in this chapter. Even if you just take the average 7.5 hours per day an individual spends "working" in an organization, you will end up in an organizational environment a little over 111 days per year. If you work for 40 years, you'll basically spend 12 of those years at work. We don't tell you this to scare you, but to help you understand the importance of knowing how to interact and behave in organizations. So, let's get started!

1.1 What is an Organization?

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the three common components of the various definitions of the term "organization."
2. Differentiate among the four types of organizations: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal.

As with any academic endeavor, one must understand what one is studying before one can delve into the specifics and intricacies of the subject matter. For this reason, this section is going to start by defining what is meant by the term "organization" and then looking at three different ways of categorizing different types of organization.

Defining "Organization"

Many people have attempted to define what is meant by the word "organization." Instead of following suit and throwing yet another definition into the mix, we've selected a number of definitions from common dictionary definitions to ones used by business, psychology, economics, and communication scholars. Table 1.1 "Defining "Organization"" contains a partial list of the different types of definitions seen across various academic disciplines.

Table 1.1 Defining "Organization"

Dictionary Definition
(1) the act of organizing or the state of being organized; (2) an organized structure or whole; (3) a business or administrative concern united and constructed for a particular end (4) a body of administrative officials, as of a political party, a government department, etc (5) order or system; method.organization. (2009). Collins English Dictionary—Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Retrieved March 18, 2012, from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/organization

General Business Definitions
"a system of consciously coordinated activities of two or more persons."Barnard, C. I. (1938). *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pg. 73.
"The accomplishment of an objective requires collective effort, men set up an organization designed to coordinate the activities of many persons and to furnish incentives for others to join them for this purpose."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach*. San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 5.
"A social unit of people, systematically structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals on a continuing basis. All organizations have a management structure that determines relationships between functions and positions, and subdivides and delegates roles, responsibilities, and authority to carry out defined tasks. Organizations are open systems in that they affect and are affected by the environment beyond their boundaries."organization. (n.d.). Retrieved March 18, 2012, from BusinessDictionary.com website: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/organization.html
"a Body of individuals working under a defined system of rules, assignments procedures, and relationships designed to achieve identifiable objectives and goals."Greenwald, H. P. (2008). *Organizations: Management without control*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 6.
Organizational Behavior Definitions
"a social unit within which people have achieved somewhat stable relations (not necessarily face-to-face) among themselves in order to facilitate obtaining a set of objectives or goals."Litterer, J. A. (1963). *Organizations: Structured behavior*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, pg. 5.
"an organization is a complex system, which includes as subsystems: (1) management, to interrelate and integrate through appropriate linking processes all the elements of the system in a manner designed to achieve the organizational objectives, and (2) a sufficient number of people so that constant face-to-face interaction is impossible."Lundgren, E. F. (1974). *Organizational management: Systems and process*. San Francisco: Canfield Press, pg. 7.
Economics Definition
A short hand expression for the integrated aggregation of those persons who are primarily involved in: "(1) the undertaking or managing of risk and the handling of economic uncertainty; (2) planning and innovation; (3) coordination, administration and control; (4) and routine supervision" of an enterprise.Harbison, F. (1959). Entrepreneurial organization as a factor in economic development. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 70*, 364–379, pg. 365.
Industrial/Organizational Psychology Definition
"work consists of patterned human behavior and the 'equipment' consists of the human beings."Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York, NY: John Wile & Sons, pg. 55.
"lively sets of interrelated systems [task, structure, technology, people, and the environment] designed to perform complicated tasks."Levitt, H. J. (1972). *Managerial

psychology: An introduction to individuals, pairs, and groups in organizations. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pg. 265.
Organizational Communication Definitions
"social collectives in which people develop ritualized patterns of interaction in an attempt to coordinate their activities and efforts in the ongoing accomplishment of personal and group goals."Kreps, G. L. (1986). Organizational communication. New York: Longman, pg. 5.
"including five critical features—namely, the existence of a social collectivity, organizational and individual goals, coordinated activity, organizational structure, and the embedding of the organization with an environment of other organizations."Miller, K. (2012). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Wasdworth-Cengage, pg. 11.
"Communicative structures of control."Mumby, D. (in press). *Organizational communication*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
"an organized collection of individuals working interdependently within a relatively structured, organized, open system to achieve common goals."Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2009). *Organizational communication for survival: Making work, work* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon, pg. 1.
"an aggregate of persons, arranged in predetermined patterns of relationships, in order to accomplish stated objectives."Redding, W. C. (1964). The organizational communicator. In W. C. Redding & G. A Sanborn (Eds.), *Business and industrial communication: A source book* (pp. 29–58). New York: Harper & Row, pg. 33.

After reading this laundry list of different definitions for the word "organization," you may wonder how you to determine which one is the best? Well, to be honest—we think they all have something to offer. When you look at the various definitions for the word "organization," you will start to see a certain pattern emerge of consistent themes within the definition. Jason WrenchWrench, J. S. (in press). Communicating within the modern workplace: Challenges and prospects. In J. S. Wrench (Ed.), *Workplace communication for the 21st century: Tools and strategies that impact the bottom line: Vol. 1. Internal workplace communication*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. examined a similar list of definitions and concluded that there are three primary features that run through all definitions of the term "organization": the structure, the goal, and the people.

Organizational Structures

The first major theme commonly seen in the various definitions of the word "organization" has to do with **structure**[1]. When we talk about how organizations are structured, we are talking primarily about how they function in terms of what happens both within an organization and how an organizations functions within its external environment. For our purposes, we will look at structure in terms of four

1. How an organization functions in terms of what happens both within the organization itself and within its external environment.

basic processes: external environment, input, throughput, and output (<u>Figure 1.1 "Organizational Structures"</u>)

Figure 1.1 *Organizational Structures*

External Environment

The first factor to consider when thinking about an organization is the external environment that an organization exists in. The **external environment**[2] consists of all vendors, competitors, customers, and other stakeholders who can have an impact on the organization itself but exist outside the boundaries of the organization. Changes in the external environment where an organization exists will have an effect on the organization itself. For example, image that the government is going to pose new regulations on your industry, these new regulations will have an effect on how the organization must function. When it comes to how organizations interact with its external environment, we often refer to two different types of boundaries. An organization that has **open boundaries**[3] allows for the free flow of information to the organization and is more likely able to adapt to changes that occurs within the environment. **Closed boundaries**[4], on the other hand, occur when an organization tries to insulate itself from what is occurring within its environment. When an organization has closed boundaries, that organization ends up being less aware of what is going on within the external environment and sets itself up for major problems or obsolescence.

Input

The next major aspect of an organization's environment involves inputs. **Inputs**[5] are those resources that an organization brings in from the external environment in order for the organization to accomplish its goals. Typically, resources can be discussed in three general categories: physical materials, people, and information. First, organizations bring in physical materials that it needs to accomplish its goals. Whether its computers, desks, light fixtures, or supplies necessary to build silicon microchips, organizations rely on a variety of vendors in the external environment to provide physical materials.

The second type of input necessary from the external environment involves people. People can either come in the forms of workers, which are necessary resources for any organization. An organization is reliant on bringing in skilled workers to help the organization accomplish its goals. One of the biggest complaints many organizations have is a lack of skilled or qualified workers. Depending on the organization, skills or qualifications can run from specific college or graduate

2. All of the vendors, competitors, customers, and other stakeholders who can have an impact on the organization itself but exist outside the boundaries of the organization.

3. Organizations that allow for the free flow of information to the organization and is more likely able to adapt to changes that occurs within the environment.

4. When an organization insulates itself from what is occurring within its external environment.

5. Those resources that an organization brings in from the external environment in order for the organization to accomplish its goals.

degrees to specific industry experience to specific technical know-how. According to Julian L. Alssid, executive director of the Workforce Strategy Center in New York, "Employers seem to be less willing to invest in training in this economy. Again, it is the combination of the right credential and practical experience they look for."Balderrama, A. (2010, February 22). Available jobs, not enough skilled workers [online article]. Retrieved from http://msn.careerbuilder.com/Article/MSN-2192-Job-Search-Available-Jobs-Not-Enough-Skilled-Workers/, Paragraph 7.

The final type of input an organization needs is information. **Information**[6] refers to any data that is necessary for an organization to possess in an effort to create knowledge.Atwood, C. G. (2009). *Knowledge management basics: A complete how-to guide.* Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press. According to the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), data is "is raw and without context and can exist in any form, usable or not."ASTD. (2006). Managing organizational knowledge. In E. Biech (series Ed.), *ASTD Learning System, Vol. 8.* Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, pg. 2. Often organizations end up with piles of data including customer service reports, market trends, and other material typically in the raw, numerical form. Organizations then turn this data into information by giving the data meaning through some kind of interpretation. While most people think of data as purely numerical, there are other non-numerical types of data that can be important to turn into information. For example, if the US congress passes a new law that impacts how your organization must handle customer records, the law may not specifically say how your organization must comply with the law. In this case, the new law is data and your organization must turn that law into usable information in the form of its own policies and procedures. When you combine information with understanding that leads to action, information is transformed from information to knowledge.

So, how do organizations go about acquiring data that can lead to action? ASTD discusses two types of external environment scanning processes that organizations can employ: proactive and reactive.ASTD. (2006). Managing organizational knowledge. In E. Biech (series Ed.), *ASTD Learning System, Vol. 8.* Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press. First, **proactive scanning**[7] occurs when an organization actively looks for data or existing information that could be transformed into useable knowledge. For example, doing research on what your competitors in an effort to stay on top of your market is an example of proactive scanning. The second type of scanning, **reactive scanning**[8] occurs when an organization faces a specific problem or crisis and then either makes sense of data/information it poses or searches the external environment for data or information that could be useful. Ideally, if an organization does a good job with proactive scanning, reactive scanning will not be necessary very often. When an organization is forced to use reactive scanning, time gets wasted as they attempt to find the data/information and turn it into actionable knowledge.

6. Any data that is necessary for an organization to possess in an effort to create knowledge.

7. When an organization actively looks for data or existing information that could be transformed into useable knowledge.

8. When an organization faces a specific problem or crisis and then either makes sense of data/information it poses or searches the external environment for data or information that could be useful.

Throughput

Throughput[9] is ultimately what an organization does with inputs within the confines of the organization itself. Throughput can range from the use physical materials, people, and information to how organizations structure themselves internally to create goal oriented throughput. While we cannot discuss every possible way an organization can utilize inputs, we should note that the issue of internal organizational structure is very important at this level of an organizations. For this reason, we really must discuss two ways that organizations commonly structure hierarchies.

