The Behavior of Organizations in Practice:

A Stakeholder-by-Stakeholder Application of the Relational Approach

Panayotis Zamaros, 2026

Editorial Note: This article presents the original theoretical framework, structure, ideas, and argumentation of Panayotis Zamaros, developed in the context of personal research on organizational behavior and institutional theory. Preliminary academic editing — including prose refinement, structural organisation of the six stakeholder sections, integration of the two-level state/voter chain, development of the industry examples, insertion of APA citations, and embedding of the six relational diagrams — was carried out by Claude (Anthropic, claude-sonnet-4-6), acting as editorial assistant. The final editing was performed by the author. All theoretical claims, scholarly judgements, and analytical conclusions are the author's own, grounded in and supported by the referenced sources.

Abstract

The Relational Approach (Zamaros, 2011, 2017) proposes that the behavior of organizations — their institutional, outward-facing action as legal and economic units — simultaneously shape internal organizational dynamics and informs the behavior of every stakeholder group that interacts with the organization. *This article translates that proposition into practice*. For each of six stakeholder groups — consumers, employees, investors, suppliers, competitors, and the state — it applies the same four-step analytical logic: rendering the relational diagram precise for that stakeholder; detailing the data to be collected under each strand; specifying the conclusions to be reached; and drawing the strategic consequences for the organization. The state is treated as a special case, since it carries its own stakeholder — voters — generating a two-level relational chain that the framework captures distinctively. Examples are drawn from hospitality, fast fashion, pharmaceuticals, automotive manufacturing, telecommunications, and public health policy.

Keywords: *behavior of organizations, relational approach, stakeholder behavior, institutional behavior, consumers, employees, investors, suppliers, competitors, state, voters, four-strand architecture*

Introduction

The four-strand architecture of the Relational Approach (Zamaros, 2011, pp. 24–26) provides a research framework for studying the behavior of organizations and its relational consequences simultaneously.

Strand 1 captures the behavior of the organization as displayed act — advertising, communiques, websites, public documents. Strand 2 captures the behavior of the organization as internally driven action — value descriptions, structure, leadership and management styles, cohesion tactics. Strand 3 captures stakeholder thinking as an unobserved perceptual process mediating between the organizational act and the stakeholder's enacted behavior. Strand 4 captures stakeholder behavior as enacted interpretation of organizational acts — opinion polls, attitudinal research, press reports, statistical measures.

The power of the framework lies in its transferability. The same four-strand logic applies regardless of which stakeholder is being studied. What changes is the precision of the diagram — the specific institutional relationship between the organization and the stakeholder in question — and the specific data sources and methods appropriate to that relationship.

This article works through six stakeholder groups in turn, applying the following four steps in each case: (1) the relational diagram is rendered precise for the stakeholder; (2) the data to be collected under each strand is detailed; (3) the conclusions to be reached from that data are specified; (4) the strategic consequences for the organization are drawn.

The state receives extended treatment as a nested case, since it is simultaneously a stakeholder of the organization and a principal whose own behavior is shaped by its relationship with voters. The resulting two-level chain — organization to state, state to voters — is a structural feature of the relational architecture that conventional stakeholder analysis, which treats the state as a single regulatory actor, systematically misses.

I. Consumers

Industry context: hospitality

1. Rendering the diagram precise

In the hospitality context, the general relational diagram is rendered as follows. The organization becomes the hotel. The stakeholder becomes the guest. The behavior of the organization becomes hotelier behavior: the institutional presentation of the hotel as a unit, expressed through its website, advertising, booking platforms, physical environment, and staff conduct. The stakeholder behavior becomes guest behavior: booking decisions, length of stay, in-property spending, review writing, return visits, and word-of-mouth. Strand 3 captures guest perception, the interpretive process through which the guest reads the hotel's institutional behavior and forms an expectation and an intention to act. The relationship between hotel and guest can be qualified as strong and durable (the returning guest who identifies with the brand), problematic and rocky (the guest whose expectations were not met), or broken (the guest who switches permanently and writes a negative review; Zamaros, 2017, p. 88).

Figure 1. Consumers -- Hospitality (Hotel / Guest)

