



MICROFOUNDATIONS OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

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Introduction

Research on business relationships is of interest to scholars from various science fields, including social exchange theory (Emerson, 1962; Cook, Emerson, 1984; Scott, 1991), relational exchange theory (Macneil, 1978; 1980; Dwyer et al., 1987), game theory (Nielsen, 1988), agency theory (Bergen et al., 1992) and population ecology theory (Aldrich, 1979), transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1975), evolutionary economics (Nelson, Winter, 1982), organisational theory, especially resource dependency theory (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978), the resource-based view (Barney, 1991), relational view (Dyer, Singh, 1998), marketing and stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). Due to this situation, business relationships are not only defined in many ways but also their features, nature and functions are examined and discussed from different perspectives. This, in turn, causes that the literature in this field is large, the knowledge is diffuse, and the publications are often ontologically ambiguous. As a result, there is still no clear evidence of levels (e.g., a focal unit, an ontological level of a focal unit, an analytical level) that should be investigated within business relationships or networks research. Moreover, there is still the lack of unequivocal directions as to which level of analysis is the primary one in examining business relationships or networks

This research problem (coming from conceptual and methodological gaps) led us to the following objectives of this paper: 1) to explore fundamental assumptions of inter-organisational relationships and inter-organisational networks research, 2) to identify the recent exploration fields of microfoundations, and 3) to propose the ontological-methodological premises of examining the microfoundations of inter-organisational relationships linking the ARA model arguments to the microfoundational research programme (a microfoundational analysis).

To achieve the research objectives we adopted a narrative literature review for reconciling inter-organisational relationships and inter-organisational networks as well as for recalling conceptual-methodological underpinnings of microfoundations. Moreover, we

used a scoping review for mapping exploration fields (Ćwiklicki's (2020) recommendations) in the microfoundational research programme. It was based on reviewing Web of Science Core Collection database results for a keyword 'microfoundation*' with the following inclusive criteria: management, business, social issues, sociology, psychology applied, psychology multidisciplinary (searching by a title). As a result, 173 materials were scanned. Then, limiting the materials to articles in the management area, 92 records were found. Next, after scanning abstracts, some papers concerning taxing, economy, institutional theory, and solely methodological issues were omitted. Finally, 74 papers were deeply analysed (Table 1).

Table 1. Literature review – Web of Science Core Collection database results

Keywords with characters (searching by a title)	Microfoundation*
Results	438
Results inc. inclusive criteria	173
Results limited Management	92
Results after the calibration process	74

Source: own work

The structure of the paper is three-fold. The first section involves theoretical assumptions in studies on inter-organisational relationships and inter-organisational networks. Then, we presented the concept of microfoundations with a focus on a conceptual-methodological overview and exploration fields in management. The third section presents our research proposal combining the ARA model arguments and the microfoundational research programme assumptions. Finally, we summarised our findings and pointed out limitations of our paper as well as the future research directions, and contributions¹.

Inter-organisational relationships and inter-organisational networks – theoretical assumptions

Before the 1980s „inter-organisational relationships were treated as exemptions from the „ideals” of hierarchies and markets” (Ritter, Gemünden, 2003, p. 691). At that time, researchers tried to place business relationships either between or besides hierarchies and markets (Williamson, 1985; Thorelli, 1986; Powell, 1990). The roots of interest in inter-organisational relationships go back to the 1960s when industrial marketing researchers began to pay attention to the importance of ties between suppliers and buyers in the industry. Then, in the 1970s, some service marketing scholars also began to emphasize the importance of the interaction between sellers and buyers (Grönroos, 1979; Gummesson, 1977). „The service marketing and the industrial marketing researchers did not claim the universal application of their ideas to marketing” (Mattsson, 1997, p. 151). Interest in the phenomenon of relationships at the level of seller-buyer resulted in the creation of the relationship marketing concept. In 1983, Berry defined the term relationship marketing. But the significant development of research on relationship marketing was noted in the 1990s, after Kotler (1991) had moved the paradigmatic orientation from transactions to relationships (Parvatiyar, Sheth, 1997, p. 233).

At the beginning of the interest in the topic of business relationships, lots of researchers focused on the dyadic approach between the two companies (Dwyer et al., 1987; Anderson, Weitz, 1989; Anderson, Narus, 1984; 1998; Hallen et al., 1991), e.g. in the opinion of Håkansson and Snehota „Every relationship is developed between two parties over time. It is developed through an interactive process in which the two parties act with each other, solving problems and taking advantage of opportunities” (Håkansson, Snehota, 1995, p. 35).