A **hierarchy**[10] is a categorization system where individuals/departments are ranked over other individuals/departments based on skills, centrality, and status. First, organizations can place people/departments over others because of specific skill sets. For example, managers are placed over workers because of their skills in managing people. While we know this isn't always why people get promoted, the general idea of a management class of people is because managers can help organize employees towards the organization's goal(s). Second, people can be ranked over others because of their centrality to the organization's goals. For example, if your organization is a tech company, the product developers may be ranged structurally over people in customer support or marketing because without the product developers there is no need for customer support or marketing. Lastly, organizations can be organized based on status, an individual's relative position to others as a result of esteem, privilege, or responsibility. When someone gets promoted to a higher position, her or his status increases in terms of a formal hierarchy. Whether that promotion is a result of esteem, privilege, or responsibility doesn't matter at this point, only the elevation within the hierarchy.

Now that we've discussed what a hierarchy is, let's talk about the two common ways that organizations are typically patterned: flat vs. tall hierarchies (Figure 1.2 "Hierarchies").

Figure 1.2   Hierarchies

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9. What an organization does with inputs within the confines of the organization itself.

10. A categorization system where individuals/departments are ranked over other individuals/departments based on skills, centrality, and status.

11. Any stimuli that could elicit meaning that is not contained in words themselves.

The first image in Figure 1.2 "Hierarchies" represents **tall hierarchies**[11], they are called such because they represent many, many hierarchical layers between those at the bottom of the hierarchy and those at the top of the hierarchy. Two commonly discussed tall hierarchies are the Catholic Church and the US military. With the Catholic Church, you have the average parishioner at the bottom of the hierarchy the Pope at the top of the hierarchy. In the US military, you have your average enlisted soldier at the bottom of the hierarchy and the President of the United

States (in her/his commander in chief title) at the top of the hierarchy. In both cases, the people at the bottom have little or no communication with those at the top of the hierarchy.

The second image in <u>Figure 1.2 "Hierarchies"</u> represents **flat hierarchies**[12] where there are only a couple of hierarchical layers between those at the bottom and those at the top of the hierarchy. Think of these organizations like mom and pop restaurants. In a typical small restaurant, the owner may also serve as the chef and may only have a handful of waitstaff, table bussers, and dish cleaners as employees. In these hierarchies, it is very easy for those at the bottom of the hierarchy to communicate with those at the top of the hierarchy.

Output

The final aspect related to organizational structure is **output**[13], which is the ultimate product or service that an organization disseminates back to the external environment. Whether one is create the components of a cell phone or sending computer technicians to people's homes, every organization is designed to produce some kind of service or product for the external environment. Even nonprofit organizations like the American Red Cross are producing a range of both products and services for the external environment.

Organizational Goals

Organizations have many goals, but it helps to clarify those goals into a simple typology (classification into ordered categories). Edward Gross examined the various types of organizational goals and created a simple typology consisting of five distinct goals that organizations have: output, adaptation, management, motivation, and positional.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294.

Output

The first type of goal that organizations commonly have are referred to as output goals, or organizational goals that are "reflected, immediately or in the future, in some product, service, skill or orientation which will affect (and is intended to affect) that society."Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294, pg. 287. While Gross was initially discussing goals in terms of educational organizations, the goals also apply to other organizational types as well. In essence, every organization has some type of output goal that will be released back into the external environment. For a pizza chain, the output goal could be the pizza it delivers to your house (product); the customer

12.

13. The ultimate product or service that an organization disseminates back to the external environment.

service it gives customers (service); or the expertise in pizza making it brings to the enterprise (skill).

Adaptation

The second type of organizational goal argued by Edward Gross are adaptation goals, or goals that an organization has in terms of adapting to the external environment.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. All organizations exist in environments that change, and successful organizations are going to change and adapt to that external environment. One of the biggest risks many organizations face if they do not adapt to the external environment is obsolescence, which "occurs when there is a significant decline in customer desire for an organization's products or services."Wrench, J. S. (2012). *Casing organizational communication.* Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt, pg. 11. Many organizations becomes so focused on making a specific product that the product eventually is no longer wanted or needed by customers, which will lead to the eventual death of an organization.

Management

The next type of organizational goal discussed by Edward Gross are management goals, which involves three types of decisions: (1) who will manage or run an organization, (2) how to handle conflict management, and (3) output goal prioritization.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. First, organizations need to decide on the formal structure of an organization and who will exist at various rungs of the hierarchy. In addition to determining the formal structure, these goals also determine what type of and who holds power within the organizational hierarchy. Second, managerial goals focus on how conflicts within the organization will be handled. Organizations have a vested interest in keeping the organization running smoothly, so too much conflict can lead to interpersonal or inter-departmental bickering that has negative consequences for the organization. Lastly, management goals determine the overarching direction of the organization itself. As the saying goes, someone has to steer the ship. We'll discuss different types of leaders in Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives", but for now we'll just note that having a clear direction and clear prioritization of the products and services an organization has is very important for the health of an organization. If an organization tries to do too much, the organization may end up scatter-brained and not function as a cohesive whole. If the organization tries to do one and only one thing, the organization may become obsolescent. Overall, people in management must place output goal prioritization very high on the to-do-list.

Motivation

The fourth common goal organizations have, as discussed by Edward Gross, are motivational goals or goals set out to ensure that all employees are satisfied and remain loyal to the organization.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. There is a wealth of research that has examined the importance of employee motivation on job satisfaction and worker productivity.Latham, G. P. (2007). *Work motivation: History, theory, research, and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. In a study conducted by Whitman, Van Rooy, and ViswesvaranWhitman, D. S., Van Rooy, D. L., & Viswesvaran, C. (2010). Satisfaction, citizenship behaviors, and performance in work units: A meta-analysis of collective construct relations. *Personnel Psychology, 63*, 41–81. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.2009.01162.x, the researchers examined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee productivity across 73 different research studies that have examined the subject. Overall, the researchers concluded that satisfied employees were more productive. Secondly, ensuring that employees are motivated also helps to ensure that employees remain loyal to an organization. According to Hart and Thompson, employee loyalty is "an individual's perception that both parties to a relationship [employee and organization] have fulfilled reciprocal expectations that 1) demote enduring attachment between two parties, and that 2) involve self-sacrifice in the face of alternatives, and that 3) are laden with obligations of duty."Hart, D. W., & Thompson, J. A. (2007). Untangling employee loyalty: A psychological contract perspective. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 17*, 297–323, pg. 300. By this definition employees are loyal because they knowingly enter into a relationship with an organization, sacrifice part of themselves to the organization (and vice versa), and thus feel a sense of obligation or duty to the organization. Of course, loyalty only works when an employee feels that the organization is standing up to its end of the reciprocal expectations. If an employee feels that an organization is not meeting its basic obligations, then the employee will view that organization unkindly and the employees loyalty will diminish over time.Hajdin, M. (2005). Employee Loyalty: An Examination. *Journal Of Business Ethics, 59*, 259–280. doi:10.1007/s10551-005-3438-4 As such, organizations must strive to make one of its goals ensuring that it is meeting its basic obligations towards employees in an effort to foster employee loyalty.

Positional

The final type of organizational goal described by Edward Gross are positional goals, which are goals that attempt to position an organization within the environment in comparison to other organizations within the same market.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. For example, imagine that your organization is an automotive tool manufacturer. Your organization will attempt to position itself against other automotive tool manufacturers that exist in the market. There are two common ways to position

one's self within a specific market: 1) higher volume at a lower price or 2) higher quality at a higher price. The first way to position one's self within a market is to create more products or faster service at a cheaper cost. The second way to position one's self in the market is to create a luxury product/service that costs more. While the product or service costs more, you provide the appearance of being the luxury brand. In a 2011 article in *PCWorld*, the authors mention that 56% of new cellphone users were purchasing an Android device as compared to only 28% that purchased an iOS (iPhone) device.Kellog, D. (2011, September 26). In U.S. market, new smartphone buyers increasingly embracing Android [Press release]. Retrieved from http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/in-u-s-market-new-smartphone-buyers-increasingly-embracing-android/ Simply put, the Android is cheaper and there are more versions of the Android available for cellphone subscribers. Only Apple makes iOS compatible cellphones and they are typically more expensive than Android devices. Apple has historically set itself up as a luxury line in the computing industry while PCs and now Android cellphones are cheaper and made for the mass market. Interestingly, iPhones actually only account for 4% of the overall cell phone market in November 2011, but accounted for 52% of industry profits.Hamburger, E. (2011, December 7). These charts tell the real story of Android vs. *Business Insider*. iPhone. Retrieved from http://www.businessinsider.com/android-vs-iphone-charts-2011-12 Clearly, the iPhone may not be getting a strong percentage of the market share, but it is still beating out its competition.

Organizational People

The final characteristic common the various definitions of the word "organization" involves people. In Jason Wrench's original discussion of the three common themes related to people, he discussed interdependency, interaction, and leadership.Wrench, J. S. (in press). Communicating within the modern workplace: Challenges and prospects. In J. S. Wrench (Ed.), *Workplace communication for the 21st century: Tools and strategies that impact the bottom line: Vol. 1. Internal workplace communication.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. For our purposes, we also pose the notion of control as an important factor related to people as well.

Interdependency

The first term associated with people in organizations is the concept of interdependency. **Interdependency**[14] is mutual dependence or depending on one another. Interdependency is the notion that people within an organization are dependent upon one another to achieve the organization's goals. If one part of the organization stops functioning properly, it will impact the other parts of the organization. For example, imagine you are a copyeditor for a publisher in New York City. If you get behind on your job, the graphic designers, marketing

14. Mutual dependence or depending on one another.

professionals, printers, and other groups of people will also get behind. At the same time, interdependency can also help an organization. If you working with a solid group of colleagues, if something happens to get you behind others can help pull the slack and keep things moving forward on schedule. Overall, people impact each other in organizations.

Interaction

Our interactions with others help define and create what is an organization. Without the interactions we have with our coworkers, customers, and other stakeholders, an organization really doesn't exist. For this reason, you can almost say that the "thing" we call an organization doesn't really exist because it's not a physical structure, but rather an organization is the outcome of our interactions with others. An organization may have physical things within it (desks, computers, pencils, etc.), but the actual organization is ultimately the people that make exist.

At the same time, people within an organization also interact with each other in various roles in an effort to accomplish the organization's goal(s). People within organizations and people who come in contact with organizations are constantly in a state of interaction. As we will learn later in this book, organizations have many different stakeholders (an individual or group that has an interest in the organization), and each different set of stakeholders requires different communication strategies. Ultimately, communicative interaction is one of the most basic functions of any organization.

Control

As the definition of organization from Dennis Mumby, organizations are inherently entities that must control the behavior of its members while members generally strive for their own sets of needs.Mumby, D. (in press). *Organizational communication.* Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. When one group has one set of needs and desires and another has a different set of needs and desires, we refer to these groups as being in dialectical tensions. Table 1.2 "Dialectical Tensions" contains many of the dialectical tensions that exist between organizations and its various members.

