

## WEEK 1

### FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

- Typical OB studies
- The RA
- Fundamental concepts
  - Individuals, Organizations
  - Behavior, Trust, Language
- Case studies

## Typical OB studies

a/The study of organizational behavior:

- Content-wise

The study of OB involves the study of

- Individuals
- teams (or groups)
- organizational systems

- Purpose-wise

OB is studied for organizational improvement

## *Typical OB studies*

The study of organizational behavior is therefore contrived.

In this course the purpose of studying OB is to

- Help students discover their behaviors
- Shed light on complexity
- Propose new concepts to replace tired-old definitions
- Propose a new approach for OB

## Laying ground for the RA

### b/Organizational project

Organizations are typically seen to be a group of individuals who come together because they have a business project that is common to all of them and which is expected to take place for a long period of time.

Consequence: The organization is seen to be a unit. It is an autonomous unit

## Laying ground for the RA

Distinction: But if an organization can be seen to form a group, it is also seen to be constituted by groups or teams of individuals, each having its own business project but only relatively to that of the organization as a whole.

Thus, groups/teams are seen to be the constitutive parts of an organization as a system.

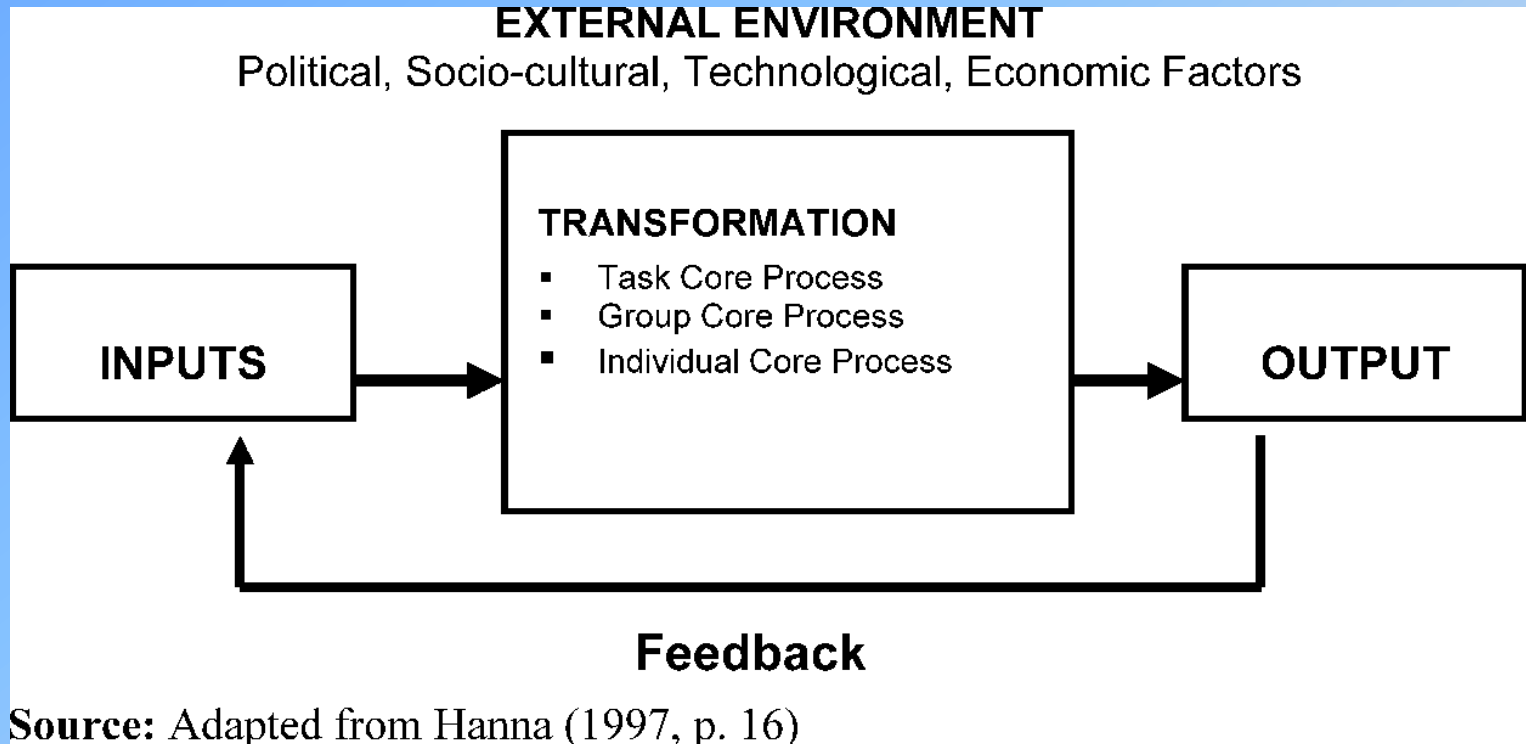
The is this the summative viewpoint.