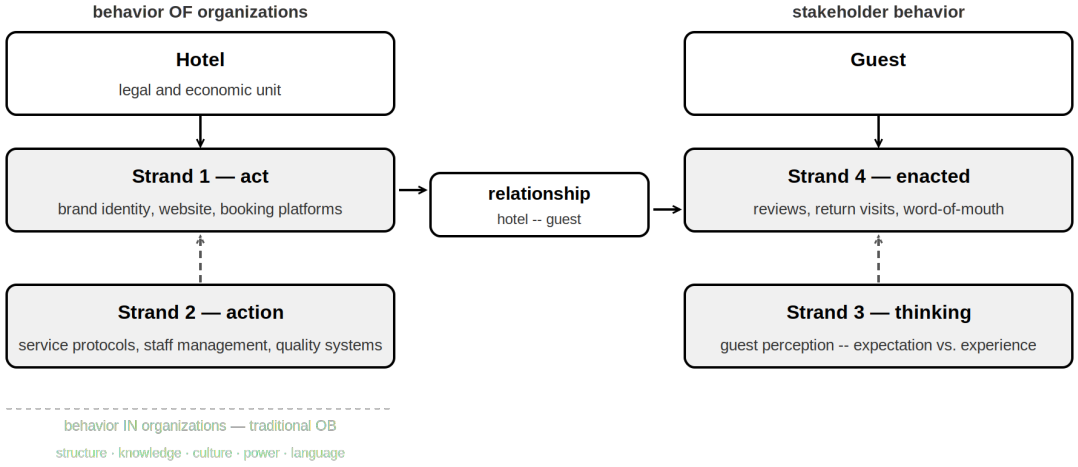

Figure 1. Consumers — Hospitality (Hotel / Guest). Strand 2 internal action generates the Strand 1 act; Strand 3 unobserved perception generates Strand 4 enacted guest behavior.

2. Data by strand

Strand 1 data is collected from the hotel's website, booking platform listings, advertising materials, and official communiques. Discourse analysis (Grant & Iedema, 2004, p. 8) is the primary method: what descriptive signature does the hotel project? What organizational typology does it claim (e.g. prospector, defender, analyzer), and

how consistent is that claim across channels? The three qualities of authority, credibility, and constancy (Zamaros, 2012, p. 46) are directly testable here.

Strand 2 data is collected through surveys of staff (leadership style, management concern, cultural norms), documentary analysis of quality systems and service protocols, and structured observation of internal coordination practices (Zamaros, 2017, pp. 32–44). Leadership surveys establish whether the dominant management concern is rational (efficiency, occupancy rate), emotional (guest satisfaction scores), or discursive (brand storytelling). The open-self framework survey (Zamaros & Zamaros, 2003, p. 33) identifies gaps between the hotel's stated identity and its enacted one.

Strand 3 has no behavioral indicators. Guest perception is unobservable directly. It is inferred from Strand 4 data and from the gap between Strand 1 projections and Strand 4 outcomes.

Strand 4 data is collected from TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Google reviews (qualitative content and quantitative score distributions), repeat booking statistics, in-property spending data, and Net Promoter Score surveys. The other-directed approach (Zamaros, 2003, pp. 39, 55) applies: guest behavior is studied as a series of enacted acts from which the underlying Strand 3 perception is deduced.

3. Conclusions

From Strands 1 and 2 combined: what type of hotel is this institutionally built, what does it claim to be, and what does its internal action confirm or contradict? A hotel that projects a luxury prospector identity (Strand 1) but whose Strand 2 data reveals a rational management concern (cost-cutting, occupancy maximization) produces an institutional behavior gap: the act does not match the action (Zamaros, 2011, p. 24).

From Strand 4: what type of guest does the hotel attract, and what is the quality of the relationship? Deliberate shoppers (rational passion, preference for known brands) in a strong relationship confirm the institutional posture. A pattern of guests reporting expectation mismatches in reviews is the behavioral indicator that Strand 3 perception diverges from Strand 1 projection.

4. Strategic consequences

If the institutional behavior gap is confirmed, the organization faces a choice: close the gap from the inside (align internal action with outward claim) or close it from the outside (revise the descriptive signature to match what the organization really does). The first strategy is transformational and costly; the second is discursive and faster but risks credibility loss if guests detect the revision (Zamaros, 2012, p. 46). The relationship qualification determines urgency: a rocky relationship demands faster intervention than a brittle one (Zamaros, 2017, p. 88).

II. Employees

Industry context: fast fashion

1. Rendering the diagram precise

In the fast-fashion context, the organization becomes the brand (Zara is used as the running illustration (ImpACT International, 2021)). The stakeholder becomes the employee — both front-line retail staff and supply-chain workers. The behavior of the organization becomes brand institutional behavior: its competitive posture as an analyzer-prospector, its speed-to-market logic, and its values discourse around creativity and empowerment (Zamaros, 2017, p. 87).