Table 1.2 Dialectical Tensions

What the Organization Needs/Wants	What Workers Need/Want
Minimize Costs	Maximize Salary/Benefit Package
Systemization of Job Duties	Autonomy to do one's job

What the Organization Needs/Wants	What Workers Need/Want
Ability to Streamline the Organization	Job Stability
Agreement	Dissent
Transparency	Privacy
Conventionality	Innovation
Organization-Focused	Self-Focused
Permanence	Change
Rights of the Organization	Rights of the Individual
Work life	Social life

As a result of these inherent dialectical tensions, organizations try to stack the deck in its favor to maximize its needs and desires, and subsequently minimizes the needs and desires of workers in the process. Let's briefly examine each of these dialectical tensions in turn.

Minimize Costs vs. Maximize Salary/Benefits. The first dialectical tensions occurs when organizations try to keep their overhead costs low while workers try to maximize what they earn in terms of both salary and benefits (insurance, stock options, retirement, etc.).

Systemization vs. Autonomy. Organizations like stability, so they prefer workers who learn how to do a specific task and then systematize that task in the most efficient manner. As such, organizations (especially in manufacturing contexts) will train in explicit detail exactly how an employee should accomplish a task. Workers, on the other hand, prefer to have autonomy when making decisions for how best to accomplish their daily work and do not enjoy being micromanaged.

Streamline vs. Stability. Organizations are fundamentally focused on the bottom line, and therefore often want to have the ability to streamline the organization in an attempt to maximize profits. If an organization can lay off workers and maintain maximum productivity, then it's often in the organization's best interest to do so. While streamlining is good for an organization, it can create a chaotic environment for employees who crave job stability. Workers want to know that their work is appreciated and it will keep them employed.

Agreement vs. Dissent. The next dialectical tension listed here is agreement vs. dissent. In this tension, organizations prefer for workers to blindly follow and do what organizational leaders dictate. Workers, on the other hand, want to have a

voice to articulate when they disagree with the dictates of leaders or the general direction of the organization. We'll explore the area of organizational dissent more in Chapter 5 "Communicating Between and Among Internal Stakeholders".

Conventionality vs. Innovation. Organizations are innately slow moving organisms that do not like change, so it's very common to hear "But we've *always* done it that way." Workers on the other hand want to bring their own creative problem solving skills to the table and think of new and innovative processes and procedures that could benefit both the organizations and the workers. While not all worker ideas spot-on, organizations that stick to conventional ways of thinking may end up losing a lot of employees who prefer more freedom to be innovative.

Transparency vs. Privacy. In our world today organizations are increasingly want to know what workers are doing in the workplace. As such, organizations expect that employee's work lives are completely transparent and will do everything from monitoring e-mail and telephone calls to installing software on workers' computers that logs and monitors key strokes made on a keyboard. Workers, on the other hand, are increasingly demanding that there be some privacy especially in their digital lives.

Organization vs. Self-Focused. Organizations innately want workers to be focused on their jobs and improving their productivity. Workers, on the other hand, want to focus on themselves and improving themselves. Many organizations will support self-improvement as long as it has a clear benefit for the organization, but workers often want to focus on their own improvement even if that improvement has no benefits for the organization or may lead the worker to find a new organization.

Permanence vs. Change. When looking at the permanence/change dialectic, organizations strive to maintain knowledge and thus keep people who are hard workers for the long haul. Often, organizations call this employee loyalty. Workers on the other hand, desire change and can get very bored doing the same work day-in and day-out. Often workers become pigeonholed in specific jobs with specific duties, that there is no way to get out besides leaving the organization itself. Overall, organizations in our society have many more tools at its disposal to get its way than do workers.

Organizational vs. Individual Rights. Ultimately, when it comes to organizations the focus is on the organization and its rights and less on the individual's rights. Workers believe that their human rights shouldn't stop at the front door of the organization. For example, many workers are shocked when organizations fire them for posts that are made on social networking websites. Workers believe these posts should be private and organizations looking at these posts is a violation of

one's privacy rights. Organizations, on the other hand, believe looking at social networking site posts is a completely appropriate behavior and well within its rights as an organization. While this specific example also overlaps with the transparency/privacy dialectic, the focus here is on whose rights are more important.

Work vs. Social Life. The last dialectical tension associated with organizational control is the focus on work vs. social life. Organizations believe that workers should be focused purely on their work life. As a result of digital technology, it has become increasingly easier for people to be on call 24-7 by their organizations. Workers, on the other hand, believe they are entitled to a social life that does not involve one's organization. Furthermore, workers often believe that as long as their private, social life behavior does not impact their work life, their organization's should stay out of their personal lives. Many organizations go so far as to include "morality clauses" into contracts that enable them to fire employees whose person-life behavior is deemed inappropriate for organizational members.

Leadership

The last term associated with people in organizations is leadership. Any organization must have an individual or clearly discernible group that guides the organization towards accomplishing its goal(s). Without strong leadership, individual members of an organization are left to their own ideas of how to accomplish the organization's goals. Basically, if you have too many people trying to lead, you'll end up with an organization that is stretched entirely too thin to accomplish anything.

The opposite of leadership is followership. If an organization is going to thrive, it must have strong leadership and followers who are willing to follow that leader. In Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives" we'll examine leadership and followership.

Types of Organizations

The last factor in understanding organizations is to realize that there are numerous types of organizations. For a good overview of the different taxonomies that have been created trying to categorize these different types of organizations, we recommend reading Carper and Snizek's article on the subject.Carper, W. B., & Snizek, W. E. (1980). The nature and types of organizational taxonomies: An overview. *Academy of Management Review, 5*, 65–75. For our purposes in this book, we are going to use the classification scheme originally posed by Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott.Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative*

approach (2004 printing). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Blau and Scott created a taxonomy of organizations that included four distinct categories: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal.

Mutual Benefit Associations

The first type of organization that exists is the **mutual benefit organization**[15], which is focused on providing for its membership. Some examples are "political parties, unions, fraternal associations, clubs, veterans' organizations, professional associations, and religious sects."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 45. People generally join these types of organizations because of the benefits of membership. When these organizations are first being created, organizational members are generally very involved in the creation of the organization. However, once one of these organizations has been around for a while, the majority of the members become passive and let the minority run the organization.

Business Concerns

The second type of organization is the **business concerns organization**[16], which is focused on doing well for the organization itself. According to Blau and Scott, the "dominant problem of business concerns is that of operating efficiency—the achievement of maximum gain at minimum cost in order to further survival and growth in competition with other organizations." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 49. Most for-profit organizations will fall into the business concerns organization. Business concerns organizations are faced with problems associated with "maximizing operating efficiency in a competitive situation."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 43. Because of the need to cut costs and maintain a competitive advantage, these organizations are often cold and calloused in how they treat its members and customers.

Service Organizations

According to Blau and Scott, **service organizations**[17] are "one whose prime beneficiary is the part of the public in direct contact with the organization, with whom and on whom its members work—in short, an organization whose basic function is to serve clients." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 51. Service organizations can include "social-work agencies, hospitals, schools, legal aid societies, and mental health clinics." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 51. The basic problem service organizations face is "the problems associated with the conflict between professional service to

15. Organization focused on providing for its membership.

16. Organization focused on doing well profitably for the organization and its stakeholders.

17. Organization whose prime concern is providing products or services for a specific public clientele.

clients and administrative procedures are characteristic of service organizations." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach*. San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 43. Often service organizations are steeped in organizational hierarchies and procedures that prohibit providing the easiest and fastest service to potential clients.

Commonweal Organizations

The last type of organization discussed by Blau and Scott are **commonweal organizations**[18] "where the prime beneficiary is the public-at-large."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach* (2004 printing). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pg. 44. Some examples of commonweal organizations include "the State Department, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, military services, police and fire departments, and also the research function as distinguished from the teaching function in universities."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach*. San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 54. All of these organizations were created because they represented areas where the general public needed some level of protection or knowledge or the organization serves administrative purposes of the government. Overall, the crucial problem posed "by commonweal organizations is the development of democratic mechanisms whereby they can be externally controlled by the public." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach* (2004 printing). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pg. 43.

18. Organization designed to benefit society at large.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- When one analyzes a variety of definitions for the term "organization," three common themes tend to emerge: the structure, the goal, and the people. Organizational structure examines how an organization functions both internally and with its larger external environment. The goal is the general purpose a group of people is trying to achieve. Lastly, the people refer to the various internal and external stakeholders associated with the organization.
- There are four common organizational types: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal. Mutual benefit organizations are designed to help the individuals who belong to the group (e.g., fraternities, sororities, clubs, etc...). Business concerns organizations are primarily concerned with turning a profit for the organization and its shareholders (e.g. anything from Walmart and Citibank to your local grocery story or restaurant). The third type of organization is the service organization, which is geared towards providing a specific service to people within society (e.g., hospitals, legal-aid societies, etc...). Lastly, commonweal organizations are those that are generally run by the government for the greater good of society (e.g., the military, fire/police departments, department of education, etc...).

EXERCISES

1. Think of an organization you currently belong to (or have belong to in the past). Looking at Figure 1.1 "Organizational Structures", how has your organization interacted with its environment with regards to input, throughput, and output.?
2. Of the ten dialectical tensions discussed in Table 1.2 "Dialectical Tensions", which one do you think has the strongest impact on an organization you current belong to (or has belong to in the past)? Why do you think this dialectical tension causes the most imbalance of control?
3. From your own organizational interactions, find two different organizations that fit into each of the four types of organizations: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal.

1.2 What is Communication?

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define and explain what is meant by the term "human communication."
2. Explain the basic model of communication and how it applies to the organizational context.

First and foremost, there is no agreed upon definition of the word "communication" by various scholars. In fact, various scholars have attempted to examine the term and generally found that there are a vast array of different approaches to understanding the term.Dance, F. E. X. (1970). The "concept" of communication. *The Journal of Communication, 20*, 201–210.'Dance, F. X. (1984). What is communication?: Nailing Jello to the wall. *Association for Communication administration Bulletin, 48*, 4–7.'Losee, R. M. (1999). Communication defined as complementary informative processes. *Journal of Information, Communication and Library Science, 5*(3), 1–15.'Nilsen, T. R. (1957). On defining communication. *Speech Teacher, 6*(1), 10–17. In one of the most exhaustive examination of the types of definitions created by various academics, Frank Dance examined 95 unique definitions and broke them down into fifteen different types of definitions.Dance, F. E. X. (1970). The "concept" of communication. *The Journal of Communication, 20*, 201–210. While all of these definitions may exist, not all of them are clearly applicable for our purposes as we study organizational communication. For this reason, we are going to focus on defining the term "human communication."

