

Week 11: Cultural Approaches to Organizations + Communicative Constitutions of Organizations

COMM 2100 Introduction to Comm Theory
SI Session

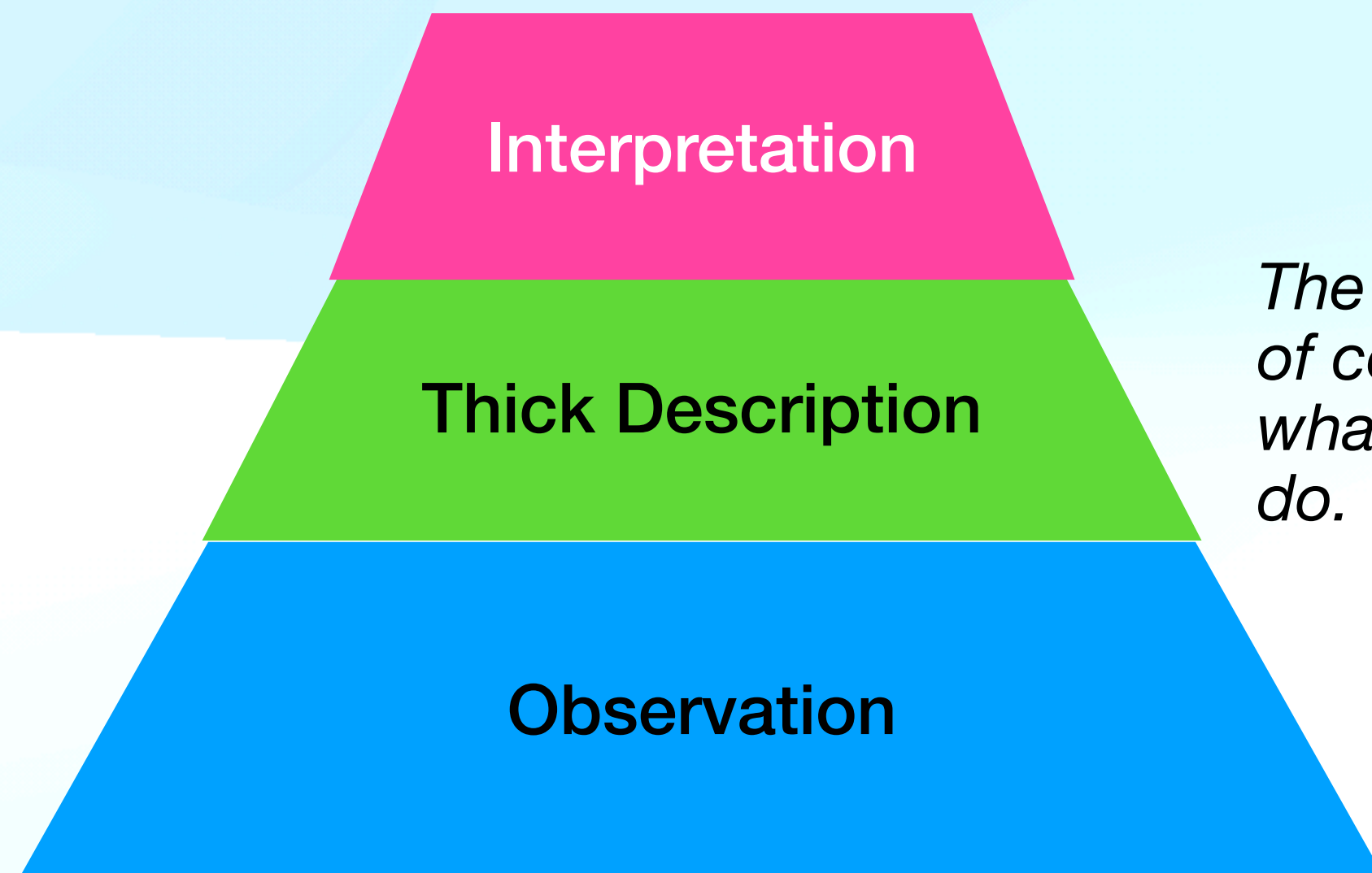
kristen (Jing) Zhang

Culture – webs of significance