Figure 2. Employees -- Fast Fashion (Zara)

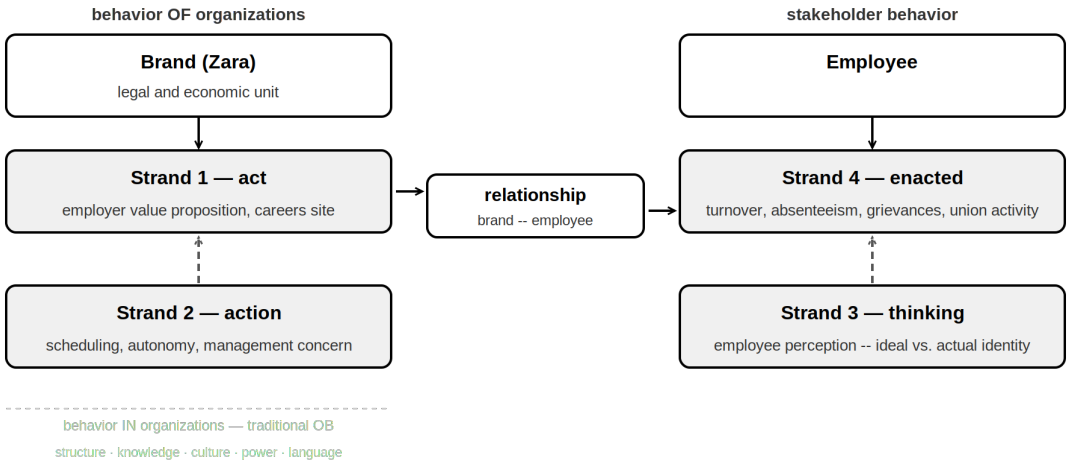

Figure 2. Employees — Fast Fashion (Zara). The same analyzer-prospector institutional behavior that produces a strong consumer relationship generates a rocky employee relationship.

The stakeholder behavior becomes employee behavior: daily conduct at work, compliance with or resistance to management practices (Ton & Huckman, 2008), turnover rates, absenteeism, internal grievance behavior, and union activity. Strand 3 captures employee perception: how staff read the brand's institutional behavior relative to their own occupational identity and expectations.

2. Data by strand

Strand 1 data is collected from the brand's employer value proposition (EVP) i.e. careers website, recruitment advertising, internal communications, and published CSR and sustainability reports (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015). Discourse analysis (Grant & Iedema, 2004, p. 8) identifies whether the institutional language toward employees is consistent with the language toward consumers, or whether two separate descriptive signatures are in play.

Strand 2 data is collected through the open-self framework survey (Zamaros & Zamaros, 2003, p. 33): identifying the gap between the ideal occupational identities the organization projects (creative, empowered, entrepreneurial team members) and the actual occupational identities employees report (monitored, time-pressured, replaceable). Leadership surveys (Zamaros, 2017, p. 32) and management concern surveys (Zamaros, 2017, pp. 36–44) establish whether the dominant internal management posture is rational (efficiency, throughput) or emotional (people-centered).

Strand 4 data is collected from Glassdoor and LinkedIn reviews, turnover statistics, absenteeism rates, internal engagement scores, press coverage of labor disputes, and trade union reports. High turnover in a brand that projects an empowerment narrative is the behavioral indicator of a Strand 3 perception gap (Zamaros, 2011, p. 25).

3. Conclusions

The Zara case reveals the asymmetry at the heart of the relational architecture. The same institutional behavior — analyzer-prospector, dynamic, fashionable, market-responsive — produces a strong relationship with deliberate shoppers and a rocky relationship with calculating employees (Zamaros, 2017, pp. 87–88). The brand's Strand 1 projection toward employees (empowerment, creativity, team membership) is contradicted by its Strand 2 reality (tight scheduling, high throughput targets, limited autonomy). The open-self survey captures this gap directly: the ideal identity

the organization promises and the actual identity employees experience are systematically misaligned (Zamaros & Zamaros, 2003, p. 33).

4. Strategic consequences

The organization must choose whether to treat employees as a residual stakeholder (minimizing the gap through communication) or as a constitutive one (recognizing that the quality of the consumer relationship depends on the quality of the employee relationship). The Relational Approach insists on the second: since the behavior of the organization shapes the behavior in the organization, a rocky employee relationship is not a separate HR problem — it is a symptom of an institutional behavior gap that will eventually surface in Strand 4 consumer data as well (Zamaros, 2011, p. 24).

III. Investors

Industry context: pharmaceuticals

1. Rendering the diagram precise

In the pharmaceutical context, the organization becomes the drug manufacturer (Roche and Novartis provide the illustrative frame) (Akyildirim et al., 2026). The stakeholder becomes the investor — institutional shareholders, retail shareholders, ESG funds, and activist investors each constitute distinct sub-types with distinct behavioral profiles. The behavior of the organization becomes its institutional investor-facing presentation: quarterly earnings calls, annual reports, pipeline communications, pricing justifications, and ESG disclosures. The stakeholder behavior becomes investor behavior: buy, hold, or sell decisions; AGM voting behavior; shareholder resolutions; and public advocacy. Strand 3 captures investor perception: how investors read the organization's institutional behavior relative to their own risk appetite, ethical commitments, and return expectations.

