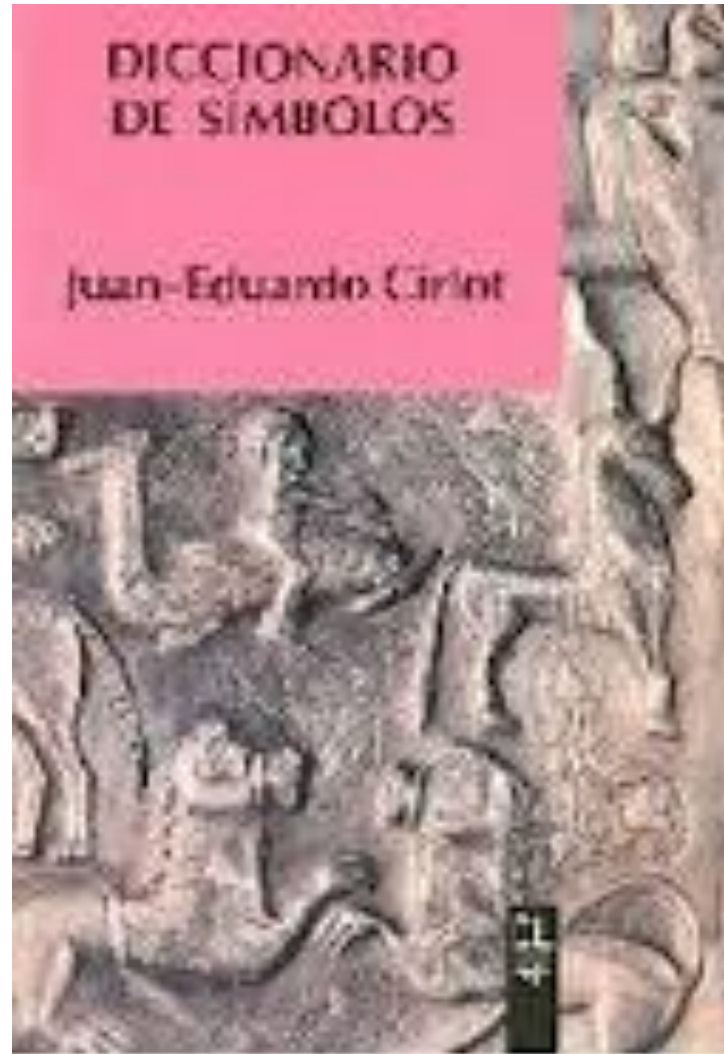
## CIRCLE: main image-schema

- Clocks
- Big hug
- Circles
- Round road
- Carrouseles
- Roller-coaster
- Wheels
- Pneumatics

Looking for a key to interpret....

Looking for universality in the interpretation, I found....

- 1992



# CIRCLE: What does it mean?

- Repetition
- Protection
- Perfection
- Speed
- Union
- Coordination
- Eternal return
- Movement
- Precision
- regularity

# CIRCLE: moral consequences

- Why conceiving your primarily organizational day to day experience like a circle could imply moral consequences?
- In a CIRCLE, there is no individual distinction (no discrete elements)
- There is no “**myself**”, there is only “**us**”
- What about if there is a shoplifting, pilfering, petty thefts (robo hormiga) in the factory?
- Who will break the “circle” to whistle blow this wrongdoing?
- What kind of effective compliance should the company expect?