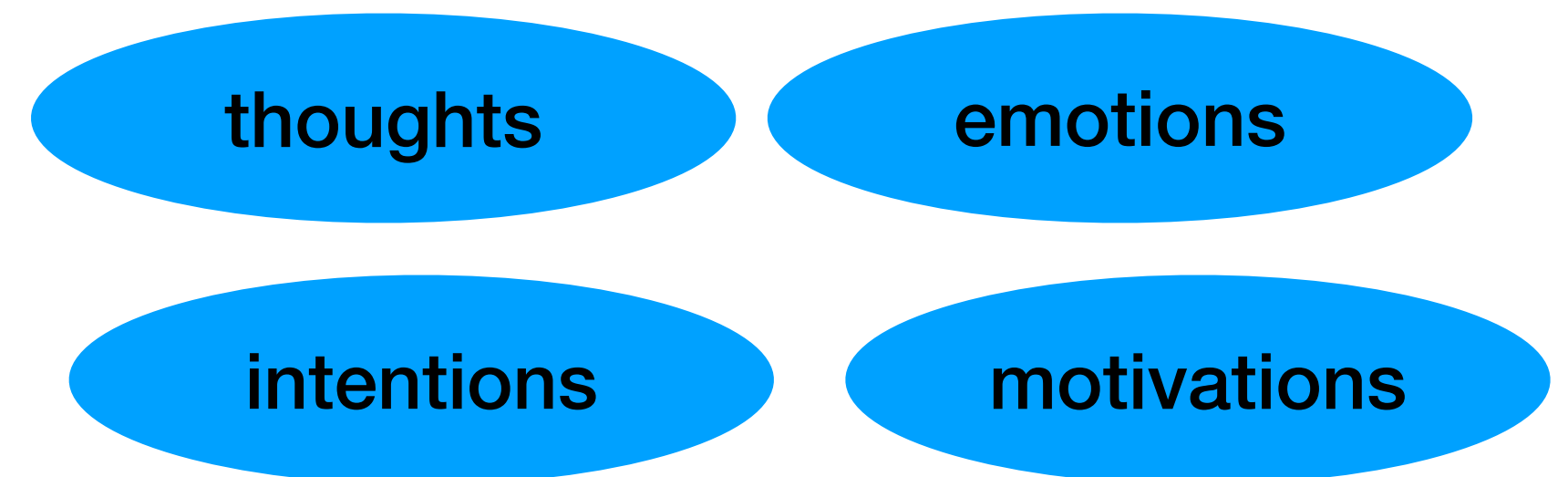
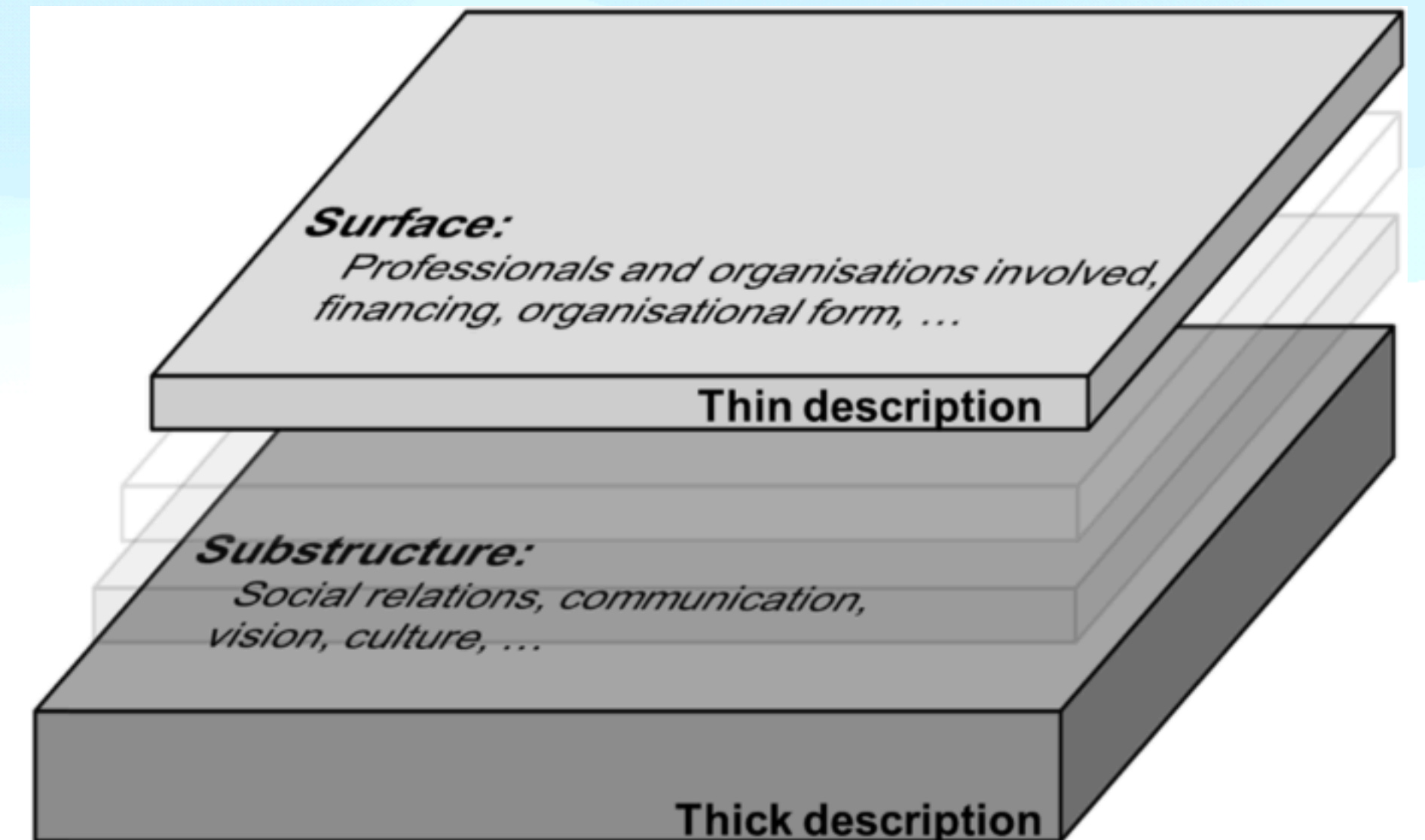
- “Man is the animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun.” – Clifford Geertz
- “It is communication that creates and constitutes the taken-for-granted reality of the world.” – Michael Pacanowsky
- Culture: the shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sensemaking.
- Cultural Performances: Actions by which members constitute and reveal their culture to themselves and others; an ensemble of texts.

