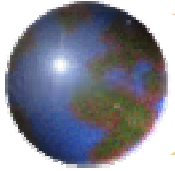


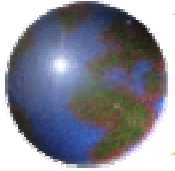
Chapter 1: Overview

- ✚ Definition of employment relations (ER)
- ✚ ER: Levels & interest groups
- ✚ Frames of references
 - ☒ System approach
 - ☒ Social action approach
 - ☒ Conflict frame of reference approach
 - Radical pluralism & marxism, pluralism, unitarism



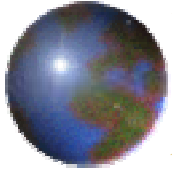
What is employment relations?

- ✦ It is concerned with:
 - ❑ Employment, unemployment & self-employment.
 - ❑ How individuals, groups, organisations or the state have their interests represented
 - ❑ What these interests are
 - ❑ How individuals manage & promotes their interest within an organisation
 - ❑ The way conflict is managed & regulated



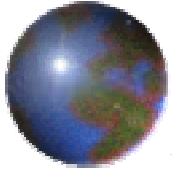
Levels of employment relations

- ✦ The various levels of analysis provide different aspects & types of questions:
 - ✦ International
 - ✦ National
 - ✦ Industry
 - ✦ Organisational or corporate
 - ✦ Workplace
 - ✦ individual



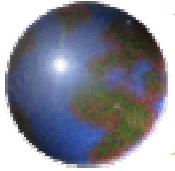
ER is contentious

- ✦ It is multi-disciplinary with many different & often conflicting angles on ER issues
- ✦ It is influenced by wider society changes & norms
- ✦ Our own perspective is based on an individual set of beliefs & values
 - ▣ We often align ourselves with those who share our views (media, employers, unions, etc.)
- ✦ Frames of reference: different ways of seeing ER



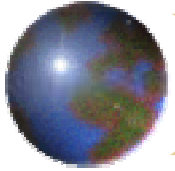
Systems approach

- ✦ Treats ER as a distinctive system although it partially overlaps & interacts with social, economic & political systems
- ✦ Emphasises the interdependencies & interactions between org. & their environment
 - ▣ Inputs => processes => outputs => feedback
- ✦ Concerned with how order & stability are established in a changing environment



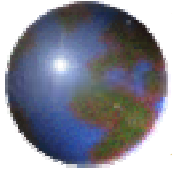
Systems approach II

- ✦ Rules & practices are key ER outputs
 - ▣ Written rules, oral rules, custom & practice
- ✦ Limitations of systems approach
 - ▣ More of a descriptive framework than an explanatory & analytical approach to ER
 - ▣ It is preoccupied with rules & stability
 - ▣ It tends to overlook the dynamics of interest divergence & conflict



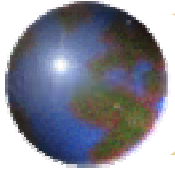
Social action approach

- ✦ It provides an individual, subjective & action orientated approach to ER
 - ▣ How does the individual 'see' or interpret ER (be it changes, rules or empl. Relationships)?
- ✦ It recognises that people may not share similar ideology & often attach different meanings to ER interactions & changes
- ✦ It tries to explain individual behaviour
 - ▣ Motivation, bargaining, conflict resolution



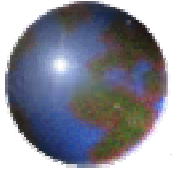
Social action approach II

- ✚ The strength of the social action approach is also its weakness:
 - ❏ Its explanations tend to be subjective and are often ideologically motivated
 - ❏ The individual & subjective angles tend to bypass structural or systemic explanations
 - ❏ It is difficult to obtain a comprehensive view of ER changes & interactions



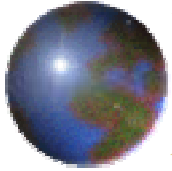
Conflict frames of reference

- ✦ Wide coverage: from unitarism to marxism
- ✦ Radical pluralism (influenced by marxism)
 - ▣ Social phenomena are interrelated
 - Isolated analysis of ER does not make sense
 - ▣ Conflict is inherent in ER
 - power imbalance between employer & employees
 - ▣ Unions can counter but not overcome exploitation of employees.



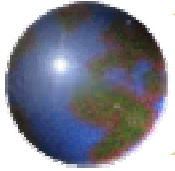
From radical pluralism to pluralism

- ✦ Radical pluralism focusses on conflict, with little to contribute re: other outcome types
 - ▣ Contributes to criticism of pluralism
- ✦ Pluralism
 - ▣ Has often been a 'favourite' of ER researchers
 - ▣ ER as a complex system with different 'actors' (groups, individuals) having different interests
 - ▣ 'mutual survival' overlays sectional interests



Pluralism

- ✦ Acknowledges managerial prerogative & employee rights: a continuous balancing act
- ✦ Collective & individual approaches
- ✦ Criticisms
 - ❑ may focus too much on conflict resolution & how to accommodate change & power differences
 - Need a more comprehensive analysis of conflict
 - ❑ Could put more emphasis on government influences & how power differences exist at all ER levels



Unitarism

- ✚ Paternalistic approach: little 'room' for conflict, unions or employee influence
- ✚ Managerial prerogative is stressed
- ✚ Neo-unitarism: certain forms of HRM
- ✚ Criticisms
 - ▣ Harmonious understanding of ER & power
 - ▣ Bypasses different views & employee rights