The first step in defining the term "human communication" is to acknowledge that the attempt you are making is one in a voice of many. The definition of "human communication" we will provide here is not necessarily the best or the one most commonly used in every communicative context, but it is the one we will use to guide this book. In the words of Frank Dance when he wrote about what makes human communication human, "Human communication is indeed a dappled thing, swift, slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim. The search for its essence and the study of its meaning is a search rich in the doing, not in the done."Dance, F. E. X. (1980). Swift,

slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim: What makes human communication human. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 44*, 60–63, pg. 63.

For the purposes of this book, we define **human communication**[19] as the process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. This definition can be easily broken down into a series of characteristics: source, message, channel, and receiver. Figure 1.3 "Basic Model of Communication" provides a general representation of what this model looks like within the public speaking context, but can easily be applied to other communicative contexts (interpersonal communication, small group/team communication, mass communication, etc.). Let's briefly break this definition and model down into four core areas that must be understood: process, source, message, channel, and receiver.

Figure 1.3 *Basic Model of Communication*

Process

First, and foremost, it is important for anyone studying communication to remember that communication is a **process**[20], which indicates that there are no distinct beginnings to communication nor ends. By process, we mean that communication is a series of interactions that alter with time and produce changes in those involved in the interactions. We should also mention that there are many external factors that can influence the process as well. The success or failure of informative or persuasive attempts can alter how people interact with each other in future interactions. Additionally, one's cultural background can affect how people approach the communicative process. In essence, there are a number of factors that are constantly at play within an interaction that effect the communication process.

Source

The "**source**[21]" is the individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning. To help us understand the role of the source we will look at the two major components here: individual/group and message.

19. The process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.

20. The notion that there are no distinct beginnings to communication nor ends.

21. The individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning.

Individual vs. Group

We refer to this position in the basic communication model as either an individual or a group because depending on the communicative context, the source of a message could represent a single person's ideas or an entire group's ideas. For example, if you are providing an employee feedback about her or his job performance, the message you are sending may come from you and you alone. However, if you are the CEO of a corporation delivering a press conference, your message may be coming out of your mouth but may represent dozens of individuals involved in the crafting of the message. Often receivers are completely unaware of the number of people involved in the crafting and filtering of a message before they receive the message itself. Furthermore, in the position as a CEO, you would also be viewed as the mouthpiece of the organization, so anything you say is also attributed to the organization, which could represent thousands of people.

Message

The basic goal of the source is to take an idea that is occurring in her or his mind and someone transmit that same idea to another person (or persons). The "idea" someone is trying to send to a receiver is the **message**[22]. We refer to this transmission of a message from the source to the receiver as "stimulating meaning" because the source is attempting to transmit the idea in her or his head and communicate in such a fashion that the receiver will understand the idea in the same way as the source. One very important caveat to stimulating meaning is ensuring that meaning is actually achieved. One of the biggest mistakes some novice managers have is assuming that if they tell an employee something, their message has actually been understood in the way it was intended to be understood. As such, it's very important to ensure a receiver is understanding the meaning of a message in the way a source intends for that message to be understood.

One of our coauthors was recently involved in a labor negotiation. The employees in the organization believed that the organization was financially healthy and thus they deserved better pay. The organization, on the other hand was not financially healthy. The discrepancy between the two arose because there was a pot-of-money that the employees believed could be tapped to give them raises. Unfortunately, that specific pot-of-money was untouchable because the organization oversaw the management of the money but could not actually use the money for its own devices. As a peripheral member of the negotiations, our coauthor recommended that the organization get its auditing firm to clearly specify in a note to the employee negotiators what the uses of the fund were. Our coauthor realized that the organization's negotiators had a problem communicating this message because the receivers viewed them as biased. By having the outside (and thus impartial) auditing team craft the specific message, the employee negotiators finally

22. The "idea" someone is trying to send to a receiver.

understood the problem backed down on their demands. This example involves both problems sending a message (from the organization to the employee negotiators) and then a solution to ensure understanding (from the auditing firm to the employee negotiators). The example also illustrates another common problem with transmissions of messages, receivers must see the source as credible and trustworthy or the receivers may dismiss the message as inherently biased.

Channel

When a source decides to create a message, he or she can rely on three primary channels to send that message. A **channel**[23] is "*the means by which a message is carried from one person to another* [emphasis in original]."Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, pg. 10. As we are discussing human communication, break these channels into three distinct types: verbal, nonverbal, and mediated.

Verbal

The **verbal**[24] channel consists of specific spoken sounds that represent real phenomena or ideas. For example, when we say the word "office," we know that the letters o-f-f-i-c-e do not represent an actual physical location but rather the idea of a location where work occurs. Of course, for understanding to occur, the source and the receiver must have the same understanding for how words are intended to be understood. In fact ensuring that people communicating in an organization are using the same lexicon is such a common problem that there are numerous humor books that have been written on the subject.Beckwith, L. (2006) *The dictionary of corporate bullshit: An A to Z lexicon of empty, enraging, and just plain stupid office talk.* New York, NY: Broadway Books.'Fugere, B., Hardaway, C., Warshawsky, J. (2005). *Why business people speak like idiots: A bullfighter's guide*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Nonverbal

The second channel people can transmit a message through is the **nonverbal**[25] channel, which encompasses any stimuli that could elicit meaning that is not contained in words themselves. Everything from how someone gestures, looks (physical attractiveness, dress, jewelry, etc.), sounds, smells, etc... can impact how others will view that person. Research has indicated that between 65 to 95% of someone's understanding of a verbal message is dependent upon the nonverbal behavior associated with the verbal message.Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. For examine, imagine you walk into a colleague's office and she's clearly red-faced and her fists are clenched. You ask her

23. The means by which a message is carried from one person to another.

24. Specific spoken sounds that represent real phenomena or ideas.

25. Any stimuli that could elicit meaning that is not contained in words themselves.

how she's doing and she flatly responds, "fine." If you pay attention to only the verbal message sent, "fine," you will interpret her message as she's excellent (like fine wine). However, when you interpret her nonverbal behavior, you'll quickly ascertain that she is far from "excellent" but may not want to talk about what happened at the moment.

Mediated

The last channel a source can send a message through is a **mediated**[26] channel. A mediated message is any message that is sent using some kind of technology (print-form, auditory, visual, electronic, etc...). Historically, some of the earliest writings on communicating with employees were about creating employee newsletters to communicate better. In today's technologically advanced world, we are increasingly spending more and more time communicating with each other at work using mediated computer technologies. From e-mail, to Skype, to Twitter, LinkedIn, to blogs and vlogs, to who knows what comes next, we are increasingly becoming more and more dependent on mediated forms of communication in the workplace.

Receiver

While we've discussed the receiver a message throughout the entire section, we should note that the **receiver**[27](s) is ultimately the person interpreting and understanding a source's message. When a receiver attends to a source's message, he or she must interpret that message in light of her or his understanding of the message. If the source uses unfamiliar words, the receiver may not accurately interpret the message in the intended way. For this reason, it's important for a source to consider any feedback the receiver sends about the message to ensure that understanding has occurred.

A Few Notes About The Basic Model

While this model presents communication in an easily digestible, linear fashion, we also recognize that in many communicative contexts (like a business meeting) we may be functioning in the roles of source and receiver simultaneously. The definition presented here (as well as the basic model) are starting points for understanding human communication that have been developed and expanded upon since the 1940s.Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The mathematical theory of communication.* Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.'Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, pg. 10.

26. Any message that is sent using some kind of technology (print-form, auditory, visual, electronic, etc...).

27. The person interpreting and understanding a source's message.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Human communication is the process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.
- The basic model of communication examines four basic components: source, message, channel, and receiver. The source of a message is the individual or group who is originating an idea and attempting to transmit that idea to another person or persons. The message is the idea that is attempting to be transmitted. The channel is the specific method of communication an individual uses to convey a specific message: verbal (the use of words), nonverbal (other communicative characteristics outside of the words themselves), and mediated (the use of technology to convey a message). Lastly, the receiver is the individual who is targeted for a message who receives the message and then has to make sense of the message itself.

EXERCISES

1. Look at the definition of human communication provided in this book. Do you think this definition accurately reflects how humans communicate with one another? Why or why not?
2. Image you've been asked to run a meeting consisting of five people. Explain how a meeting consisting of five people would relate to the basic model of communication.

1.3 History of Organizational Communication

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the three different ways the term "organizational communication" can be understood according to Stanley Deetz.
2. Define the term "organizational communication" as it is used within this book.
3. Identify some of the major historical events in the creation of the field of "organizational communication."

Now that we've examined what we mean by "human communication" in this book, let's switch gears and discuss the nature of "organizational communication." To help us understand what is meant by the term "organizational communication," we'll explore differing ways of viewing the term and then a basic conceptual definition that we will use in this book.

Ways of Viewing Organizational Communication

Stanley Deetz argues that defining what is meant by the term "organizational communication" is only half the question. "A more interesting question is, 'What do we see or what are we able to do if we think of organizational communication in one way versus another?' Unlike a definition, the attempt here is not to get it right but to understand our choices." Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual Foundations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3–46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pg. 4. Instead, Deetz recommends that we attempt to understand the three conceptualizations that are available to "organizational communication" scholars and students: the discipline, ways to describe organizations, and a phenomenon within organizations.

"Organizational Communication" as a Discipline

The first way the term "organizational communication" is commonly used is as a descriptor tool that refers to a specific sub-division of the communication field. However, organizational communication is not an academic area of study unique to the field of communication studies. Because organizational communication is a unique discipline there are courses, books, and degrees all associated with the study of organizational communication. According to Dennis K. Mumby and Cynthia Stohl, "A community of scholars constitutes a disciplinary matrix when they share a set of paradigmatic assumptions about the stud of a certain phenomenon."Mumby, D., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 50–72, pg. 52. In essence, organizational communication is a discipline because people who study it share a common conception of the study of this thing called "organizational communication." Mumby and Stohl go on to note that "This does not mean that there is a consensus on every issue, but rather that scholars see objects of study in similar ways, and use the same language game in describing these phenomena." Mumby, D., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 50–72, pg. 52. In fact, you may find your teacher or even yourself disagreeing with our interpretation of certain aspects of organizational communication, which is very much a normal part of any academic discipline.

"Organizational Communication" as a Descriptor

The second way we can view the term "organizational communication" is as descriptor for what happens within organizations. Deetz explains, "to think of communication as a way to describe and explain organizations. In the same way that psychology, sociology, and economics can be thought of as capable of explaining organizations' processes, communication might also be thought of as a distinct mode of explanation or way of thinking about organizations." Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual Foundations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3–46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pg. 5. As you will quickly see in this book, organizational communication as it has been studied in the past and continues to be studied today is a hybrid field, which means that people in a variety of different academic areas conduct research on the topic. People in anthropology, business, psychology, sociology, and other academic areas conduct research that is fundamentally about organizational communication. Communication scholars differ in how we approach organizational communication because our training is first, and foremost, in human communication, so we bring a unique history and set of tools to the stud of organizational communication that other scholars do not possess.