At the same time, since the 1970s a different group of scholars began to pay attention to the fact that individual firms are dependent on other enterprises in their strategies. This interdependence does not only take place at the level of dyads but „business actors are embedded in business networks where they are interdependent on the resources and activities of several other actors” (IMP Group, 2021). That point of view reflects the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) group perspective of business relationships. Relationships are dyads but they also are parts of networks. „A business network is built up by business relationships.” (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 3). Therefore business networks can be regarded as sets of connected firms (Astley, Fombrun, 1983; Miles, Snow, 1992), sets of connected relationships between firms (Cook, Emerson, 1978; Håkansson, Johanson, 1993) or sets of connected relationships (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 1). In this context „relationship is defined as an interdependent process of continuous interaction and exchange between at least two actors in a business

network context” (Holmlund, Törnroos, 1997, p. 305). „The network research had a much broader functional perspective and functional background than *marketing*” (Parvatiyar, Sheth, 1997).

The perception of relationships either in the dyad or network has implications for conducting research. One of the first attempts to set in order considerations on business relationships was made by Håkansson and Snehota (1995). They distinguished two approaches to business relationships: the relationship perspective and the network approach. These two trends in researching business relationships are currently clearly visible in the literature. There is even industrial network literature, which consists of publications by scientists exploring relationships in the context of the network.

Depending on the approach taken, a relationship is seen as an interaction between two entities (a relational perspective, Håkansson, Snehota, 1995, p. 35; Medlin, 2003, p. 64) or between two or more entities (a network approach, Holmlund, Törnroos, 1997, p. 305; Möller et al., 2005, p. 1279; Ojansivu et al., 2020, p. 181). We agree with the view of Anderson et al. that relationships are dyads, but they are part of a network of organisations (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 3; Mandják, Szántó, 2010, p. 205) that „refers to any group of organisations and actors that are interconnected with direct or indirect exchange relationships” (Möller et al., 2005, p. 1275).

The next mainstream in the study of business relationships that is particularly important for understanding their nature is resource dependency theory. „Inter-organisational relationships are the means that an organisation uses to win access to resources that are perceived to be vital to the achievement of its objective” (Eiriz, Wilson, 2006, p. 281). The resource dependency theory assumes that enterprises are not self-sufficient, but resource-dependent. To obtain these resources, they establish a variety of formal and informal relationships. The significance of these relationships depends on the perceived relative importance of the resources exchanged between the parties and the number of perceived alternative resources. Also, the interests of companies in resource control do not have to be the same. Thus, power is important in shaping relationships as a variable that exchange entities use to influence each other. Moreover, in the resources-based view, Barney points out that value chain management often has attributes that may constitute sources of a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 2012, p. 33). Achieving the desired effect of this management requires the appropriate shaping of relationships between the exchange entities. In this context, relational resources are of particular importance. Business partners can link resources and develop joint skills in such a way that, as a result, relational resources, which are strategic, are idiosyncratic and invisible. This is of particular interest to the Relational View (RV) approach. While the RBV provides a theoretical justification for why relationship entities cooperate (namely to gain access and develop resources and skills that competitors do not have), the RV focuses on seeking answers to the

question of what the role of cooperation is (as a way of using complementary resources and skills of partners) in gaining a competitive advantage (Zacharia et al., 2009, p. 103). The RBV is criticised primarily for not fully answering the question of how enterprises should manage resources (Priem, Butler, 2001, p. 35). The RV, although it answers how the economic rent is created, does not answer how this rent should be/is distributed once it is created by the business partners. These gaps are filled by the stakeholder theory, which does not only answer the question of how enterprises should manage relationships with entities from their environment to have access to resources and, consequently, strengthen their competitive advantage, but also recognises that the network of relationships is in itself a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Harrison et al., 2010, p. 61).