Let's see other drawings before  
going deep

**WALL**

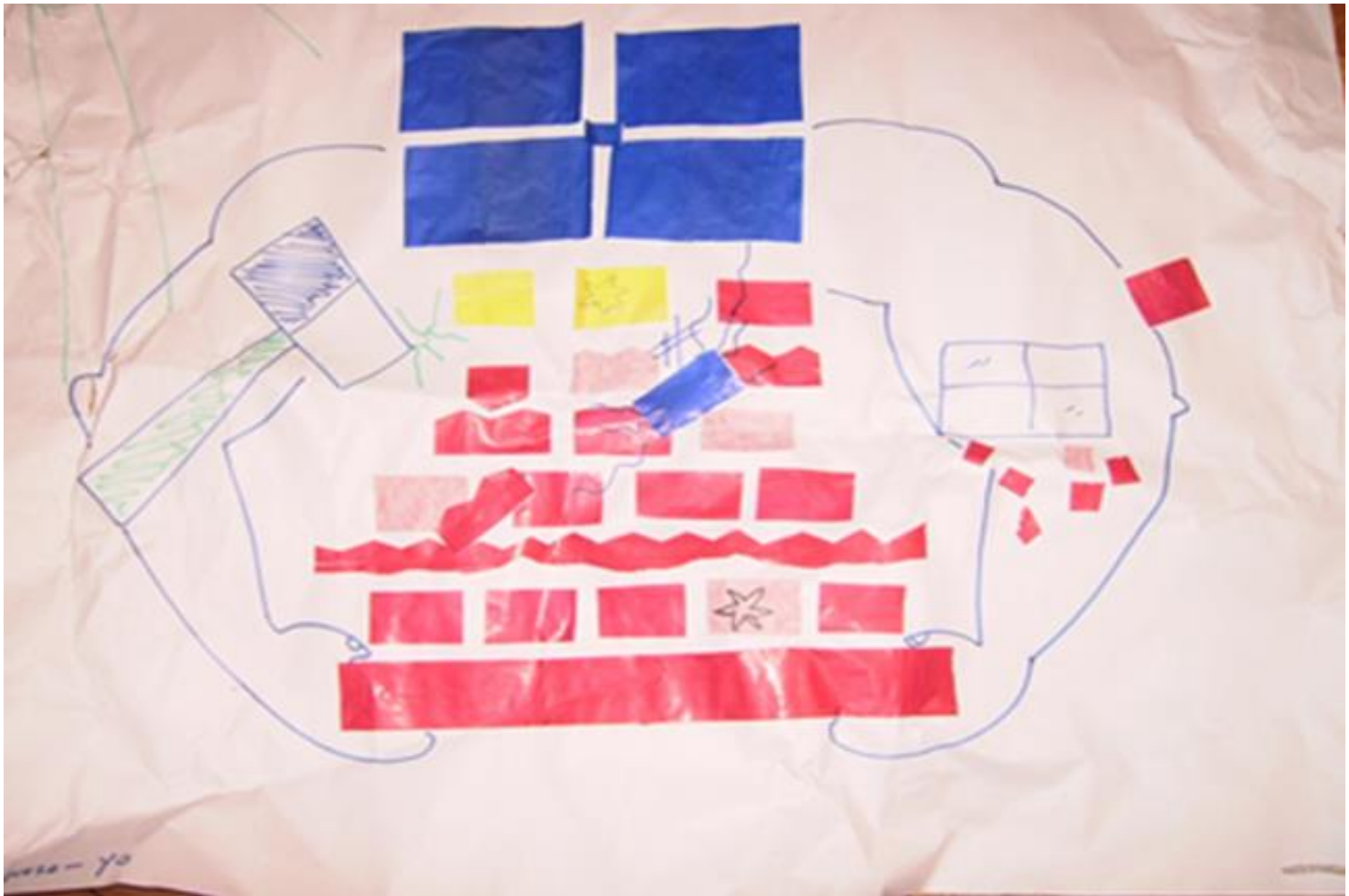
**= minimum common content for  
the next posters**

Executive MBA students  
(30 years old average)