"Organizational Communication" as a Phenomenon

The final way one can view the term "organizational communication" is to view it as a specific phenomenon or set of phenomena that occurs within an organization. For example, when two employees get into a conflict at work, they are enacting organizational communication. When the chief financial officer of an organization is delivering a PowerPoint presentation on the latest quarterly earnings to the organization's board of directors, he or she is engaging in organizational communication. The latest advertisement campaign an organization has created for the national media is another example of organizational communication.

A Conceptual Definition of "Organizational Communication"

The definition we will use for organizational communication in this book stems primarily out of the last of Deetz's three views of "organizational communication." Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual Foundations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3–46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. For the purposes of this book, we define **organizational communication**[28] as the process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages. You'll notice the similarities between this definition and the one we provided earlier for human communication. Let's break this definition down by exploring the primary unique factor in this definition, organizational stakeholders.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of Business Terms*, a **stakeholder**[29] is "any party that has an interest in an organization. Stakeholders of a company include stockholders, bondholders, customers, suppliers, employees, and so forth."Scott, D. L. (Ed.). (2009). stakeholder. In *The American heritage dictionary of business terms* (p. 503). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. As discussed in the Preface of this book, there are a range of different stakeholders that exist for an organization. Here is just a short list of some of the stakeholders within an organization: workers, managers, shareholders, etc... Every organization also has to be concerned with stakeholders who exist within the organization's external environment: competitors, community members, governmental agencies, etc... Basically, every organization has a wide range of stakeholders that it must attend to in order to run itself smoothly.

A History of Organizational Communication

Instead of providing a long, drawn out history of the field of organizational communication as we know it today, we've provided you a brief timeline dating

28. The process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.

29. Any individual or group who has an interest within the organization.

back to the 1750s when the Industrial Revolution began in the United Kingdom. The introduction of steam-powered machinery forever changed the way businesses operated and led to the eventual creation of the modern corporation. <u>Table 1.3 "Major Events in Organizational Communication"</u> is a summary of the major events in the history of organizational communication. This table is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but only a representative list of some of the major key-moments in the study of organizational communication.

Table 1.3 Major Events in Organizational Communication

1750	Industrial Revolution starts in the United Kingdom and quickly transforms the nature of business.
1908	A. E. Phillips publishes the first public speaking book specifically aimed at business men, *Effectively Speaking.*
	Harvard Business School becomes the first academic program to focus on the scholarship of business.
1910, April	The first meeting of the Eastern Public Speaking Conference is held. The association changed itself to the Speech Association of the Eastern States in 1950 and then to the Eastern Communication Association in 1973.
1914	The National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking is formed and holds is first convention the following the year. This association changed its names four times over the next hundred years: National Association of Teachers of Speech, 1923; Speech Association of America, 1946; Speech Communication Association, 1970; and National Communication Association, 1997.
1919	Edward L. Bernays and Doris Fleishman open the first public relations firm.
1929	William Phillips Sandford and Willard Hayes Yeager are the first speech scholars to publish a public speaking book aimed at business professionals titled *Business and Professional Speaking.*
1937	W. Charles Redding publishes an article titled "Speech and Human Relations" in the academic journal *The Speaker.* Redding is widely considered the father of organizational communication.
1938	Chester Barnard publishes *The Functions of the Executive* and argues that "The first function of the executive is to develop and maintain a system of communication" (p. 226).
1941	Paul F. Lazarsfeld publishes the first review of the discipline of communication based on his and others' research at the Bureau of Applied Social Research and determines that communication could be broken into four categories: 1) who, 2) said what, 3) to whom, and 4) with what effect.
1942	Alexander R. Heron argues that successful communication with one's employees is necessary for good business in his book *Sharing Information with Employees.*

1945	University of Denver holds the first graduate-level seminar in industrial communication.
1949	Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver publish *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, which provides the first major model of human communication (source, message, receiver, noise).
1952	The first dissertation specifically in industrial communication was completed by Keith Davis in the department of business at Ohio State University. The title of the manuscript was "Channels of Personnel Communication within the Management Setting."
1953	Ohio State University and the University of Nebraska offer the first Ph.D. degrees conferred by speech departments in industrial communication.
1961	Lee Thayer, a speech professor with an interest in communication in businesses, publishes *Administrative Communication* which is the first true textbook in organizational communication.
1963	The *Journal of Business Communication* is started by the American Business Communication Association.
1964	W. Charles Redding and George A. Sanborn publish *Business and Industrial Communication: A Source Book*, which compiled copies of previously published articles on a wide range of organizational communication topics. The publication of this book is generally seen as the true start of the field of organizational communication.
1967	The first "Conference on Organizational Communication" is held at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. At the conference, Philip K. Tompkins reviews the state of organizational communication and divides the types of research into two categories: (1) informal and formal channels of communication and (2) superior-subordinate relationships. Tompkins' presentation marks the official acceptance of the term "organizational communication."
	Henry Voos publishes *Organizational Communication: A Bibliography* sponsored by the Office of Naval Research.
1968	Division IV, organizational communication, becomes an officially recognized group by NSCC, which became the International Communication Association in 1970.
1972	W. Charles Redding publishes his book *Communication with the Organization: An Interpretive Review of Theory and Research*. In this monograph he poses 10 basic postulates of organizational communication.
1973	The Academy of Management authorizes a new division within its association titled Organizational Communication.
1982	The *Western Journal of Communication* publishes a series of articles based out of a conference held in Alta, Utah, "The Summer Conference on Interpretive Approaches to the Study of Organization Communication." This series of articles argues for the importance of incorporating interpretive methods in the study of organizational communication.

1983	Linda Putnam and Michael E. Pacanowsky publish *Communication and Organizations: An Interpretive Approach.* This edited book further solidifies the importance of interpretive research methods in organizational communication.
1987	Fredric M. Jablin, Linda L. Putnam, Karlene H. Roberts, and Lyman W. Porter publish the *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective.*
1991	Wert-Gray, Center, Brashers, and Meyers publish an article titled "Research Topics and Methodological Orientations in Organizational Communication: A Decade in Review." The authors find that of the 289 articles published in the 1980s, 57.8% were social scientific, 25.9% were qualitative, 2.1% were critical, 14.2% were categorized as other.
1993	Dennis Mumby puts for a research agenda for critical organizational communication research in an article titled "Critical Organizational Communication Studies: The Next 10 Years" in *Communication Monographs.*
2001	Fredric M. Jablin and Linda L. Putnam publish *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods.*
2004	Elizabeth Jones, Bernadette Watson, John Gardner, and Cindy Gallois publish an article titled "Organizational Communication: Challenges for the New Century" in the *Journal of Communication.* In the article they identify six challenges organizational communication scholars face in the 21st Century: (1) innovate in theory and methodology, (2) acknowledge the role of ethics, (3) move from the microlevel to macrolevel issues, (4) examine new organizational structures, (5) understand the communication of organizational change, and (6) examine diversity and intergroup communication.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stanley Deetz articulated three different ways the term "organizational communication" can be understood: the discipline, ways to describe/ explain organizations, and a phenomenon within organizations. His first perspective describes organizational communication as an academic discipline that consists of an intellectual history, textbooks, courses, degrees, etc... The second way to describe organizational communication as a way of describing organizations. Under this perspective, organizational communication is used to describe and/or explain how organizations functions. Lastly, organizational communication is a specific set of behaviors that is exhibited within an organization itself. People talk and interact with one another, which is a form of organizational communication, and through these interactions we actually create the phenomenon that is an organization.
- In this book, the authors define "organizational communication" as the process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.
- The history of organizational communication is a complicated one. Starting with the industrial revolution and the evolution of the modern corporation, the idea of organizational communication was ultimately crystalized in the 1950s and 1960s. During the early years, most of the research conducted examining communication within an organization was conducted from a social scientific perspective, but starting in the 1980s with the work of Linda Putman, organizational communication research has become more diversified to include both interpretive and critical perspectives.

EXERCISES

1. Find two examples of how you could use the term "organizational communication" for each Stanley Deetz's three conceptualizations of the term. Did you find this process easy or difficult? Why?
2. Look at the definition of organizational communication provided in this book. Do you think this definition accurately reflects the nature of organizational communication? Why or why not?
3. Since the 1960s, which decade do you think has been the most important in the transformation of the field of organizational communication? Why?

1.4 Approaches to Organizational Communication Research

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain what is meant by the social-scientific approach to organizational communication.
2. Explain what is meant by the interpretive approach to organizational communication.
3. Explain what is meant by the critical approach to organizational communication.

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In Table 1.3 "Major Events in Organizational Communication" you saw the basic history or of organizational communication and how it's grown into the academic discipline that it is today. The earliest years in the development of the field were predominantly marked by either thought pieces written about organizational communication or were driven by social-scientific/quantitative research. If you read Table 1.3 "Major Events in Organizational Communication" carefully, starting in the early 1980s new voices began emerging in the field of organizational communication brining both qualitative/interpretive and then rhetorical/critical approaches to the study of organizational communication. In this section, we are going to examine each of these different methodological traditions and the types of research questions commonly posed in each. As authors, we find it very important to have this discussion in the first chapter because you'll come in contact with all three methodological approaches as you read this book. We want you, as readers, to be able to critically analyze the research we are presenting and understand how the different methodological traditions impact our understanding of the phenomenon that is organizational communication. To help with this purpose, we are going to explore the two major branches of organizational communication: social-scientific/quantitative and qualitative (both interpretive and critical).

Social-Scientific/Quantiative

The first major tradition in organizational communication is the social-scientific/quantitative tradition to organizational communication. The bulk of the early work

in organizational communication either focused on prescriptive methods for business speaking or came from outside the field of communication studies until the 1960s. The 1960s represented a period when the field started to solidify and create professional boundaries to differentiate itself from business, psychology, sociology, and speech. During these early years of the field, the goal of organizational communication research was very scientific. In essence, researchers would use theory to form a series of hypotheses, the researchers would then test these hypotheses through experimental observation, and the outcomes of the experimental observations would help the researchers revise the original theory, which inevitably lead to new research questions and hypotheses. The predominant research methodology available at the time stemmed out of the world of social psychology and was based in statistics. As noted in the two studies examining organizational methodology discussed in the history of organizational communication, the bulk of research conducted today is still from this social-scientific or quantitative perspective.Spence, P. R., & Baker, C. R. (2007). State of the method: An examination of levels of analysis, methodology, representation, and setting in current organizational communication research. *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association, 36*, 111–124.'Wert-Gray, S., Center, C., Brashers, D. E., & Meyers, R. A. (1991). Research topics and methodological orientations in organizational communication: A decade in review. *Communication Studies, 42*, 141–154. For social scientists, there are three general avenues of research that are common: survey, experiments, and content analyses.