In the economy, it is a fact that relationships with stakeholders are created, maintained, developed, or terminated to achieve the company's business goals, including obtaining the resources necessary to generate a satisfactory financial result. But business relationships are also a special form of social relations (Mandják, Szántó, 2010, pp. 205–206). Social relations can be understood as stable bonds between individuals (Guercini, Ranfagni, 2021, p. 358). Thus, the behaviour of individuals in an organisation is embedded in social relations (Granovetter, 1985, p. 481). Researchers from various fields refer to the concept of embeddedness. This concept allows to link considerations between economic sociologists and business relationship researchers. „Business relationships are generally built up very much as a social exchange process in which the individuals that take part become committed beyond strictly task content” (Håkansson, Snehota 1995, p. 10). The personal relationship appears to be a condition for the development of inter-organisational ties between any two companies (Håkansson, Snehota, 1995, p. 10).

The embeddedness of business relationships is carried out not only in the personal relationship but also emerges through activities (activity links) and resources (resource ties) (Mandják, Szántó, 2010, p. 206). Thus, business relationships can be treated as something that has its substance: it involves actors, activities, and resources which, through interactions, form the relation (Håkansson, Snehota, 1995, p. 28). Activity links regard many ways to mutual coordination in terms of research and development activity, production, technical, administrative, commercial, and other activities of a company, wherein these links change over time, as a relationship develops. Resource ties result from the interaction and dependence of the related entities, and they are related to mutual adaptation of resources. These ties relate to both tangible and intangible resources. Resource ties represent in themselves a resource for a company. The basis of the actors' bond is their mutual commitment. Actor bonds connect relationship entities and influence how they perceive each other. Actor bonds form identities of entities with each other. Bonds reflect the interaction process, the durability and closeness of relationships, but also change over time depending on the circumstances of the exchange. It should be noted that the term „actor” introduces ambiguity in the study of business relationships. In the opinion of Håkansson and Snehota „in certain situations, it is thus clear that a company must be seen as a multi-actor while in others it can be considered a single actor” (Håkansson, Snehota, 1995, p. 47). Mandják and Szántó (2010, p. 2013) think similarly that the actor can be an individual or an organisation.

A relationship has effects for the dyad in itself, for each of the two actors. A relationship has a function for each of the two companies singly and probably affects them in different ways. A business relationship can be used for different purposes of enterprises and has

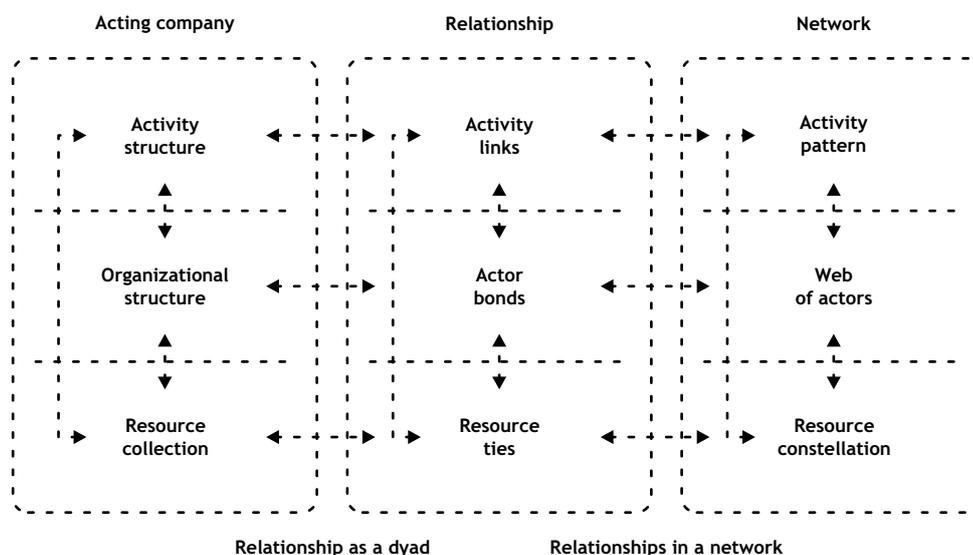


Figure 1. ARA model

Source: own study based on: Håkansson, Snehota, 1995, pp. 43-44

different effects for each of the two companies. Market actors are related to each other. Therefore, the relationship between two actors also affects other entities that are not directly involved in a given relationship. Any relationship practically is also subject to effects from other relationships and actors, and it is an element of a larger structure, it is a substance of a web of business relationships. Business relationships form a network that could be considered in three layers: production network layer, resource network layer and social network layer (Holmlund, Tönroos, 1997, p. 308) because business relationships also are always embedded in a web of social relations (Mandják, Szántó, 2010, p. 207; Guercini, Ranfagni, 2021, p. 358).