2. Data by strand

Strand 1 data is collected from annual reports, quarterly earnings transcripts, investor day presentations, press releases, and ESG reports (Andersen et al., 2022). Discourse analysis (Grant & Iedema, 2004, p. 8) examines what descriptive signature the organization projects to investors: is the dominant logic financial (returns, pipeline

value) or mission-driven (patient outcomes, access to medicine), and how consistent is this across documents and over time? The three qualities of authority, credibility, and constancy (Zamaros, 2012, p. 46) are directly testable here: does the language shift after a pricing controversy (Krüger, 2015), and if so, how?

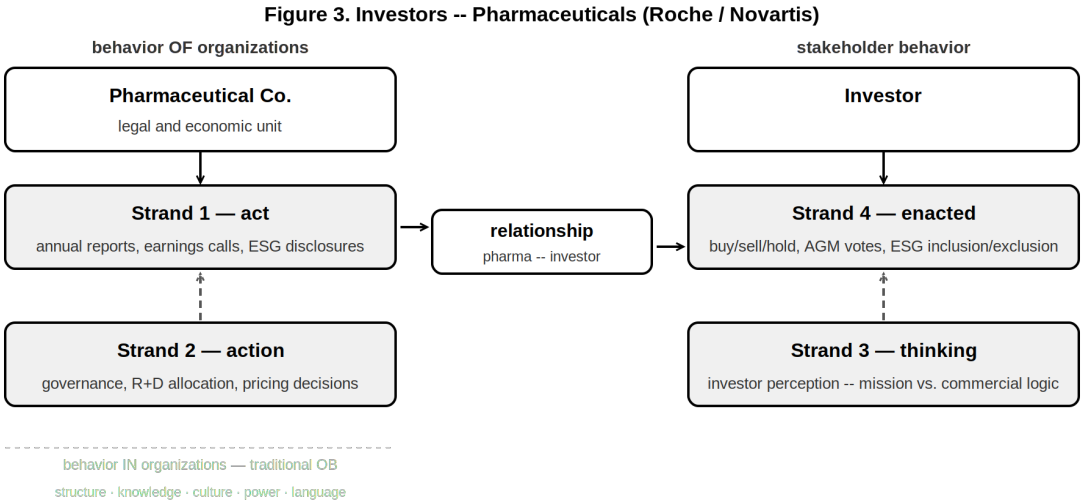

Figure 3. Investors — Pharmaceuticals (Roche / Novartis). Strand 3 divergence between mission-driven projection and commercial reality surfaces in Strand 4 ESG divestment behavior.

Strand 2 data is collected through documentary analysis of governance structures (board composition, remuneration policy, audit committee reports), leadership surveys targeting investor relations and executive teams (Zamaros, 2017, p. 32), and management concern surveys identifying whether the dominant concern is rational (shareholder value) or discursive (narrative management; Zamaros, 2017, pp. 36–44).

Strand 4 data is collected from AGM voting records (Akyildirim et al., 2026), institutional shareholder reports, short interest data, credit ratings, analyst reports, and ESG fund inclusion or exclusion decisions. ESG fund exclusion constitutes a particularly rich behavioral indicator: it reveals how investors have translated their Strand 3 perception into a concrete act (Zamaros, 2011, p. 25).

3. Conclusions

A pharmaceutical company that projects a mission-driven identity (Strand 1) while its Strand 2 data reveals a rational management concern (shareholder value maximization, aggressive pricing) will generate Strand 3 perception divergence among ESG investors, whose Strand 4 behavior (divestment, shareholder resolutions on drug

pricing) constitutes a behavioral signal that the institutional behavior gap has been detected (Zamaros, 2011, pp. 24–25). A strong investor relationship, by contrast, is one in which the Strand 1 projection and the Strand 2 reality are mutually consistent (Zamaros, 2017, p. 88).

4. Strategic consequences

The organization must decide which investor sub-type it is primarily addressing and whether its institutional behavior is coherent relative to that audience. An ESG-positioned pharmaceutical company cannot sustain aggressive pricing practices at the Strand 2 level without eventually losing the ESG investor relationship at the Strand 4 level (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). The relational approach makes this structural: the investor relationship is not managed through communications alone (Strand 1 adjustment) but requires alignment of internal action (Strand 2) with outward projection (Zamaros, 2011, p. 24).

IV. Suppliers

Industry context: automotive manufacturing

1. Rendering the diagram precise

In the automotive manufacturing context, the organization becomes the vehicle manufacturer (Toyota provides the illustrative frame (Matsuo, 2015)). The stakeholder becomes the supplier — tier-one component suppliers, raw material providers, and logistics partners each constitute distinct sub-types. The behavior of the organization becomes its institutional supplier-facing presentation: procurement practices, contract terms, quality standards, supplier development programs, and public supply chain commitments. The stakeholder behavior becomes supplier behavior: compliance with quality standards, investment in dedicated tooling, willingness to share cost innovations, and decisions to prioritize or deprioritize the manufacturer in conditions of supply scarcity (Zamaros, 2017, p. 87).