Survey Research in Organizational Communication

The first common type of social scientific method utilized in organizational communication is probably the most common in communication research as a whole, the survey. **Surveys**[30] involve a series of questions designed to measure individuals' personality/communication traits, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge on a given subject. Surveys are as popular as they are because you can get massive amounts of information from a wide array of people very quickly. However, one always has to question whether or not a survey is adequately using the right types of participants for a specific study. For example, using a group of college students to discuss workplace violence may not be very accurate because of the limited exposure your average undergraduate college student has in the work world. As such, you want to look for studies that utilize people who not in school and work for a living outside of the college environment if at all possible.

Experimental Research in Organizational Communication

The second type of common social-scientific/quantitative study conducted by communication researchers is the experiment. Like in the physical sciences, the goal of an **experiment**[31] is to manipulate some facet of a participant's experience to

30. Form of social-scientific research based on a series of questions designed to measure individuals' personality/communication traits, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge on a given subject.

31. Form of social-scientific research based on the manipulation of some facet of a participant's experience to determine how that participant responds.

determine how that participant responds. For example, in a study examining the impact that an initial handshake has on potential interviewers, you could have a trained confederate (someone the participants do not know is working for the researcher) enter into a potential job interview and shake the hands in an aggressive, average firmness, or weak fashion. The goal of this potential study would be to determine if the interviewer's experiences with the potential job candidate would differ based on the type of handshake he or she used at the beginning of an interview. In this hypothetical study, we, as the researchers, would manipulate the type of handshake an interviewer receives at the beginning of the interview in some kind of random fashion to ensure we are not accidentally biasing the results. Overall, experiments generally involve a lot of planning and time to pull-off competently.

Content Analysis in Organizational Communication

The final type of research conducted on the banner of social-scientific/quantitative research is the content analysis. A **content analysis**[32] involves taking a series of artifacts and numerically coding information contained within the artifacts to see if a discernible pattern emerges. First, we need to define what we mean by artifacts. In this sense of the word, artifacts are objects made by organizational members capturing communication attempts. For example, speeches of CEOs found on YouTube could be a video artifact or press releases from Fortune 500 corporations could be a different type of artifact. Second, we then numerically code these artifacts looking for specific details. For example, maybe we're going to analyze speeches made by Fortune 500 CEOs looking for terms that resemble patriotic themes: patriotism, United States, duty, honor, America, etc… Our could would be to get a numerical count of this specific type of image. We could then also analyze the incidence of these themes across different organizational types: banking, automotive, etc… In this case, the goal would be to see if different types of organizations have CEOs who are more likely to invoke images of patriotism than other types of organizations.

For more information on conducting quantitative research, we recommend reading Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond, and McCroskey's *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication: A Hands-On Approach*.Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach.* New York: Oxford. The accompanying sidebar contains an example of a social-scientific/quantitative study in organizational communication.

32. Form of social-scientific research based on taking a series of artifacts and numerically coding information contained within the artifacts to see if a discernible pattern emerges.

Example of Quantiative/Social Scientific Research

Individual Differences in Managers' Use of Humor: Subordinate

Perceptions of Managers' Humor

By Brian J. Rizzo, Melissa Bekelja Wanzer, and Melanie Booth-Butterfield (1999)Rizzo, B. J., Wanzer, M. B., & Booth-Butterfield, M. (1999). Individual differences in managers' use of humor: Subordinate perceptions of managers' humor. *Communication Research Reports, 16*, 360–369.

In this study, Rizzo, Wanzer, and Booth-Butterfield set out to examine subordinates' perceptions of their manager's use of humor in the workplace. The researchers recruited 151 participants in introductory communication courses, graduate communication courses, and MBA courses. All participants were either current or past part-time (less than 40 hours per week) or full time (40 hours per week or more) employees of some organization.

The researchers used three mental measures in this study: Self and Manager Humor Orientation (individual's use of humor in interpersonal interactions—was completed once for self and once for their manager), Humor Behaviors (Individual's use of humor strategies in the workplace—was completed once for self and once for their manager), Manager Affect (degree to which a subordinate likes her or his manager), and Manager Effectiveness (degree to which a subordinate perceives her or his manager as effective).

The researchers had four hypotheses in this study (taken from page 362):

H1: High humor oriented individuals will report using more humorous behaviors in the workplace than low humor oriented individuals.

H2: Hugh humor oriented individuals will perceive more types of humorous behaviors as appropriate for their manager to use in the workplace than low humor oriented individuals.

H3: Subordinates perceptions of managers' humor orientation will be positively associated with liking toward these managers.

H4: Employees' perceptions of mangers' humor orientation will be positively related to perceptions of managerial effectiveness.

The Results

First, employees who rated themselves as using large amounts of humor in their daily interactions with others used more humorous behaviors in the workplace than those individuals who did not rate themselves as humorous.

Second, employees who rated themselves as using large amounts of humor in their daily interactions with others believed that managers could use a wider array of humor strategies in the workplace than those individuals who did not rate themselves as humorous.

Third, employees' perceptions of their manager's use of humor in her or his interactions with others was positively related to a subordinate's liking of that manager.

Lastly, employees' perceptions of their manager's use of humor in her or his interactions with others was positively related to a subordinate's perception of the effectiveness of that manager.

In essence, all four of this study's hypotheses were supported.

Qualitative

Research generally divides methods into two different epistemologies, or ways of knowing: social-scientific and humanistic. We've briefly discussed the first approach, social-science, in the previous section and we're going to explore the nature of this humanistic way of knowing, which is generally referred to as qualitative research.Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach.* New York: Oxford. Qualitative research is "It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world."Van Maanen, J. (1979). Reclaiming qualitative methods for organizational research: A preface. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 24*, 520–526, pg. 520. Because of the variety

of different approaches available under the larger title "qualitative," researchers often break discuss two different qualitative lines of inquiry: interpretive and critical.Fink, E. J., & Gantz, W. (1996). A content analysis of three mass communication research traditions: Social science, interpretive studies, and critical analysis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 73*, 114–134. We'll explore each of these in the rest of this section.

Interpretive

Interpretive research is not an easy idea to nail down, so any discussion of what interpretive research is must start by clearly distinguishing this approach from the social scientific one. According to Amedeo P. Giorgi, the social-scientific (often referred to as positivistic research by qualitative researchers) method can be broken into six general parts:

1. Reductionistic, the goal is to reduce phenomena into operational definitions for easy of study;
2. Deterministic, the belief that outcomes and phenomena are the result of causes that can be duplicated;
3. Predictive, the general goal of scientific research is to predict behavior;
4. Observer independent, researchers attempt to be as objective as possible and avoid influencing the data;
5. Empirical, only data that can be observed or obtained from participants is worthy of analysis;
6. Repeatable, research results should be replicated by other researchers; and
7. Quantitative, all phenomena should be numerically measured.Giorgi, A. (1971). Phenomenology and experimental psychology, In A. Giorgi, W. F. Fischer, & R. Von Echartsberg (Eds.), *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology* (vol. 1, part 1). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Fundamentally, Giorgi believed that social-scientific researchers are asking fundamentally wrong questions. Instead of asking how a phenomena should be measured, Giorgi believed that researchers should ask, "What do the phenomena mean?"Giorgi, A. (1971). Phenomenology and experimental psychology, In A. Giorgi, W. F. Fischer, & R. Von Echartsberg (Eds.), *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology* (vol. 1, part 1). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, pg. 21. Put a different way, interpretive research focuses on "how people communicate in their own natural environments, when they are guided by their own personal objectives, how they give meaning to their communication, especially when they are using communication for those pragmatic objectives that determine and control day-to-day existence."Chesebro, J. W., & Borisoff, D. J. (2008). Interpretive research. In J. S.

Wrench, C. Thomas-Maddox, V. P. Richmond, and J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach* (pp. 449–486). New York, NY: Oxford, pg. 451. Let's break this definition down into its functional parts.

Communicating in Natural Environments

The first major goal of interpretive research is the desire to see how people communicate in their natural environments. By natural environment, interpretive researchers do not want to view people engaging in communication within a laboratory setting. Instead, interpretivists want to observe people going about their daily communicative routines with their coworkers in a fashion that resembles as normal a communication experience as humanly possible.Yanow, D., & Ybema, S. (2009). Interpretivism in organizational research: On elephants and blind researchers. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 39–60). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Interpretivists believe that communication that in one's natural environment will be unforced and will resemble how people actually communicate instead of how they perceive their communication to be, which is an inherent problem with some social-scientific research (especially surveys).

Guided by Personal Objectives

Second, interpretivists want to observe participants as they go about their daily lives doing what they normally would do and not alter their behavior for the researcher(s). One of the inherent differences between social-scientific research and interpretivistic research is that interpretivists do not go into the research encounter expecting to "see" anything specific. Social-scientists set specific hypotheses, determine how to test those hypotheses, and test the hypotheses. By this purpose, social-scientists go into a research encounter expecting to "see" something very specific. Interpretivists, on the other hand, go into a research encounter to observe and learn and ultimately see what their participants show them. Instead of going in with a pre-set agenda, interpretivists watch how people behave when the participants are guided by their own personal objectives and not those of the researcher.

People Giving Meaning to their Own Communication

Lastly, interpretivists are interested in how people understand their own communicative behavior and give meaning to their own communicative behavior. Humans generally behave and communicate for a variety of reasons, and thus understand and prescribe a variety of meanings to their communication. An interpretivist is less concerned with attaching some kind of meaning to a researcher participant than they are with understanding how that research

participant views her or his own communicative behavior. As an outsider looking in, we can ascribe all kinds of incorrect attributions to an individual's communicative behavior. It's only when we get inside a communicative interaction from the participant's point-of-view, that we can truly begin to understand why someone is communicating a specific manner and how that communication is important to her or him. In the organizational environment, maybe a researcher is interested in understanding how people view the balance between their work lives and their personal lives. It's only after someone engages with people that a researcher can start to develop a better idea of how people view this phenomenon of work-life balance answering the question, "what does this phenomena mean?" Renee Cowan and Mary F. Hoffman did just this in their study examining how people view their work and personal lives in the accompanying sidebar.

For more information on conducting interpretive research, we recommend reading Lindlof and Taylor's (2002)Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. book on interpretive research methods in communication.

Example of Interpretive/Qualitative Research

The Flexible Organization: How Contemporary Employees Construct the Work/Life Border

By Renee Cowan and Mary F. Hoffman (2007)Cowan, R., & Hoffman, M. F. (2007). The flexible organization: How contemporary employees construct the work/life border. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 8*, 37–44.

In this study, the researchers set out to qualitatively examine how individuals manage their work lives and their personal lives with each other. Specifically, the researcher had one overarching research question in this study:

RQ1: How do employees of today define the terms flexibility and permeability in regard to work/life balance?