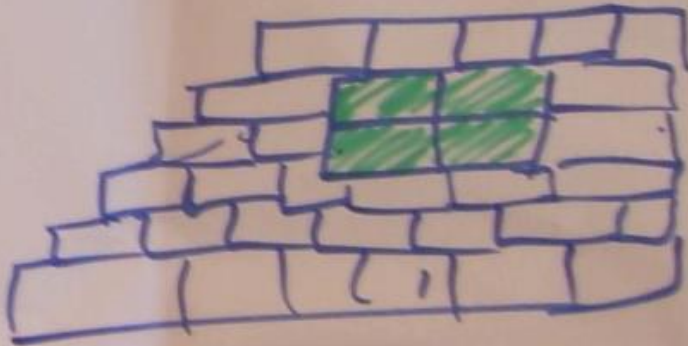
# Wall

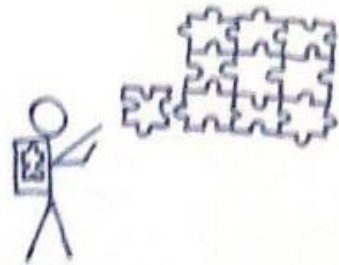
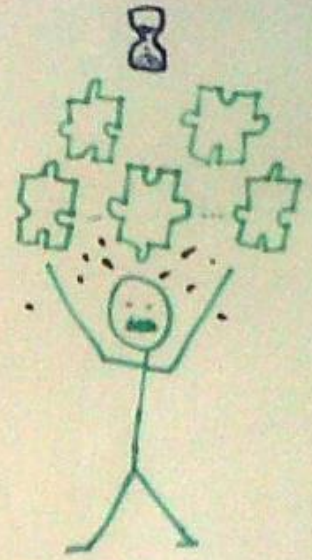
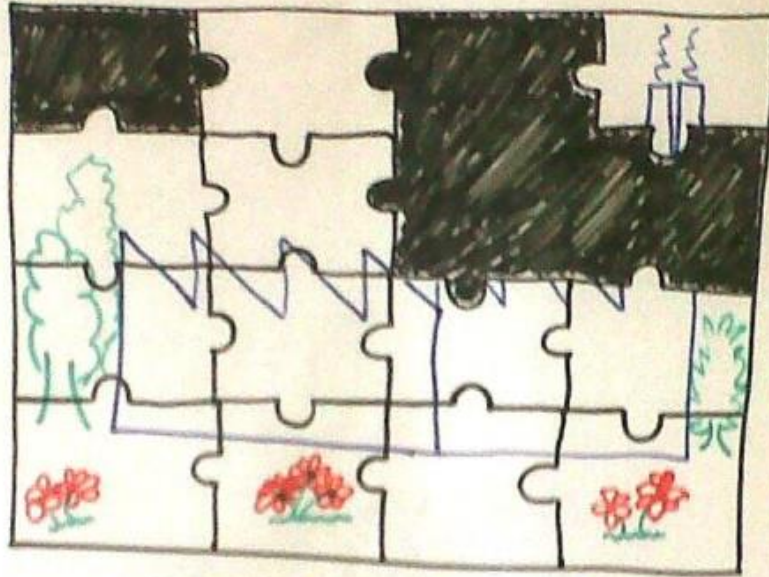
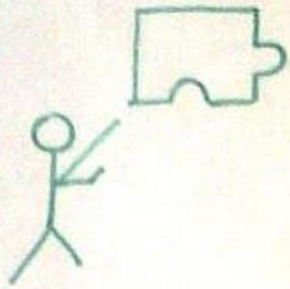
- Think about all the meanings that surrounds the idea of wall
- Think about all the semantic allusions that this concept embraces
  - Bricks, glue, pile, limit, protection, .....