## *Laying ground for the RA*

Critique of the summative perspective: organizations seen to be the sum of their constituent parts.

However, an organization is dependent on groups and individuals outside of it who have a relative influence on the processes and actions of individuals and teams in the organization – open systems perspective.

## Laying ground for the RA



## *Laying ground for the RA*

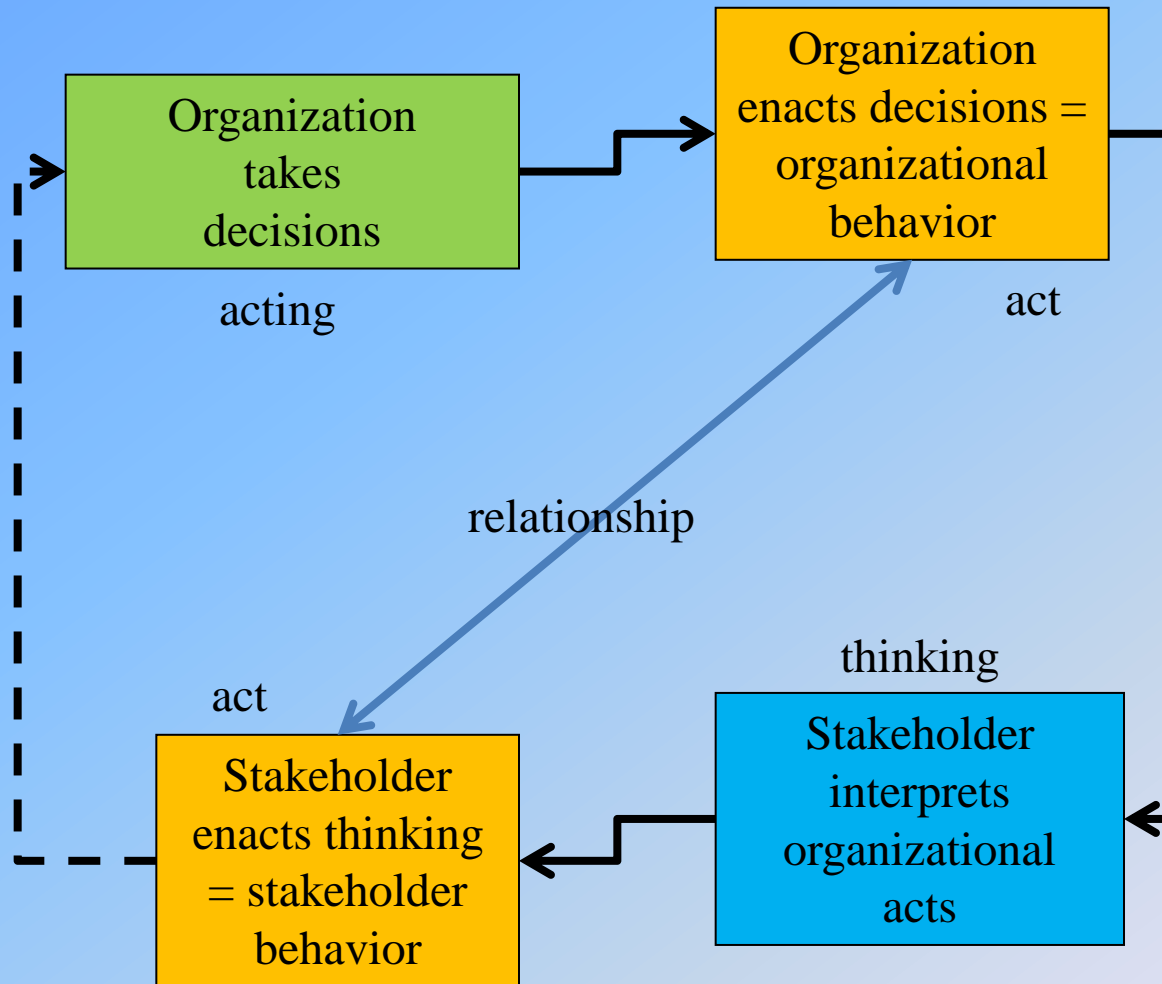
Critique of the open systems perspective: the open systems perspective centers on the organization and downplays relations with stakeholders.