2. Data by strand

Strand 1 data is collected from procurement policy documents (Dyer & Chu, 2000), supplier codes of conduct, supply chain transparency reports, (Dyer & Chu, 2000)and

public statements about supplier partnerships. Discourse analysis (Grant & Iedema, 2004, p. 8) identifies whether the organization projects a partnership identity (long-term, collaborative, developmentally oriented) or a transactional identity (cost-minimizing, adversarial, interchangeable suppliers).

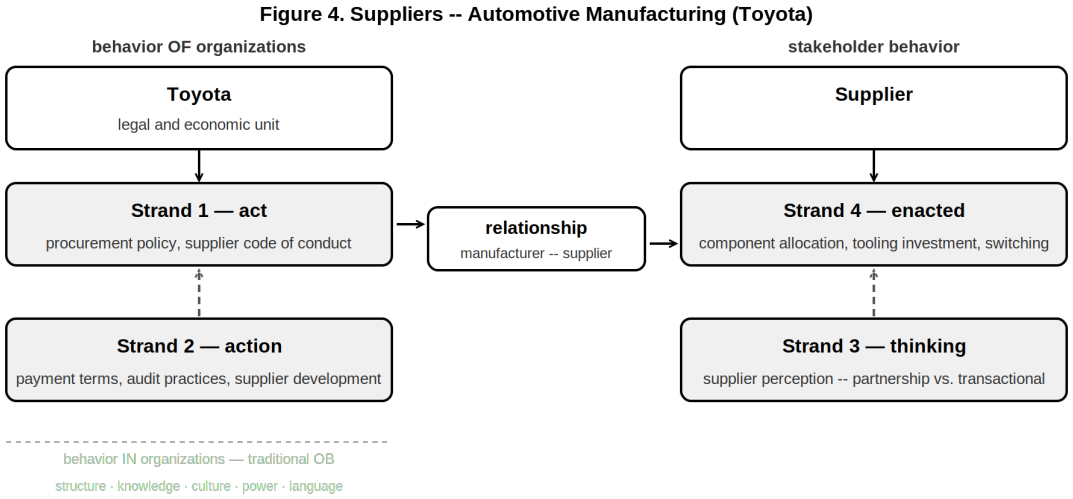

Figure 4. Suppliers — Automotive Manufacturing (Toyota). Strand 2 partnership practices confirm the Strand 1 partnership identity, producing strong supplier behavior in conditions of scarcity.

Strand 2 data is collected through supplier surveys assessing the gap between the partnership identity projected and the procurement practices experienced: payment terms, contract flexibility, audit frequency, and response to supply disruptions. Management concern surveys (Zamaros, 2017, pp. 36–44) targeting procurement and supply chain functions identify whether the dominant internal concern is rational (cost per unit, lead time) or relational (supplier capability development, shared problem-solving).

Strand 4 data is collected from supplier satisfaction surveys, switching behavior, delivery performance data, quality rejection rates, and industry association reports. Supplier allocation of scarce components constitutes the most revealing Strand 4 indicator: it reveals the enacted consequence of Strand 3 perception under conditions of scarcity (Zamaros, 2011, p. 25).

3. Conclusions

Toyota's case illustrates a strong supplier relationship built on institutional behavior coherence: the partnership identity projected (Strand 1) is consistent with the supplier

development practices enacted (Strand 2), producing supplier behaviors (Strand 4) characterized by investment in dedicated capability and preferential component allocation during supply crises. (Matsuo, 2015; Supply Chain Dive, 2021) The 2011 Tohoku earthquake and the 2021 semiconductor shortage both revealed this strength (Matsuo, 2015). By contrast, manufacturers whose Strand 1 projects partnership but whose Strand 2 reveals adversarial procurement produce rocky supplier relationships whose fragility becomes visible precisely in conditions of supply disruption (Zamaros, 2017, p. 88).

4. Strategic consequences

The organization must recognize that supplier behavior in conditions of scarcity is the true test of the supplier relationship. A supplier that allocates scarce components to a manufacturer first is a supplier whose Strand 3 perception of the manufacturer's institutional behavior is strongly positive. Building and maintaining that perception requires Strand 2 coherence — procurement practices that match the partnership language of Strand 1 — not Strand 1 adjustment alone (Zamaros, 2011, p. 24).

