

# Transformations in B2B Processes and Relationships

2007 American Marketing Association  
Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium

Mark B. Houston

(University of Missouri-Columbia until 5/31/07)

Texas Christian University

## Two points concerning *relational mediators* in B2B

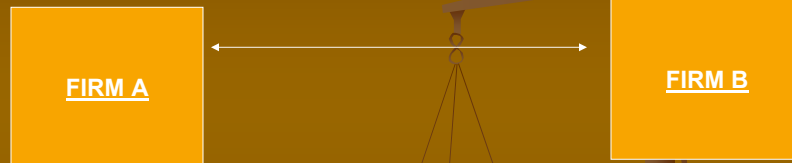
“key mediating variables,” Morgan and Hunt (1994)



1. Relationship “targets”
2. Relationship dynamics

# 1. Relationship “targets”

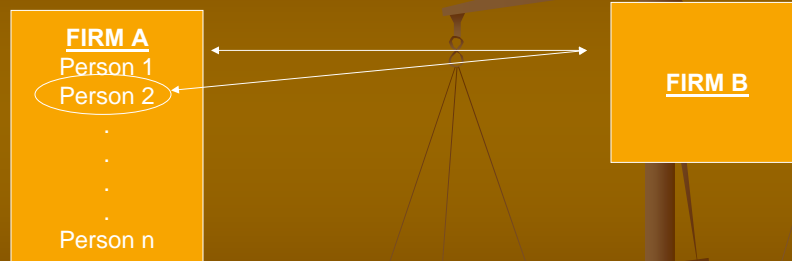
- Commitment to ?? Trust to ??



- Objective measures
  - Reciprocity
  - Duration
- Perceptual ≈ a bit Metaphysical?
  - Gioia 1986 *The Thinking Organization*
  - Daft and Weick 1984

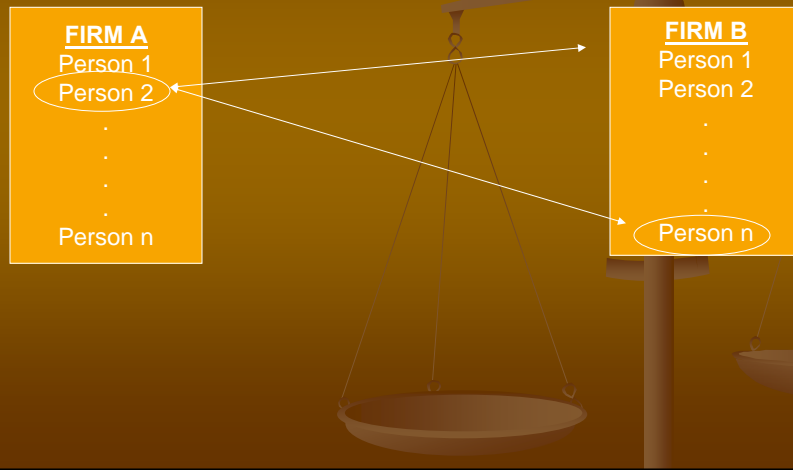
# 1. Relationship “targets”

- Commitment to ?? Trust to ??



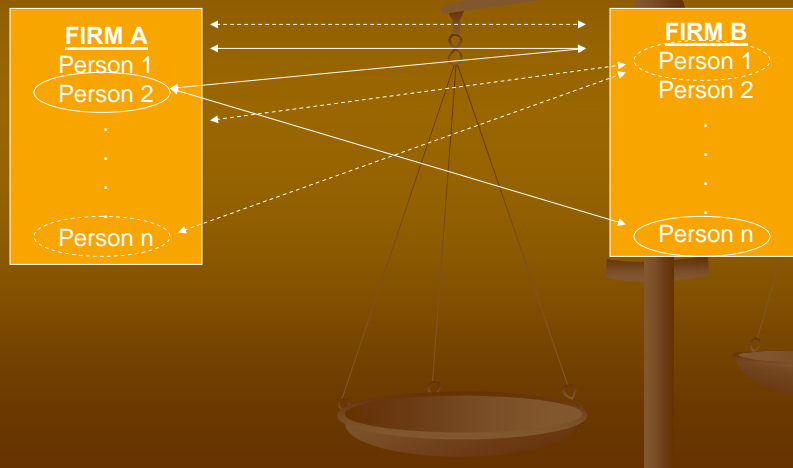
# 1. Relationship “targets”

- Commitment to ?? Trust to ??



# 1. Relationship “targets”

- Reality may be . . .



# 1. Relationship “targets”

## Implications

- Be very clear conceptually
  - Make sure mechanisms operate at appropriate levels
- Be very clear in measurement items
  - Make sure that appropriate referent is unmistakable.
- Be careful in analysis to account for interdependencies
  - Consider HLM (firm factors affect all salespeople within firm; salesperson factors affect all customers of that salesperson; customer-specific factors)

# 2. Relationship Dynamics

- Grayson and Ambler (1999)  
*“...although relational factors such as trust are principle antecedents to positive relationship outcomes . . . more research is required to understand the reason for trust’s decreasing association with positive outcomes in long relationships”*
- Do the “trust→outcome” and “commitment→outcome” relationships change over time?

## 2. Relationship Dynamics

- Relationships (and the commitment and trust that comprise the quality of the relationship) change over time.
- Dynamic; Longitudinal
- Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987 – relationship stages (awareness, exploration, expansion, commitment, dissolution)
- Jap and Ganesan 2000 – (exploration, buildup, maturity, decline)

## 2. Relationship Dynamics

- **Implication:** Search for opportunities to incorporate longitudinal data into your research design.
  - $T_1, T_2, \dots, T_n$  surveys
  - $T_1$  surveys,  $T_2, \dots, T_n$  objective outcome data