Thus, taking into account the relationships functions and the dimensions of the interactions, the nature of the business relationship can be illustrated as in Figure 1.

The model shown in Figure 1 is known in the literature as the actor-resource-activity (ARA) model and it captures both the content and the structure (connectedness) of business relationships dyads and network.

In the ARA model, the social aspect is placed in the actor layer alone, whereas the activity and resource layers relate to the economic material flow. The social aspect is almost absent from the resource and activity dimensions of relationships probably because of the conceptualisation of relationships as resources in the ARA model. Perceiving social aspects only in the dimension of the actors' bonds are currently criticised (Bondeli et al., 2018). In the opinion of Bondeli et al., „actor bonds should not be viewed as the dimension where social capital resides but the dimension where social capital originates” (Bondeli et al., 2018, p. 1106). According to Bourdieu (1986) relationships give access to resources, however, relationships are not resources in themselves. It means that social capital cannot exist without a relationship, but a relationship can exist without social capital. It can be assumed that the social structure and content of relationships are a prerequisite for the creation of social capital as a social resource. Moreover, the institutionalised flow of social exchanges is what builds the social aspect within the activity links. The relationship shaping implies a flow of common social practices that form the activity link on the social level between the actors in a relationship. In conclusion, the social aspect shows itself in the three layers of the ARA model as social practices in the activity layer, social connections in the actor layer and social capital in the resource layer (Bondeli et al., 2018, pp. 1106–1107). Social capital originates from social connections and is performed through social practices. The creation of business relationships in the social dimension is cyclical and infinite (Bondeli et al., 2018, p. 1109). However, Bondeli et al. consider business relationships only from the network actors level, thus pass over the individual level. This is undoubtedly a research gap in this area. Especially, that in terms of analysing relationships and networks, we can distinguish four levels: the dyad relationship, the portfolio relationships, the focal

net/the relationships of actors, the network/industries and markets as networks (Möller, Halinen, 1999, pp. 416–417).

The dyad relationship is between two individual actors which could be persons or companies. These relationships are continued over time. They are often long-term relationships. Portfolio relationships refer to companies that are similar to each other in some way. The similarity in this matter can mean different things: similar in their position to the focal firm (e.g. customers), similar in size (e.g. large vs. small suppliers), similar in the function fulfilled (e.g. innovation partners) (Ritter, Gemünden, 2003, p. 693). However, similar entities may differ in their importance for the functioning of the enterprise. Therefore, different types of actors require different managerial approaches for profitable action. A focal net is a construct that describes the environmental context of actors. From the perspective of an individual firm, a focal net consists of those actors that the management perceives as relevant in network perspective or refer to an interrelated group of actors pursuing a joint strategy within a network (Möller, Halinen, 1999, p. 416). „A network being an aggregated system of participating organisations in a time and space-bound technosocial system” (Möller, Halinen, 1999, p. 416). The starting point of the analysis is the whole structure of an industry or a market.

To sum up, the following levels of business relationships can be distinguished: micro (dyad), mezzo (net), and macro (markets as networks) (Mattsson, 1997). Yet, there is the lack of micro-level connected with individual premises.

To synthesize the literature review, inter-organisational relationships could be defined as interactive shaping actor bonds, resource ties and activity links between two companies or between a company and a selected segment of relationships portfolio which are embedded into a network of business connections. „Connection between relations can either be zero (no influence), positive or negative (Vedel et al., 2016, p. 142). Business relations have, naturally, their economic and social components, antecedents, and effects (Mandják, Szántó, 2010, p. 205).

Considering the phenomenon of business relationships, abstracting from the individual perspective seems to be unjustified, and the study of relationships at the individual level is an interesting research area. The microfoundations concept might allow to investigate it.

Microfoundations – a conceptual-methodological overview and exploration fields in management

The ‘microfoundations movement’ (Winter, 2013) has appeared in the management theory landscape over the past decade (Foss, Linder, 2019) and is becoming more and more popular in the management science. Looking only at Web of Science Core Collection (Keyword: microfoundation*, inclusive categories

criteria: management, business, social issues, sociology, psychology applied, psychology multidisciplinary, searching by a title, access date: 29.10.2021) we can count 111 records in Management, 74 in Business, 11 in Psychology Applied, and 20 dispersed amongst other 8 fields.