V. Competitors

Industry context: telecommunications

1. Rendering the diagram precise

In the telecommunications context, the organization becomes the incumbent operator (Deutsche Telekom provides the illustrative frame (D'Aveni, 1994)). The stakeholder becomes the competitor — both direct competitors (other mobile and fixed operators) and indirect competitors (over-the-top service providers, platform companies). The behavior of the organization becomes its institutional competitive presentation: pricing strategies, network investment announcements, spectrum acquisition behavior, lobbying positions, and partnership or acquisition moves. The stakeholder behavior becomes competitor behavior: pricing responses, investment countermoves, regulatory complaints, and strategic positioning decisions (Zamaros, 2017, p. 87).

The competitor relationship introduces a structural asymmetry absent from other stakeholder relationships: competitors are simultaneously external to the organization and constitutive of its competitive identity. A prospector organization is only a

prospector relative to defenders in the same market. The relational diagram here is therefore not simply dyadic but field-shaped: the behavior of the organization projects outward into a competitive field, and competitor behavior in that field feeds back to shape the conditions under which the organization's own institutional behavior is possible (Zamaros, 2011, pp. 18–19).

Figure 5. Competitors -- Telecommunications (Deutsche Telekom)

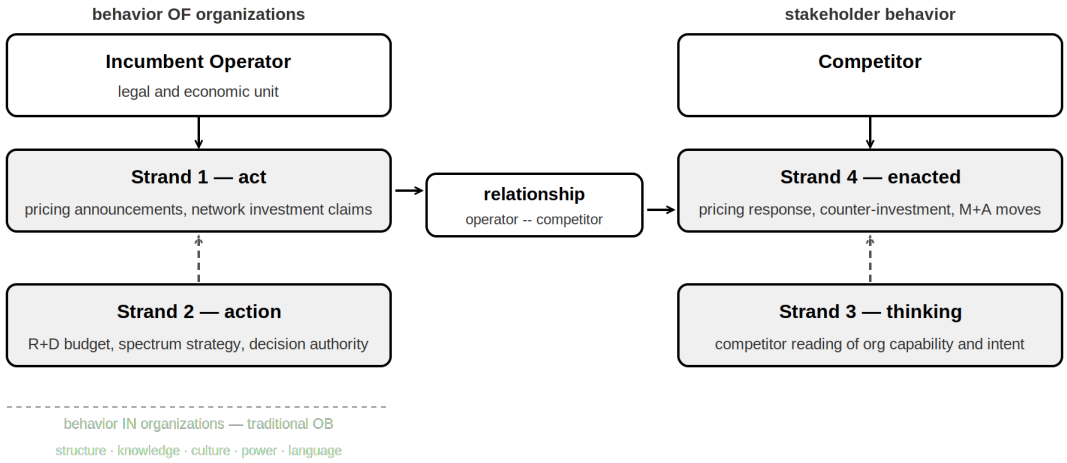

Figure 5. Competitors — Telecommunications (Deutsche Telekom). Strand 1 competitive announcements are strategic information that competitors decode against Strand 2 investment data.

2. Data by strand

Strand 1 data is collected from press releases, regulatory filings, investor day presentations, and public statements about competitive strategy. Discourse analysis (Grant & Iedema, 2004, p. 8) identifies the competitive identity the organization projects: is it a prospector (announcing disruptive pricing or technology moves), a defender (emphasizing network quality and reliability), or an aggressor (launching hostile acquisition bids; Zamaros, 2017, p. 87)?

Strand 2 data is collected from internal strategic planning documents, network investment budgets, R&D allocation data, and leadership surveys (Zamaros, 2017, p. 32). Management concern surveys (Zamaros, 2017, pp. 36–44) identify whether the dominant internal concern is turbulent (market-scanning, competitor-monitoring) or rational (network efficiency, cost per bit).

Strand 4 data is collected from competitor pricing announcements, market share data, spectrum auction outcomes, regulatory complaint filings, and industry association

positions. Competitor behavior is studied as a series of enacted acts from which the underlying Strand 3 perception of the organization's institutional behavior is inferred (Zamaros, 2003, pp. 39, 55).

3. Conclusions

A telecommunications incumbent that projects an aggressive competitive identity (Strand 1) while its Strand 2 data reveal a defender management posture (network maintenance, margin protection) will generate competitor responses calibrated to its actual capability rather than its projected posture. The gap between Strand 1 projection and Strand 2 reality is detectable by sophisticated competitors who track investment data and regulatory filings. Conversely, an incumbent whose Strand 1 and Strand 2 are consistent produces competitor responses that are more cautious and accommodating (Zamaros, 2011, pp. 24–25).

4. Strategic consequences

The competitive relationship is uniquely one in which the organization's institutional behavior is strategic information for the other party. Announcing a competitive move before the Strand 2 capability to execute it is in place invites preemptive competitor responses that undermine the move. (see also Dediu & Levitt, 2011, on Apple vs Samsung; Thornton, 2005, on Airbus vs Boeing) The relational approach reveals that competitive strategy depends on the credibility of the institutional behavior the organization projects — its authority, credibility, and constancy in the eyes of competitors as well as consumers (Zamaros, 2012, p. 46).