Method: Ethnography

Mapping out social discourse; discovering who people within a culture think they are, what they think they are doing, and to what end they think they are doing it.



The record of the intertwined layers of common meaning that underlie what a particular people say and do.



Types of stories

- Corporate Stories: the ideology of management and reinforce company policy.
- Personal Stories: those told by employees, and often defining how they would like to be seen within the organization.
- Collegial Stories: positive/negative anecdotes.

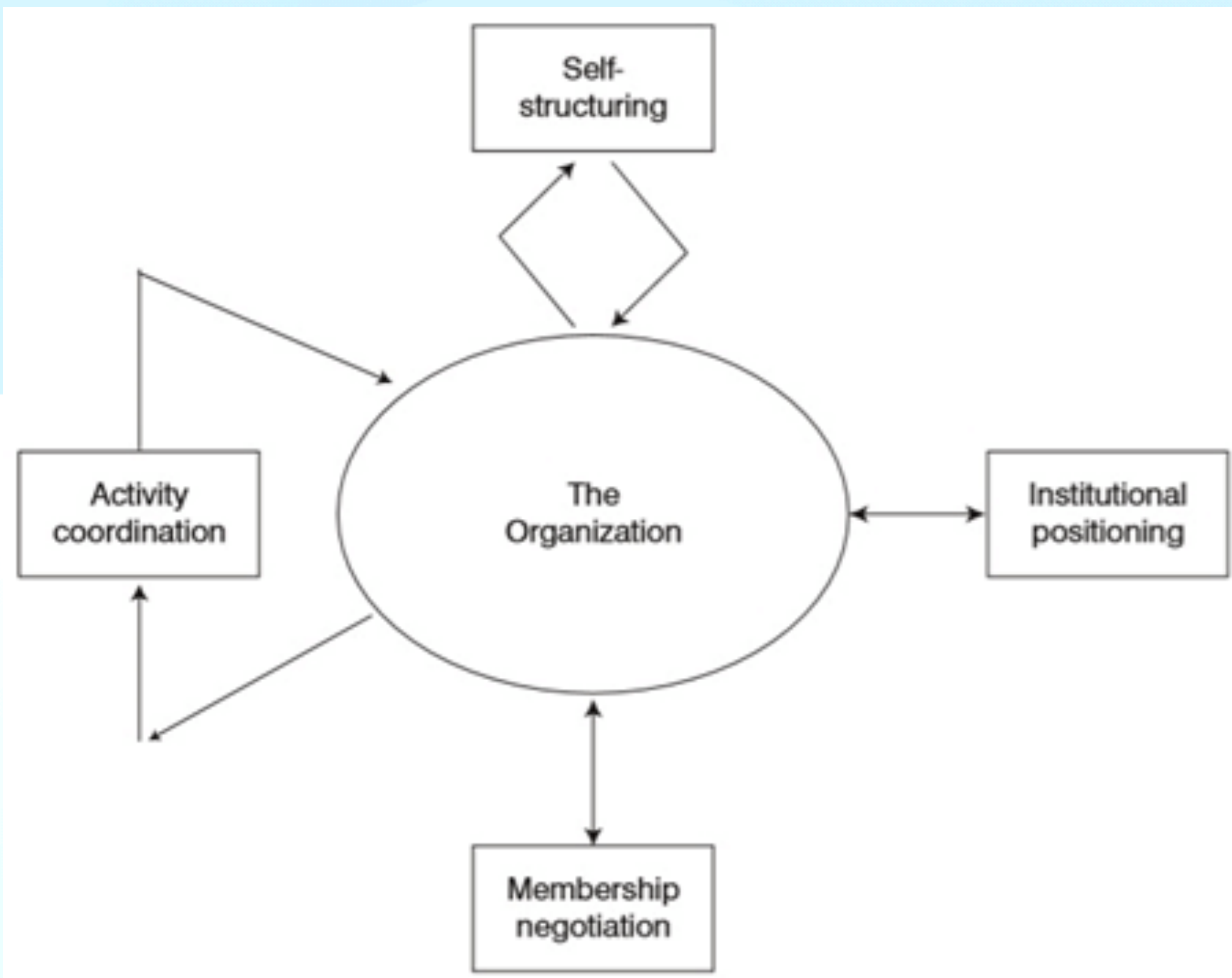
Communicative Constitution of Organization

The communication creates, or constitutes, an organization

- Constitution: communication that calls organization into being.
- Forms of communication: Four flows – they are not only what the organization does, but what the organization is.

Four flows of CCO

Flow: circulating fields of messages that constitute organizations.



- Membership negotiation: communication that regulates the extent to which a person is an organization member.
- Self-structuring: communication that shapes the relationship among an organization's members.
- Activity coordination: how we get the job done.
- Institutional positioning: Communication between the organization and outside entities.

For example, if employees are preparing to unionize, what shall they do in the four flows?

Four principles for the flows

All flows are necessary for organizations.

Different flows happen in different places.

The same message can address multiple flows.

Different flows address different audiences.

Thank you!
See you next week!