The micro-foundations project „seeks to advance our understanding of phenomena by ensuring that analysis explicitly considers (...) multilevel nature by locating (theoretically and empirically) the proximate causes of the phenomenon one seeks to explain at one or more levels of analysis lower than that of the phenomenon itself” (Foss, Linder, 2019, p. 7). The simplest exemplification concerns aggregating from a micro – to a macro-level (Foss, Linder, 2019), but analyses in various directions are possible. Nickerson and Zenger (2008) state that organisational phenomena are explainable in terms of individual actions and interactions. Individual behaviour is influenced in turn, amongst others, by cognition. The cognition of managers may have an impact on organisational outcomes (Helfat, Peteraf, 2015).

The most frequent manifestation of such a conceptual-methodological approach is the so-called Coleman bath/bathtub/diagram (Abell et al., 2010; Coleman, 1990; Foss, Linder, 2019; Piórkowska, 2017, p. 70) reflecting a multilevel path diagram (Figure 2).

The Coleman diagram reflects the following assumptions (Foss, Linder, 2019; Piórkowska, 2017):

1. all levels exist in a social ontology – context is critical,
2. there are both intra – (an arrow 2: micro-micro; an arrow 4: macro-macro) and inter-level causation (an arrow 1: macro-micro; an arrow 3: micro-macro),
3. the processes are temporal (temporal aspects may be examined either statically or dynamically); temporality is related to the concept of emergence,
4. micro-level causation is primary,
5. behaviour and interactions are compelling,
6. not only is methodological individualism critical, but also collective perception.

The aforementioned assumptions involve the basic assumptions of the microfoundational research programmes (Piórkowska, 2017, p. 29).

Referring to the scoping review done to map the fields of exploring microfoundations, we identified

seventeen main field categories with some specific topics (sub-field), as follows:

- knowledge including knowledge transfer, aggregation, sharing, recombination, economy (6 papers),
- organisational capabilities encompassing dynamic capabilities, capabilities, dynamic managerial capabilities, operational capabilities (21 papers),
- design including design thinking, effectual design, design sprint (3 papers),
- innovation, especially open innovation, innovation processes, innovation performance, explorative innovation, relational stars (5 papers),
- framing (1 paper),
- inter-firm networks encompassing network facilitation, network dynamics, networks in a merger (3 papers),
- strategy / strategic management: strategic agility, strategic fit, global strategy, firm internationalism, M&A, strategy and organisational theory, RBV, strategy and competitive advantage, value creation, behavioural strategy, performance (19 papers),
- ambidexterity including ambidextrous search, drivers of ambidexterity, control (3 papers),
- entrepreneurship, especially entrepreneurial orientation (2 papers),
- logistics (1 paper),
- CSR (3 papers),
- absorptive capacity (3 papers),
- adaptive capacity (1 paper),
- organisational routines (5 papers),
- organisational paradox (1 paper),
- organisational sustainability (1 paper),
- organisational risk-taking (1 paper).

While the majority of studies concerns dynamic capabilities and strategy, also scholars pay attention to microfoundations of business network/relationships, even recently (the year 2021).

When it comes to the identified studies on networks and inter-organisational research, the following topics are being under exploration: network facilitation, network dynamics and networks in a merger. Mueller (2021) identified behavioural antecedents of network facilitation in the form of abilities and motivation of network facilitators (second-order themes) coming from entrepreneurial orientation and mediation/arbitration (first-order categories). Moreover, she identified network facilitation practices and network-level outcomes. Kaartemo et al. (2021) provide a new insight into the

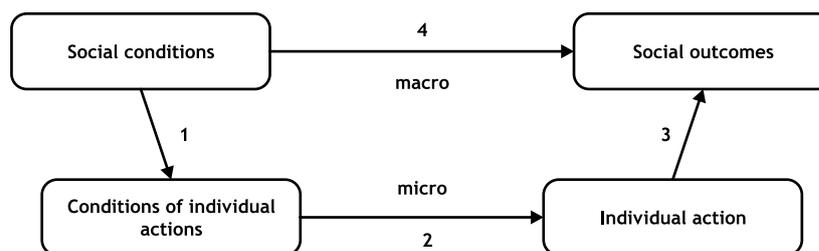


Figure 2. A Coleman bath
Source: Foss, Linder, 2019, p. 23

intentionality of network dynamics, the interplay of forces of stability and change, and the level of network dynamics. They investigated microfoundations of network dynamics from the following lens: life-cycle, teleological, dialectic, and evolutionary. Finally, they identified lower level microfoundations (endogenous inertia, agency, endogenous serendipity) and higher-level ones (exogenous inertia, external system forces, exogenous serendipity). In turn, Paruchuri and Eisenman (2012) show that anxiety arising from the merger and related integration processes alter inventors' choices, the knowledge of which they recombine to generate innovations.