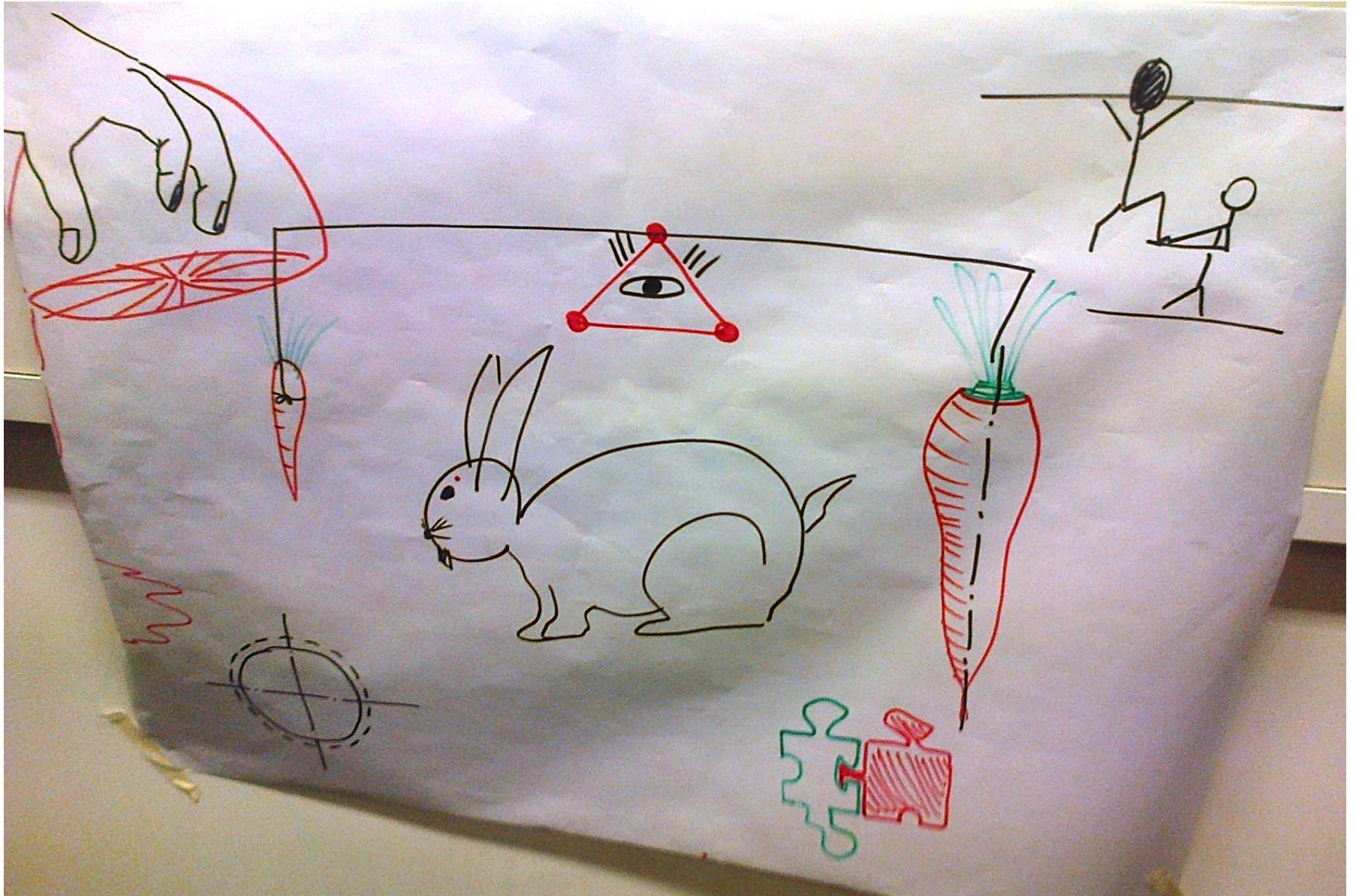
yo - yo

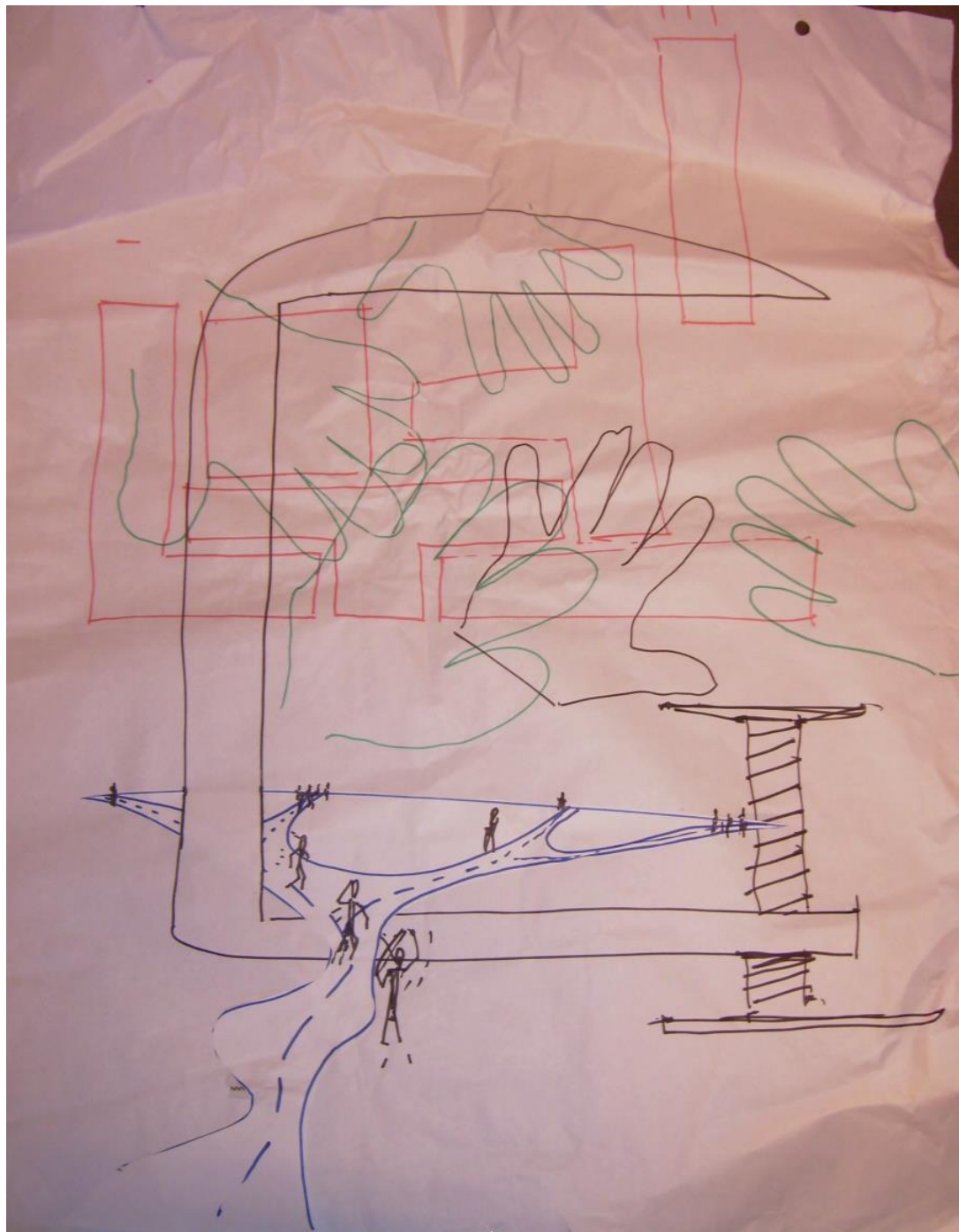






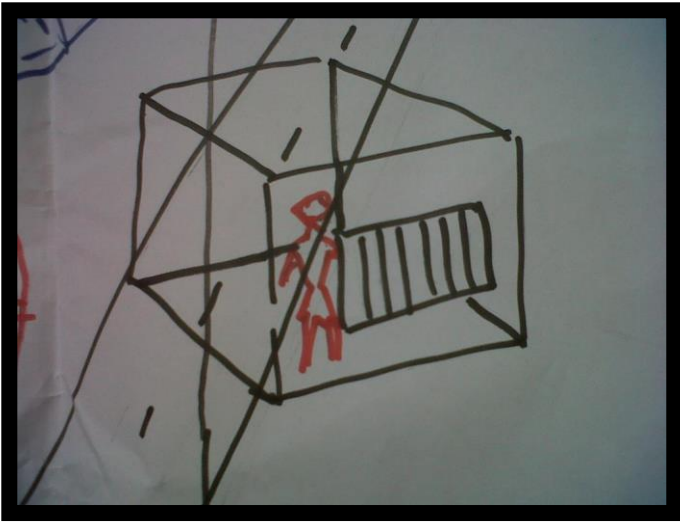
# La relación empresa-yo



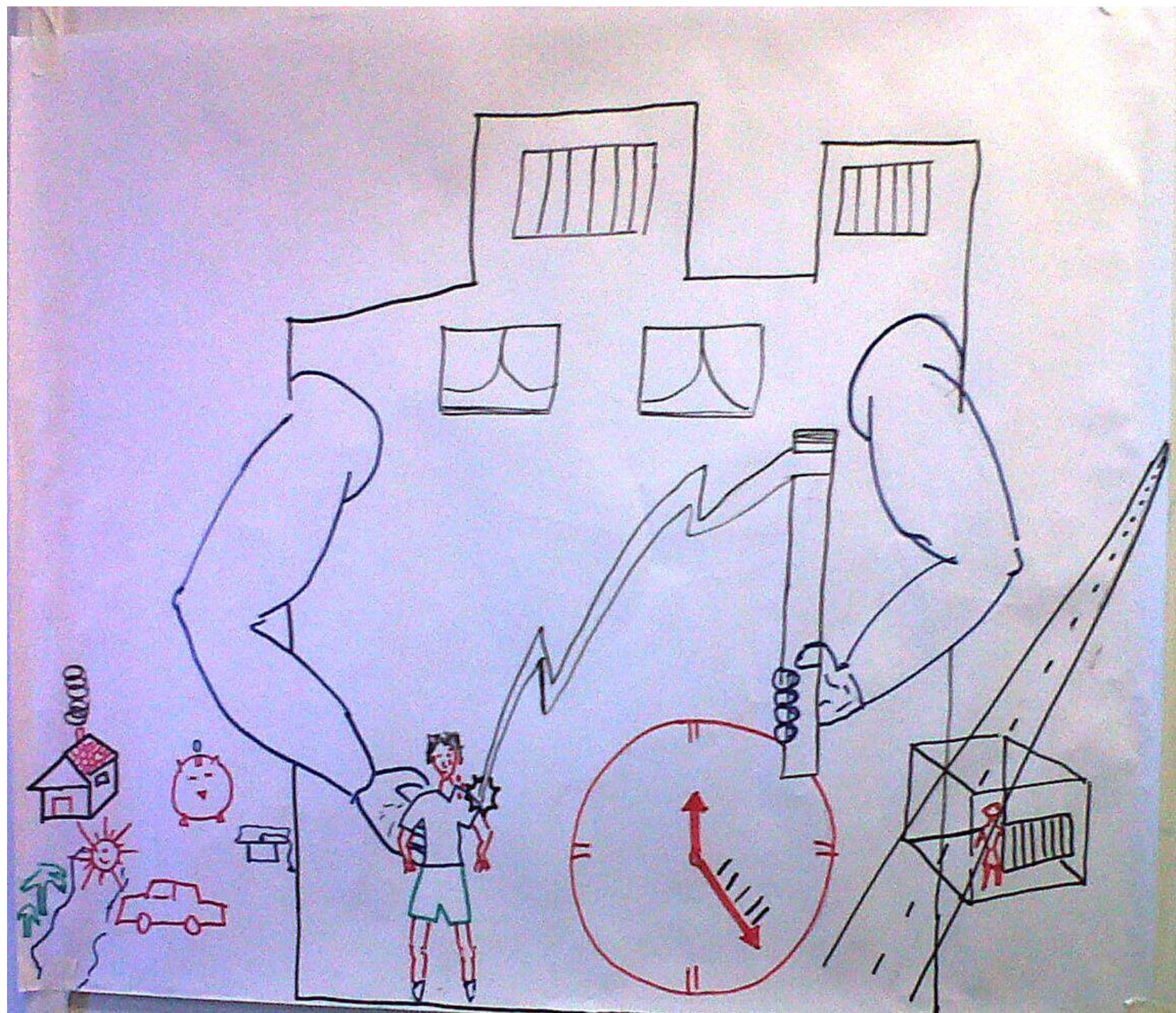














# WALL... what does it mean? And its moral consequences?

- Oppression
- power
- Limitation
- Defense, Protection
- Brick, Stones/Persistence  
Vs. Dust
- Scale
- Pile, Accumulation
- Elevation
- Prison
- Collective Efforts
- Whole/part
- The main challenge for an Executive MBA student is to fit in
- He/she feels that in return he/she offer his/her freedom to the company
- They want to be protected by a job but feel the lack of freedom.
- Moral consequences of this challenge?

# 7. How the drawings elicit group metaphors?

Third reason why I do think these drawings mirror shared mindset  
(1, process, 2 cognitive linguistics)

# This process can be considered as an organizational ethnography (OE) technique

- Schwartzman (1993): OE studies a business company as a group of natives where the ethnographer plays the role of participant observer
- Spradley (1980): The ethnographer should record “acts of speech” (=words and phrases) expressed by natives (=verbatim). He also record symbols, conversations, artifacts, etc.