VI. The State — and Its Voters

Industry context: public health policy

1. Rendering the diagram precise: a two-level relational chain

The state is a unique stakeholder because it is simultaneously an interlocutor of the organization and a principal whose own behavior is shaped by its relationship with a further stakeholder: voters. This creates a two-level relational chain that the Relational Approach captures distinctively (Zamaros, 2011, pp. 18–19) but that conventional

stakeholder analysis, which treats the state as a single regulatory actor, systematically flattens.

In the public health policy context, the organization becomes the pharmaceutical company (continuing the Roche/Novartis frame). The first-level stakeholder is the state: health ministries, regulatory agencies, pricing and reimbursement bodies, and legislative committees. The behavior of the organization becomes its institutional state-facing presentation: regulatory submissions, pricing negotiations, access commitments, lobbying positions, and public health partnerships. The state's behavior (Strand 4 at level one) includes reimbursement decisions, pricing caps, market authorization timelines, and legislative initiatives on drug pricing transparency.

But the state's behavior toward the organization is not free-floating. It is shaped by the state's own institutional behavior toward its voters — the second-level relational chain. Voter behavior (public opinion on drug pricing, electoral pressure on health policy, media campaigns on access to medicine) constitutes the second-level Strand 4 that constrains what the state can do in its first-level relationship with the organization (Zamaros, online 2021, p. 4).

Figure 6. The State and Its Voters -- Pharmaceuticals / Public Health Policy

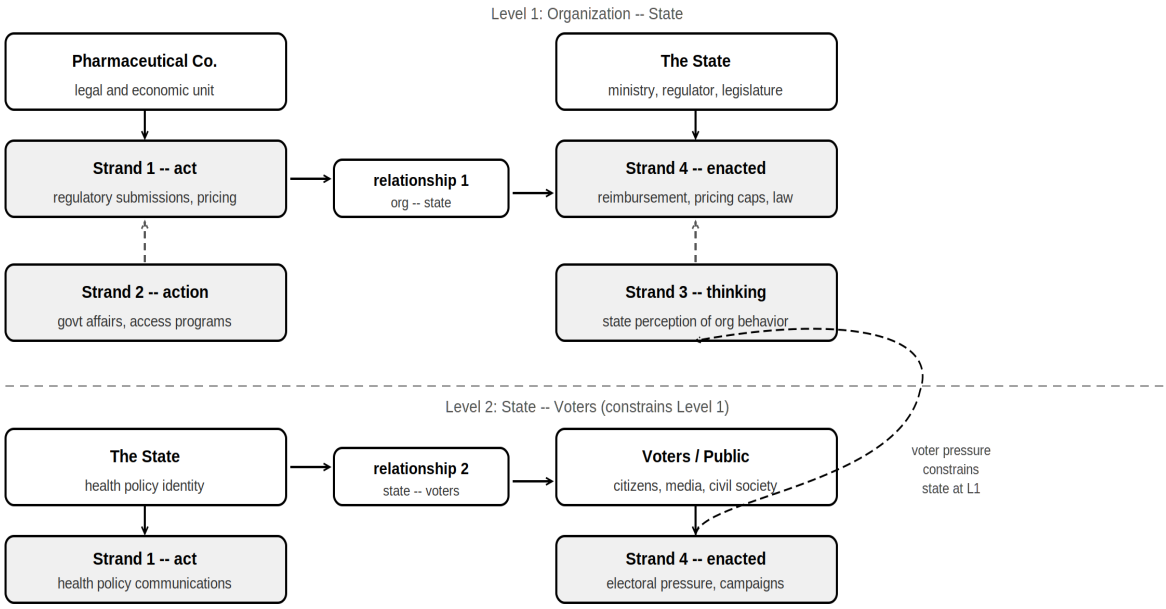

Figure 6. The State and Its Voters — Pharmaceuticals / Public Health Policy. Level 1: organization to state. Level 2: state to voters. Voter pressure (dashed feedback arrow) constrains state behavior at Level 1.

2. Data by strand: level one (organization — state)

Strand 1 data at level one is collected from regulatory dossiers, public pricing commitments, access agreements, and lobbying disclosures. Discourse analysis (Grant & Iedema, 2004, p. 8) identifies whether the organization projects a public health partner identity (mission-driven language, access commitments, outcomes data) or a commercial actor identity (return-on-investment arguments, intellectual property protection claims).

Strand 2 data at level one is collected through documentary analysis of governance structures, leadership surveys targeting government affairs and regulatory affairs functions (Zamaros, 2017, p. 32), and management concern surveys identifying whether the dominant concern is rational (shareholder value) or discursive (narrative management; Zamaros, 2017, pp. 36–44).