Undoubtedly, the list of the literature identified in our scoping review is not exhaustive. For instance, Ahuja et al. (2012) emphasised four microfoundations of networks: agency, opportunity, inertia, and random/exogenous factors. There is also research on the microfoundations of inter-organisational cooperation (Czakon, 2016; Wójcik, Klimas, 2016), the microfoundations of organisation-environment relations (Smith, Cao, 2007), or the microfoundations in the stakeholder theory (Bridoux, Stoelhorst, 2013).

Remarkably, all the exemplary investigations presented show that micro-macro and micro-macro relationships are compelling in investigating the relationships between organisations. However, there is still the lack of empirical studies on the micro-foundations of inter-organisational relationships based on multi-level research linking micro-and macro-levels in a valid ontological-methodological-empirical way. The micro-foundational research programme seems to contribute to filling this gap.

Microfoundational perspective of inter-organisational relationships – a research proposal

Originally, inter-related actors, resources, and activities (ARA) operate at the micro-level as the basis of the network at the macro-level. Consequently, a business network concept, the ARA model, and the concept of microfoundations are naturally connected (Kaartemo et al., 2021). Concerning fundamental assumptions of the microfoundations concept, the microfoundational research on business relationships

meets all of them. First, inter-related actors, activities, resources, an organisation, inter-related organisations exist in social ontology and particular business contexts. Second, there is both intra – and inter-causation. Intra – causation refers, for example, to the individual-level determinants of individual activities leading to developing relationships between actors. In turn, inter – causation exists between individual-level causes and their consequence at the organisational or business network level. Moreover, individual-level causation is primary in developing inter-organisational relationships (methodological individualism). Third, the causation is temporal, especially across levels. Inter-organisational relationships emerge from managerial behaviour and interactions that exist between social actors (collective focus). Hence, we might conclude that the microfoundational research assumptions, including the Coleman diagram, might complement the ARA model arguments (Figure 3).

Significantly, arrow 2 complements the ARA arguments with individual-level mechanisms that exist between actors' inner characteristics (micro-states) and their behaviour (micro-behaviour). It shows intra-level causation. Actors' behaviour reflected at the micro-level in Figure 3 is connected with activity links from the ARA model. Activity links, resources ties and actor bonds (ARA model) result in social interdependence and inter-relationships emergence. In turn, it leads to developing an inter-organisational portfolio and consequently activity patterns (macro-level, in the ARA model network level) resulting in organisational performance (macro-level in terms of organisational level) (arrow 3). This manifestation of developing relationships reveals inter-causation (across levels). The ARA model also presents that activity structure, organisational structure, and resource collection (so-called acting company) have an impact on developing relationships in terms of actor bonds, activity links, resource ties (individual level). Concerning our research proposal, this relation is manifested with arrows 1 and 5 that reflect macro-micro (cross-level) causation. In turn, arrow 4 shows the link between a relationship dimension and a network one (activity patterns, web of actors, resource constellation) in the ARA model. In our proposal, it emphasises macro-macro causation, in which the so-called acting

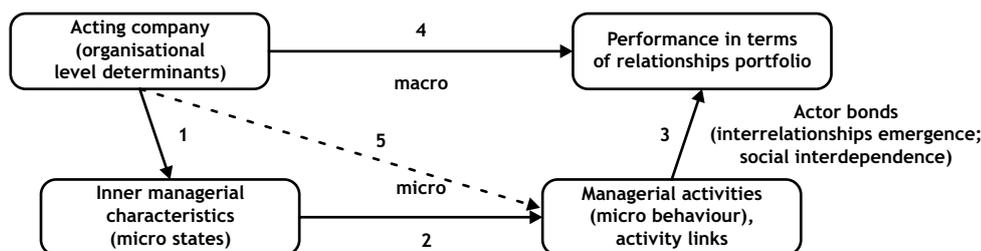


Figure 3. A Coleman bath for examining the microfoundations of inter-organisational relationships in connection with the ARA model
 Source: own proposal based on: Abel et al., 2010; Coleman, 1990; Foss, Linder, 2019; Piórkowska, 2017, p. 70; Håkansson, Snehota, 1995, pp. 43-44

company (macro – organisational-level) determines the performance of constituted relationships portfolio. The performance of constituted relationships portfolio reveals macro-level in terms of both organisational and network one.