The researchers recruited 30 participants. All of the participants had to be at least 18 years of age and currently employed in an organization that provided benefits (e.g., retirement, stock options, health care, etc.). 99 percent of the sample were permanent employees, 44 percent were female and 56 percent were male. 70 percent of the sample was married and 76 percent of the sample had children.

All of the participants agreed to take part in an interview about their "perceptions and definitions of work/life balance, what balancing work/life issues meant and looked like in their lives, what their company did that made it easy or difficult to balance work/life issues, and any stories they had heard about people using work/life benefits in their company" (p. 39). Ultimately, the 30 interviews generated 112 single-spaced pages of transcribed text for analysis.

Overall, the researchers found that the terms "flexibility" and "permeability" were used interchangeably by the participants. Furthermore, these issues can be broken into four distinct themes: time, space, evaluation, and compensation.

Time Flexibility. Employees wanted to have flexibility in how their time was calculated by the organizations. This included flex time issues (instead of

coming in at 8 and leaving at 4, you could come in at 10 and leave at 6), and the possibility of examining time over a larger period (not always counting up 40 hours within one work week, but averaged over the entire year).

Space Flexibility. Employees saw space issues as a two prong construct: physical space and mental space. Physical space flexibility is the notion that individuals should have the ability to telecommute and work from home when capable. Mental space is the notion that individuals should be allowed to think about work at home and think about home at work.

Evaluation Flexibility. Employees believed that the evaluation of one's work should be based on the quality of the work itself and not on the amount of time an individual spends in the office doing the work.

Compensation Flexibility. Employees believed that their quality work should receive extra financial compensation (bonuses, increase in pay, etc.) or time compensation (increased number of vacation days, telecommuting options, etc.).

Critical

Traditional social-scientific research wants to make hypotheses and test them interpretive research wants to study how people communicate in a natural environment and understand that communication. Critical research is less interested with explaining or understanding organizational communication than it is with "analyzing values and judging, or criticizing, them."Fink, E. J., & Gantz, W. (1996). A content analysis of three mass communication research traditions: Social science, interpretive studies, and critical analysis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 73*, 114–134, pg. 115. As the word "critical" entails, critical research is about seeing how society, or for our purposes an organization, exists in a world of power imbalances. Within most groups there are those with power and those without power. Critical researchers strongly believe that those with power purposefully prevent those without from achieving equality. As such, "critical scholarship tends to stand on the side of 'weaker' parties when studying or commenting upon relations of dominance."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 61. According to Mats Alvesson and Karen L. Ashcroft, critical theory entails four specific parts:

1. The critical questioning of ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities (what might be called 'the 4 I's') deemed dominate, in some way harmful, and/or unchallenged.
2. Through some form of denaturalization and/or rearticulation.
3. With the aim of inspiring social reform in the presumed interest of the less-privileged and/or majority—particularly resistance to 'the 4 I's' that tend to fix people into unreflectively receiving and reproducing limited ideas, selves, motives, and practices.
4. While also maintaining at least some degree of recognition that 'real' (i.e., lived and living) conditions constrain choice and action in the contemporary organizational world. Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 63.

Questioning the 4 I's

The first part of critical theory identified by Alvesson and Ashcroft is the idea that critical theory helps people question ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities that appear dominant and are in some way problematic.Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Let's look at these in turn. First, we have **ideologies**[33], which are the beliefs, myths, and doctrines that guide an individual, group, or organization. From the critical theorists perspective, they want to examine whether or not these ideologies that have been developed within an organization are fundamentally harmful (especially to workers). Furthermore, critical theorists question if specific ideologies have are unchallenged. By unchallenged, we mask whether or not a specific ideology is allowed to be pervasive and no questions the ideology or where it came from and how it stays. Often organizational leaders create ideologies that are inherently problematic for workers. If workers never question these ideologies, they'll stay in place for years or decades without ever being challenged. Critical theorists attempt to look at a variety of ideologies that exist (and get communicated) within an organization in an attempt to shed the light on how ideologies function to keep workers subjugated by management.

Second, critical theorists examine various institutions that are dominant in society and examine them to see if they are harmful for the general worker. In fact, it's this category of critical examination that really focuses its attention specifically on how modern organizations are institutions that attempt to create structures that keep workers subjugated. We'll talk more about this idea in Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication".

33. The beliefs, myths, and doctrines that guide an individual, group, or organization.

Third, critical theorists examine various interests to see if they are harmful to workers and remain unchallenged. By **interests**[34], we are specifically referring to whether or not an individual (or group of individuals) has a clear advantage or advancement of a personal or group agenda that is not necessarily clearly articulated to everyone within an organization. One of the more interesting and seedy aspects of modern organizational life is the issue of unarticulated or hidden interests that people (especially those in leadership positions) may have. Critical theorists attempt to seek out these interests and bring them to the light of day in an effort to show workers how they are being manipulated to help people in power achieve these interests. Furthermore, often the interests of those with power are not the same as those without the power.

Lastly, critical researchers attempt to examine various identities that could be harmful or under-challenged. For critical purposes, **identity**[35] refers to the state of being or believing that you are the same person or thing described or claimed by those with power. Under this premise, workers are often labeled with specific identities that are designed to subjugate the workers. For example, someone may be told that if he or she was a "good worker" then he or she wouldn't question having to put in 50 of 60 hours a week at a job. Inherent in this use of "good worker" is often the veiled threat that bad workers get fired and good workers have prospects at getting promoted. As such, workers often adopt either the good or bad worker identity without ever realizing that it is a tool of managerial control.

Denaturalization and/or Rearticulation

After identifying relevant ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities, a critical researcher must "articulate an alternative position that challenges conventional representations and critically probes (rather than taking at face value) the reported views and experiences of research participants."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 64. In essence, the critical theorist attempts to show individuals that the specific ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities that they believe are steadfast and unchangeable, are in fact creations of people in power and can be altered. Part of this process involves the critical theorists clearly articulating a new vision for ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities that are more egalitarian or worker friendly.

Inspiring Social Reform

Further the notion of rearticulating ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities is taking those changes to a more societal level. The goal of a critical theorist is to not just notice problems that exist in society but to help people change the power

34. Whether or not an individual (or group of individuals) has a clear advantage or advancement of a personal or group agenda that is not necessarily clearly articulated to everyone within an organization.

35. The state of being or believing that you are the same person or thing described or claimed by those with power.

imbalances that exist. Part of this process is helping people see new ideas, selves, motives, and practices. In the organizational context, the goal is to emancipate workers or "break away from structures and ideologies that tend to constrain forms of consciousness into prespecified routes that stifle imagination."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 64.

Constraining Choice and Action

While it would be wonderful if modern organizations could be utopian enterprises where everyone was truly equal, critical theorists must also realize that overly revolutionary or radical perspectives on organizing and the modern workplace may not be realistic or helpful.Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Instead, critical theorists should focus the real lives and experiences that people in modern organizations have. This isn't to say that critical theorists must always be strictly "realistic," but rather critical scholarship "seeks to acknowledge how realizing ideals such as class, gender, race, and ecological justice may have drastic consequences for the material functioning of organizations alongside effects on member subjectivities."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 65.

Overall, critical theory provides a very interesting and specific proactive perspective on organizational communication scholarship. For more information on conducting rhetorical/critical research, we recommend reading either Foss' (2004)Foss, S. K. (2004). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration & practice* (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland. or Swartz (1996)Swartz, O. (1996). *Conducting socially responsible research: Critical theory, neo-pragmatism, and rhetorical inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. books on rhetorical/critical research methods in communication.

Example of Rhetorical/Critical Scientific Research

The Communicational Basis of the Organizational Text as Macroactor:

A Case Study of Multilevel Marketing Discourse

By Walter J. Carl (2005)Carl, W. J. (2005). The communicational basis of the organizational text as macroactor: A case study of multilevel marketing discourse. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 6*, 21–29.

In this study, Carl wanted to examine a macroactor (an individual who is empowered to speak on behalf of a large number of people). In this specific analysis, the macroactor was a letter to the editor in *Forbes* magazine by Ken McDonald the managing director of Quixtar, Inc. Prior to this letter, Karen J. Bannan had written an article in *Forbes* magazine titled "Amway.com" discussing how the notorious multi-level marketing firm Amway was the sister company of Quixtar along with the perils of multi-level marketing. McDonald's letter in response to the Bannan letter to the editor took issue with the article because it "'did not provide an accurate picture of the company,' citing an inaccurate understanding of the corporate relationship among Amway, Quixtar, and Alticor, unfair representations of Quixtar business meetings as 'cult-like,' and only publishing accounts from dissatisfied 'Independent Business Owners'" (p. 23).

The purpose of Carl's analysis of McDonald's letter was to demonstrate that the letter is a clear piece of organizational rhetoric. While the organization attempts to hide its actions in the voice of a single individual speaking out, the very act of this letter is clearly a message with backing from the institution itself. To aid in the development of his argument, McDonald examined four major issues "(1) the features of the text that make it a letter to the editor and not, for example, a press release or news story or some other kind of text [company logo, date, salutation, name of author, author identity, etc].; (2) the issue of authorship and its authorizing function [the signature on the letter with the company's logo makes the letter act as a function of the organization itself]; (3) the presuppositions that, thought absent, are necessary for the text to 'make sense' to its audience [the primary presupposition is that the reporter did nto provide a fair, accurate, and objective account of Quixtar]; and (4) how the text is constructed to orient to these presuppositions and to build up a

> rhetorical case imputing motive to *Forbes* magazine [the letter systematically explains why Quixtar felt the need to respond]" (pp. 23–24).

Comparing the Three Types

Now that we've explained how each of the three methodological traditions approaches organizational communication, let's see how the three compare when we put them side-by-side. Table 1.4 "How the Three Methods Compare Side-by-Side" provides an explanation for how the three methodological approaches differ in their understanding and approach to organizational communication.