## C. Organizational Ethnography (cont.)

- Van Maanen(2011) : The ethnographer should analyze these records, find patterns and provide a key to interpret the acts of speech and infer the implicit rules which govern/articulates the natives' relationships. The ethnographer tries to understand the underlying weave which gives an order to the group
- The key for interpretation chosen by the ethnographer should respect the authenticity of natives' voices and elicit "shared meanings" (= rules, values, etc.)

# C. Heuristic Method for Eliciting Group Metaphors

- During the workshop
- The instructor/researcher take notes during the posters' reading . He /she identifies some meaningful metaphors and show them to the workshop attendees. If they “hit the nail” people will accept them as of their own
- After the workshop
- Instructor/researcher can find more metaphors ex post, comparing many posters from different workshops

## 8. Why these drawings help to business ethics teaching?

- It is well known the failure of corporate ethical training (CET)
- CET doesn't address emotional aspects which can trigger employees' wrongdoing within the company
- CET assumes that mindset and behaviour is always rational and do not take in account that business executives tend to be amoral or hold a pre-reflective morality

# These drawings help ....

- ....people to see themselves through their own drawings and words
- ...compel coworkers to converge their individual point of view with others in an essential way
- ...the ludic atmosphere gives advantages for a wide range of expressions
- ...the group task hide the individual opinions and they do not need to be politically correct
- ....allows a cathartic process that allows to expel bad feelings and bad thoughts about company daily life
- ....to recognize and get surprised about sharing assumptions
- .....to elicit implicit rationalizations collectively hold
- .....to overcome boundary rationality (bounded by emotions and personal interests)
- ...to reduce defensive arguments

# Let's see a metaphor found after analyzing a whole company

- All these drawings are related to WATER
- I have inferred this main metaphor in a chemical company POWER IS WATER
- This inferred is consistent with MONEY IS LIQUID listed in 2 cognitive linguistics' catalogs (Lakoff, Berkeley University and Goatly, Lingnan University).



# Green company

- Chemical products
- 8 years (spin off of a major chemical company)
- Annual turnover  
100.000.000 ARS =  
14.269.696 GBP
- 300 employees
- Sample: 118 people (non unionized employees, not 13 managers, 3 levels) attended the workshops
- Two sees/headquarters.
- Argentine branch of multinational chemical company