Conclusions

In the paper, we answered Kaartemo et al.'s (2021) call for adopting the concept of microfoundations in exploring inter-organisational relationships/network dynamics. We explored fundamental assumptions of inter-organisational relationships and inter-organisational networks research, identified the recent exploration fields of microfoundations, and proposed the ontological-methodological premises of examining the microfoundations of inter-organisational relationships linking the ARA model arguments to the microfoundational research programme. The objectives have been achieved within the narrative and scoping literature review.

Based on our findings, the following fundamental propositions might be formulated:

1. The microfoundational research programme, especially the Coleman diagram can support the studies on inter-organisational relationships. Hence, the individual level determinants coming from microfoundational methodological individualism are primary.
2. Inner managerial characteristics might influence managerial behaviour and activity links.
3. Managerial behaviour and activity links via social interdependence and emergence phenomena lead to shaping activity patterns in a network and performance (organisational and network-level) of a relationships portfolio.
4. Organisational-level determinants reveal both intra – and inter-causation as they determine individual behaviour and organisational performance as well.

We are conscious of some limitations of our research proposal that consequently lead us to identify future research directions. In the paper, we did not specify the criteria for evaluating the performance of relationships portfolio, the inner individual (managerial) characteristics, the individual activities (activity links) that may result in developing organisations-environment relationships. It needs further investigation. Moreover, in our proposal, the macro-level involves both organisational and network levels. It is proposed to split it and distinguish three levels of analysis.

The paper findings result in some contributions. First, our research proposal fills the conceptual-methodological gaps in examining the microfoundations of inter-organisational relationships. It conceptually complements the ARA model arguments and methodologically gives directions towards multi-level studies. Second, our findings also reveal managerial implications showing that individual inner states and individual activities may shape the character and portfolio of inter-organisational relationships.

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Endnote

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Mikrofundamenty relacji międzyorganizacyjnych – podstawy koncepcyjno-metodyczne

Streszczenie

Cel artykułu sprowadza się do następujących celów szczegółowych: 1) eksploracja podstawowych założeń konceptualnych dotyczących relacji międzyorganizacyjnych i sieci międzyorganizacyjnych; 2) zidentyfikowanie pól poznawczych w koncepcji mikrofundamentów; 3) zaproponowanie ontologiczno-metodologicznych przesłanek badania mikrofundamentów relacji międzyorganizacyjnych w odniesieniu do modelu ARA i analizy mikrofundamentalnej. Cele zrealizowano poprzez narracyjny przegląd literatury i przegląd zakresu. Zasadnicze wnioski poznawcze są następujące: 1) Program badawczy oparty na koncepcji mikrofundamentów, w tym diagram Colemana, może stanowić wsparcie dla badań nad relacjami międzyorganizacyjnymi. W konsekwencji, przyjąwszy założenia metodologicznego indywidualizmu, mikrofundamenty na poziomie indywidualnym mają kluczowe znaczenie; 2) Wewnętrzne czynniki indywidualne (mikrostrany) oddziałują na indywidualne zachowania i interakcje (mikroprocesy/zachowania); 3) Indywidualne zachowania menedżerskie oraz interakcje prowadzą, poprzez społeczną wzajemną zależność i zjawisko emergencji, do wzorców relacji i określonych dokonań w odniesieniu do kształtowanego portfela relacji międzyorganizacyjnych; 4) Czynniki na poziomie organizacyjnym odzwierciedlają zarówno jednopoziomową, jak i międzypoziomową przyczynowość – determinują one indywidualne zachowania oraz dokonania w odniesieniu do portfela relacji.

Słowa kluczowe

mikrofundamenty, relacje międzyorganizacyjne, diagram Colemana, model ARA