Therefore: a social-relations perspective is necessary. It puts emphasis on relationships rather than autonomy.

Thus the relational approach to OB considers the organization as the result of constellation of relations



## The RA



## *Fundamental concepts*

### a/Individuals

If individuals are biologically autonomous, they are psychologically and socially transduced. This mutual participation involves two flows or transference

- Self to other
- Other to self

The relationship is also characterized by transformation where self and other influence one another

## *Fundamental concepts*

### b/Organizations

Organizations are legally set to be autonomous, but the fact that they depend on resources to exist, they are socially transduced.

Thus the relations an organization has with its stakeholders are relationships of

- Transference – information flows
- Transformation – adapting policies and strategies

## *Fundamental concepts*

Types of transference relative to the power of transformation involve:

Inbound flow 1: the domestic environment has an impact on the business organization in terms of the production resources available (L, K), state policies, passively competitive market structure, and stakeholder desires.

## *Fundamental concepts*

Inbound flow 2: the foreign environment as an impact on the business organization in terms of the production resources (L, K) the firm needs, foreign state policies, foreign dynamic market structures.

Outbound flow 1: the organization influences the domestic environment in terms of the products and services it provides, competitive strategies, advertising impact of dynamically competitive businesses.

## *Fundamental concepts*

Outbound flow 2: the organization influences the foreign environment with its products (exports), competitive strategies, product penetration, and advertising of dynamically competitive businesses.

Non-bound flows: neither the environment (domestic, foreign) impacts on the business organization owing to the size of the firm, nor the business organization on the environments owing to its non-competitive stance.

## *Fundamental concepts*

### c/Behavior

Behavior can be seen to be an enacted thought or desire.

It is not just a way of doing that is publically observable; it is a relation and moreover it is in relation with ways of thinking.

## *Fundamental concepts*

A behavior is therefore an act.

But “act” (*actum*), a what, presupposes “action” (*actio*), a how: the processes carried out within an organization which determine specific acts.

Seen obversely, knowledge of acts gives clues as to the processes, the acting that yields them i.e. thinking. Yet thinking is forever a mystery!



## *Fundamental concepts*

### d/Trust



The following views:

- Interpersonal – trustworthiness
- Functional – stakeholder faith
- Existential – making possible beyond what there is

## Fundamental concepts

### e/Language

“If trust is about making possible, what enables this possibility is language”



### 1/The “being” of language

Language is a descriptive system that consists of

- Signifiers making up the discursive signature
- Signifieds making up the discursive meaning

## *Fundamental concepts*

### 2/Language construction

A discourse as specified and specific language, is the result of choices:

- Signifiers are chosen as per the choice of meaning
- Signifieds are chosen as per the purpose that language must fulfil – ultimately to persuade

## *Fundamental concepts*

### 3/Effect of language construction

The chosen signifiers and signifieds bring about coherence, a myth-ology, premised on 3 features making up the power base of the myth-ology:

- Clout – familiarity and security
- Credibility – replication of values
- Constancy – durability and test for time

## *Fundamental concepts*

### 4/The power base in use

The power base of a myth-ology recruits or summons. Typical summoning strategies include

- Doctrinal summoning – e.g. management discourses
- Archetypical summoning – e.g. marketing discourses

## *Understanding self and others*

Understanding one-self and the others involves grasping a set of behaviors and making sense of them. There are two ways to achieve this

- The self-directed approach: “I inquire upon myself”; the methods include: diaries, narratives
- The other-directed approach: “I inquire upon you”; the methods include: surveys about past and future instances, observations of unfolding instances