# 2 sees (administrative, productive)

## 16 collective drawings

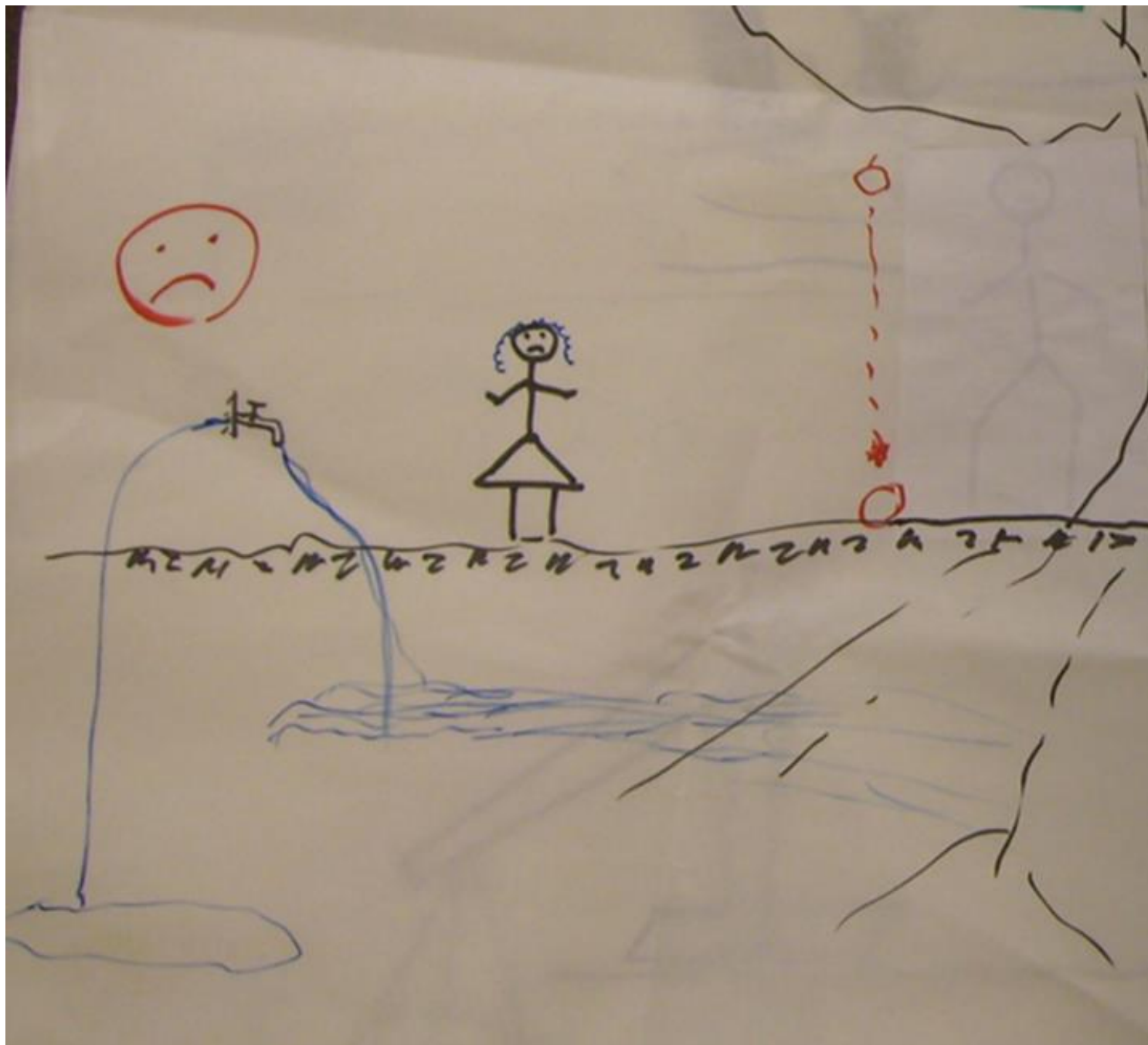
- Factory/plant
- City location 100 km from Buenos Aires
- 59 employees attending workshop
- Administrative HQ
- City location Great Buenos Aires
- 59 employees attending workshop

8-40





3-0-E





# WATER in productive see

## ETIC drawings

- Bucket 2
- Hosepipe
- Water can
- Cork flotating
- Groundwater 4
- Wasted
- Faucet 3
- River 5

## EMIC, researcher's constructs based on verbatim (readings)

- Means POWER OF GROWING
  - of controlling resources
  - of doing sthg that makes the plant to grow
  - To water, to irrigate: to have power, to make efforts to grow, to comply, commitment
  - To absorb/take over water from ground
  - To be irrigated: to be recognized, rewarded, to be payed
  - Life, benefits (river split up)
  - We do commit ourselves with the company. The company is live is our life. So we need to be fairly rewarded