Table 1.4 How the Three Methods Compare Side-by-Side

Issue	Methodological Traditions		
	Social Science	**Interpretive**	**Critical**
Basic Goal	The goal of social scientific research is to classify organizational communicative phenomena, measure them, and construct statistical models to explain the phenomena.	The goal of interpretive research is a complete, detailed description of the organizational communication phenomenon examined.	The goal of critical research is to examine how organizations exists in a world of power imbalances.
View of Organizations	Organizations are naturally existing phenomena open to description, prediction, and control.	Organizations are social entities with day-to-day talk, rites, rituals, and stories that develop its own unique culture that has aspects that are similar to other cultures.	Organizations are inherently places of power imbalances. Workers are typically subjugated by superiors who have implicit or expressed power.
Study Purpose	Social Scientific researchers have a very clear idea what they are examining at the start of a research study.	Interpretive researchers generally only have a vague idea of what they are looking for at the	Critical researchers generally select artifacts from organizations or about organizations and analyze those artifacts in an effort to see how

Issue	Methodological Traditions		
	Social Science	Interpretive	Critical
		start of a research study and prefer to view organizational phenomena from the viewpoint of their participants.	power is communicated and utilized within an organization.
Research Design	Social Scientific research designs are very carefully planned before the data are ever collected.	Interpretive research designs develop over the course of data collection.	Critical researchers can follow very stringent ways of analyzing artifacts or create the ways of analysis while examining the data.
Tools of Research	Scientific/quantitative researchers use a variety of measurement devices (e.g., questionnaires) as the primary tool of data collection.	Interpretive/ qualitative researchers collect their data themselves through interviews and observation, so the researcher is the primary tool of data collection.	Rhetorical/critical researchers do not need data sources beyond the act (an actual communication event) or artifact (the record of a communication event) being analyzed.
Writing Style	Numbers and statistics are the primary forms of data. Writing tends to be very formal.	Words, pictures, and artifacts are the primary forms of data. Writing tends to be very narrative.	Acts and artifacts are the primary forms of data. Writing tends to be narrative.
Research Scope	Social Scientific research tends to be more succinct, quickly conducted, and can be generalized to larger groups than the sample utilized in the study.	Interpretive research tends to be more detailed, time consuming, and limited to the group the researcher studied.	Critical research tends to be detailed in its analysis, but the findings should help researchers understand organizational communication in an effort to move towards egalitarian power structures.
View of Research	Social Scientific research is more objective and you are able to achieve a more detached view of the	Interpretive research is more subjective and you are able to achieve	Critical research is also highly subjective to the individual point of view of the critic. As such,

Issue	Methodological Traditions		
	Social Science	Interpretive	Critical
	communication phenomena.	an insider's point-of-view of the communication phenomena.	critics with differing political persuasions will view the same acts and artifacts in differing ways.
Purpose of Theory	Scientific/quantitative researchers view theory as the guiding metaphor for research. As such, research starts with theoretical ideas, poses hypotheses, tests them, and makes revisions to the theory.	Interpretive/ qualitative data collection ends with the creation of hypotheses and the generation of theory.	Theory can either guide a critical study or be arrived at through the process of analyzing an artifact.
Critiques	A lot of social scientific research is prescription based and looks at skills people need to have in modern organizations. However, the researcher is ultimately responsible for which skills are analyzed. Furthermore, there tends to be little research examining skills interculturally.	Interpretive research is often very subjective. Furthermore, there is a serious debate as to whether the information gained from one organization can or should impact how we view another organization.	Critical research is often very subjective and open to interpretation based on one's political persuasion. Furthermore, critical research tends to err on the side of those without power and are in the minority, so the innate political bias can be problematic for some.

Source: Wrench, J. S. (in press). Communicating within the modern workplace: Challenges and prospects. In J. S. Wrench (Ed.), *Workplace communication for the 21st century: Tools and strategies that impact the bottom line: Vol. 1. Internal workplace communication.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

At this point, you may be wondering about the state of organizational communication as a field today. Today there are still a wide range of scholars investigating organizational communication from a social-scientific, interpretive, and critical vantage point. In a 2007 article by Patric Spence and Colin Baker, the researchers set out to examine what types of methodologies modern organizational communication scholars were using.Spence, Patric, R., & Baker, C. R. (2007). State of the method: An examination of level of analysis, methodology, representation and setting in current organizational communication research. *Journal of the Northwest*

Communication Association, 36, 111–124. Using a period from 1998 to 2004, the researchers located 153 articles discussing organizational communication in major communication journals published by regional, national, and international communication associations. <u>Figure 1.4 "Types of Research Conducted"</u> demonstrates the basic findings from this study.

Figure 1.4   *Types of Research Conducted*

Source: Patric Spence & C. R. Baker, "State of the Method: An Examination of Level of Analysis, Methodology, Representation and Setting in Current Organizational Communication Research," Journal of the Northwest Communication Association 36 (2007): 111-124.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- The social scientific approach to organizational communication is based on the notion that researchers start by desiring to test a specific theoretical idea about organizational communication, which leads to specific hypotheses being made, data is the gathered and interpreted, and lastly the data leads to further generalizations that help to refine the original theory. Social scientists typically conduct research using surveys, experiments, or content analysis that can be analyzed using statistical reasoning.

EXERCISE

1. Create an experiment testing the impact that verbal, nonverbal, or mediated messages have on ensuring employee understanding about a new organizational policy.

1.5 Chapter Exercises

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

Around the world this nonprofit has many different names: Albania, Rruga Sesam, Egypt, Alam Simsim; India, Galli Galli Sim Sim; Indonesia, Jalan Sesama; Israel, Rechov Sumsum; Palestine, Shara'a Simsim; Serbia, Ulica Sezam; South Africa, Takalani Sesame; and The United States of America, Sesame Street. In all, there are 20 versions of Sesame Street being produced through the Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street. The goal of the Sesame Workshop is to improve the lives in children and their societies in four specific domains: health & wellness; respect & understanding; literacy & numeracy; and emotional well being.

In the 2006 documentary The World According to Sesame Street, the filmmakers introduce you to a world coping with violence (Kosovo), AIDS (South Africa), poverty (India), and gender inequality (Egypt). And all over the globe, the Sesame Workshop teaches students their alphabets and numbers because the Sesame Workshop realizes that the only way to ensure a child's future is through education.

1. Of the four types of organizations discussed by Blau and Scott (1962), which type of organization is the Sesame Workshop? Why?
2. The Sesame Workshop is constantly attempting to address local issues with their international programs. If you were going to create a Sesame Street for corporations, what lessons do you think they need to learn?
3. If you were producing a new Sesame Street in Iraq, what kind of inputs from the environment do you think you would need?

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

Erik Lie and Randall Heron, two University of Iowa associate professors in finance, conducted a research study in 2005 that determined that many Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) were manipulating their stock-option accounting rules in order to increase their annual salaries. In fact, Lie and Heron found that upwards of 29 percent of all public corporations have major stock-option irregularities. Basically, organizations were delaying their stock paperwork for months in an attempt to look back and select the most lucrative dates for reporting, which is a violation of federal law. Lie and Heron found a way to actually determine whether or not an organization was perpetuating this type of fraud. When the researchers realized what they had found, they contacted the United States' Securities & Exchange Commission and showed The Wall Street Journal how to use options records to look for fraud.

As a result of their research, Lie and Heron established a consulting firm that examines whether accounting irregularities are simple paper-work mistakes or something more fraudulent. The two make more than $400 an hour examining corporations' accounting records and working with plaintiffs' lawyers as expert witnesses. In a world where CEOs are often being led out of their corporations in handcuffs, organizations and lawyers are forced to take Lie and Heron's research findings very seriously.

1. While this specific case study examines accounting problems, do you think there are any communication problems that can lead to lawsuits?
2. Do you think a university researcher should be able to financially profit from her or his research?
3. While more than 2,000 organizations have been found to have options irregularities, Lie and Heron suspect that some of those organizations may be innocent. Could putting their research out into the public have a negative effect on innocent organizations? Do you think putting innocent organizations under more scrutiny in order to find guilty organizations justifiable?

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

On October 9th 2007, Harris Interactive found that in the United States (32%) and Spain (28%) the most important aspect of one's job was their salary. While salary was found to be important elsewhere in Europe, Great Britain (33%), France (30%), Italy (29%), and Germany (25%); Europeans found the interesting nature of their jobs more important: Great Britain (36%), France (44%), Italy (37%), and Germany (44%). Whereas, in the United States (28%) and Spain (25%), lower percentages of people found the interesting nature of their job to be the most important.

The study also asked the international participants to what degree they liked their current Bosses. In the United States (65%), Great Britain (56%), and France (52%), the majority of individuals polled liked their bosses. However, in Italy (48%), Spain (34%), and Germany (47%), the majority of individuals polled did not like their bosses.

1. Why do you think individuals in the United States and Spain consider salary more important than the interesting nature of their job?
2. Why do you think individuals in Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany find the interesting nature of their job more important than their salary?
3. Does it surprise you that individuals in the United States are considerably more satisfied with their bosses than the other countries polled?

END-OF-CHAPTER ASSESSMENT HEAD

1. Joana works for an organization that prides itself on openness and transparency. However, the organization tends to actually insulate itself from what's going on with its various competitors, its local community, and even governmental regulations. Based on this information, what can you say accurately about Joana's organizations relationship with its external environment.

   a. the organization has open boundaries
   b. the organization has closed boundaries
   c. the organization has a tall hierarchy
   d. the organization has a flat hierarchy
   e. the organization has limited outputs

2. Stewart sat down with a set of spreadsheet data and quickly realized that if his coffee shop was going to last the summer it really need to spend more time focusing on business from tourists because they were his only real potential for growth. Which of Edward Gross's organizational goals is Stewart faced with?

   a. output
   b. adaptation
   c. management
   d. motivation
   e. positional

3. Diana works for an organization that on the surface says it's very creative and always looking for new ways of doing business. However, every time Diana brings up a new idea she's immediately shot down with a "but we've always done it this way" attitude from her management. Which of the dialectical tensions of control is Diana facing?

   a. systemization vs. autonomy
   b. agreement vs. dissent
   c. conventionality vs. innovation
   d. organization vs. self-focused
   e. organizational vs. individual rights

4. Who is considered to be the Father of Organizational Communication?

    a. Elton Mayo
    b. Chester Barnard
    c. Lee Thayer
    d. Fredric M. Jablin
    e. W. Charles Redding

5. Which of the three methodologies used by organizational communication scholars uses survey, experiments, and content analyses to examine organizational communication phenomena?

    a. social-scientific
    b. qualitative
    c. interpretive
    d. critical
    e. rhetorical

ANSWER KEY

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. e
5. a

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Chapter 2

Organizational Communication Ethics

Why Ethics

In this chapter we examine how the philosophical world of ethics can be applied to organizational communication. When people hear the word "ethics" used in modern society, many different images and incidents quickly come to mind. Sadly, the 21st Century has already been plagued with many ethical lapses in the business sector. Turn on any major global news station, newspaper, magazine, or podcast and you're likely to hear about some business that is currently in a state of crisis due to lapses in ethical judgment. Table 2.1 "Modern Ethical Lapses" contains a short list of organizations and their various ethical lapses in judgment.

Table 2.1 Modern Ethical Lapses

Organization	Ethical Lapse
Arthur Andersen	Accounting Fraud & Shredding documents wanted in a criminal investigation
Boeing	Industrial Espionage
Bridgestone-Firestone	Delaying a recall of defective tires
Catholic Church	Sex Abuse and cover up
Coca-Cola	Taking groundwater from local farmers in India