Strand 4 data at level one is collected from reimbursement decisions, pricing cap announcements, legislative proposals on drug pricing, market authorization timelines, and compulsory licensing threats.

3. Data by strand: level two (state — voters)

Strand 1 data at level two is collected from health ministry communications, government health policy documents, political party manifestos, and public statements by health ministers. Discourse analysis (Grant & Iedema, 2004, p. 8) identifies what health policy identity the state projects to voters: affordability and access, innovation and research leadership, or fiscal responsibility.

Strand 4 data at level two is collected from public opinion polls on drug pricing and access to medicine, media coverage of pharmaceutical pricing controversies, civil society campaign data, and electoral behavior in health-policy-salient constituencies. Voter behavior is the enacted interpretation of the state's health policy institutional behavior — and it is this behavior that ultimately constrains the state's first-level relationship with the organization (Zamaros, online 2021, p. 4).

4. Conclusions

The two-level chain reveals a structural dynamic that single-level stakeholder analysis misses entirely. A pharmaceutical company that negotiates confidential pricing agreements with health ministries (Strand 1 at level one: partnership, access, confidentiality) may find that its institutional behavior becomes the object of voter

pressure (Strand 4 at level two: campaigns for pricing transparency, parliamentary questions, media investigations) that forces a state behavior change at level one (Zamaros, 2011, pp. 18–19). The state's behavior toward the organization is constrained by the second-level relationship between the state and its voters, which is itself shaped by the voters' perception of the organization's institutional behavior as filtered through media and civil society (Zamaros, online 2021, p. 4).

A pharmaceutical company whose Strand 1 projection toward the state is credible and whose Strand 2 reality confirms it (genuine access commitments, transparent pricing data, demonstrated patient outcomes) will find that voter pressure on the state tends to be muted or supportive. A company whose Strand 1 projects partnership but whose Strand 2 reveals profit-maximizing behavior generates voter pressure that escalates state intervention at level one (Zamaros, 2017, p. 88).

5. Strategic consequences

The organization must manage two relational loops simultaneously. At level one, it must ensure that its institutional behavior toward the state has authority, credibility, and constancy: that its regulatory submissions, access commitments, and pricing arguments are consistent with its Strand 2 reality and are sustained over time (Zamaros, 2012, p. 46). At level two, it must recognize that voter perception of its institutional behavior is a political variable that it cannot control directly but can influence indirectly through its Strand 1 behavior toward the public (patient advocacy, transparency initiatives, public health partnerships).

The relational approach reveals, in sum, that the state is not a monolithic regulatory actor but a relational node in a two-level chain: shaped from above by the organization's institutional behavior and from below by voter behavior that is itself a response to the organization's public institutional presence. Managing this chain requires discursive coherence across both levels — a single institutional behavior that is consistent in what it projects to regulators, to the public, and to the internal organization that must enact it (Zamaros, 2011, p. 24).

Conclusion

The Relational Approach's four-strand architecture is not a generic stakeholder framework. It is a precise analytical instrument that, when applied stakeholder by stakeholder, reveals structural features of each organizational relationship that conventional analysis misses: the institutional behavior gap between Strand 1 projection and Strand 2 reality; the asymmetry by which the same organizational behavior lands differently depending on which relational position the stakeholder occupies (Zamaros, 2017, pp. 87–88); and the two-level chain that makes the state relationship uniquely complex (Zamaros, 2011, pp. 18–19).

Across the six stakeholder groups examined, three recurring findings emerge. First, the quality of every stakeholder relationship — strong, rocky, or broken — is a function of the coherence between the organization's Strand 1 institutional behavior and its Strand 2 internal action (Zamaros, 2011, p. 24). Where the two are aligned, stakeholder behavior tends to be positive and durable. Where they diverge, stakeholder behavior eventually signals the gap — through guest reviews, employee turnover, ESG divestment, supplier switching, competitive preemption, or voter pressure on the state. Second, Strand 3 — the unobservable perceptual process — is the hinge of the relational loop (Zamaros, 2011, p. 25). It cannot be measured directly, but it can be inferred from the systematic comparison of Strand 1 projections and Strand 4 behavioral outcomes. Third, the strategic consequences of the framework are always two-directional: the organization can adjust its Strand 1 projection, or it can align its Strand 2 reality, or both. The first is faster and cheaper; the second is more durable and more credible (Zamaros, 2012, p. 46). The choice between them is itself a strategic act with relational consequences.

Future applications of the framework should address the interactions between stakeholder relationships: the way in which the quality of the employee relationship conditions the quality of the consumer relationship; the way in which the investor relationship constrains the supplier relationship; and the way in which the state relationship — through its two-level voter chain — can amplify or dampen the relational pressures arriving from every other stakeholder direction simultaneously.

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