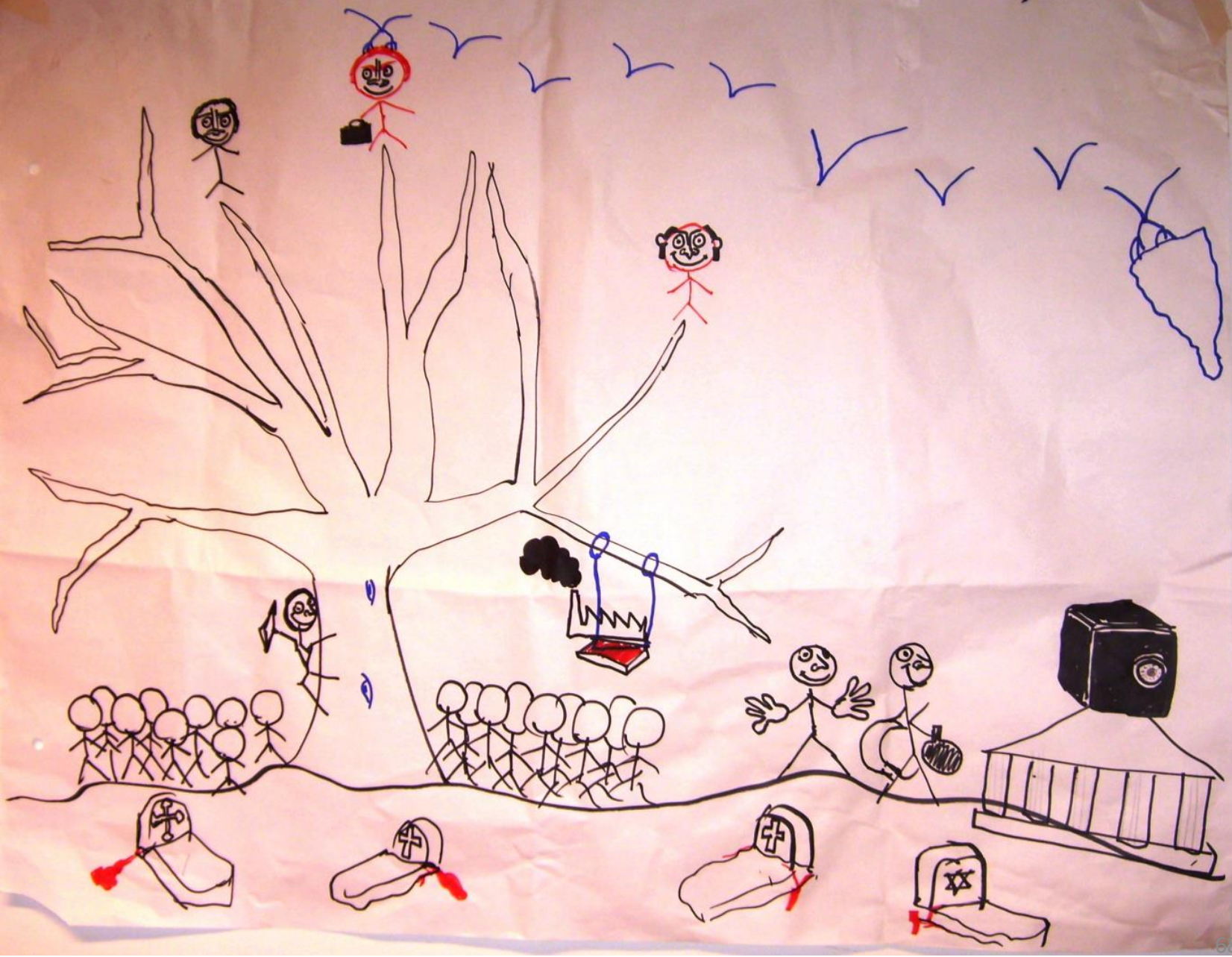








40-8



# WATER in administrative see

- WATER
  - Rain
  - Acid rain
  - Flood
  - Storm
  - Water skull
  - Water vapor
  - Blood (another precious liquid)
  - sea
- Means POWER OF DECISION MAKING
  - Company decides, foreign HQ decides
  - We flood in decisions made by others
  - Our decision is like steam (vapor)
  - Company save us from power (=sea, storm)
  - Labor= blood
  - We feel like complying is not an option. We do not have freedom

## 9. Which is the benefit for the group/the company

- Attendees to the workshop can see themselves in a mirror crafted by themselves.
- They can recognize some shared assumptions taken for granted about how company works and their places within.
- They can contrast their SM with the mindset that *Ethics and Compliance Program* aims to endorse. This program also states how the company should work and the place of the individual within it (f.i. all employees are representatives of shareholders interests, so it is forbidden to receive gifts from suppliers)

# 10- Outcome of this research

- Development of a teaching and research method or an organizational development tool
- Non positivist method/heuristic
- Metaphors and image-schemas are a trustworthy mirror to address shared assumptions

# Book

- <https://www.editorialteseo.com/archivos/14461/la-mentalidad-compartida-en-la-empresa/>