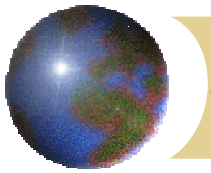


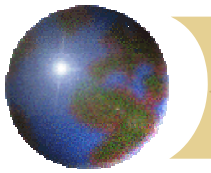
Chp. 2: ER theories

- Overview: from multi-disciplinary perspectives to general theories and then to management styles
- Multi-disciplinary perspectives provide tension, new ideas and dynamic
 - Frames of reference provide general outlook
 - Frames of reference are historically determined
 - Hyman: Labour issues – social order & social welfare



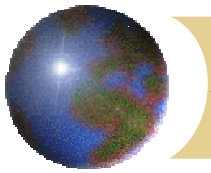
Theoretical approaches

- General & 'middle range' theories
- General theories
 - Systems theory
 - Conflict theory
 - Theory, ideology or ER 'world outlook' ?
 - Frames of reference – what do they cover?
 - Social action theory
- See also Geare 2000, Blyton & Turnbull 1998 re: macro-level theories



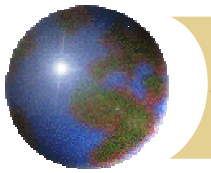
Systems theory

- J.P. Dunlop 1958 – (fig. 2.1 – D&R: 21)
- Key characteristics of system approach:
 - Input, process & output
 - Different parts interconnect
 - Focus on rules: substantive & procedural
 - Cohesion provided by common ideology
 - Tends to support status quo?



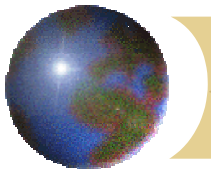
System theory - II

- Substantive rules
 - Conditions under which people are employed – can have four sources:
 - Implied terms, legislation, agreements, custom & managerial rules & directives
- Procedural rules
 - “govern how substantive rules are to be made and interpreted” (D&R: 22)
 - Eg. personal grievances & procedural fairness



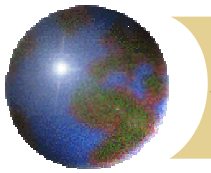
Conflict theory

- Unitary, pluralist & radical models
 - See fig 2.2 (D&R: 26)
- Originally developed by Fox in 1960s
 - Attempts to describe different managerial approaches to IR in the UK
- Unitary model
 - Is it really a conflict theory?
 - Image of football team or family
 - Resurgence in recent time through HRM?



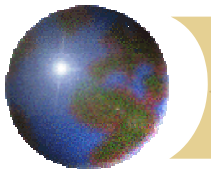
Pluralist & radical ideologies

- Pluralism – the ‘favourite’ of ER
 - Actors have different goals but mutual survival dependency (stakeholder perspective)
 - Balancing different demands & agendas
 - Achieving consensus & enlarging commonality
 - Assumption of power balance?
- Radical/marxist approach
 - Goes beyond ER; it is a societal perspective
 - Focus on action & choice
 - Focus on change & power disparities



Social action theory

- Primary attention to actors:
 - Their interpretations
 - Their goals
 - Their expectations
 - Their values and attitudes
- Influence on motivational theories & work organisation



And what does it all mean?

- Self-understanding & 'tools'
 - Note example sections (D&R: 24-25,30-31)
- Shifting fashions in ER
 - A fight between unitarism & pluralism?
- All of these theories needs 'middle range theories' to aid re: specificity
 - Limited analytical use (many behaviours, even within individual)
 - Management styles & strategies