The Communicative Constitution of Organizations:
A Framework for Explanation
(McPhee/Zaug 2000)

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McPhee and Zaug provide a generic framework for the CCO perspective

- **review of previous CCO-related studies**
  - Weick (processes; sensemaking / organizing),
  - Smith (metaphors concerning the relationship between C-O),
  - Boden (singular communicative acts),
  - Taylor (C->O relationship) as well as
  - Deetz and Mumby ((re)production aspects and power)

- **main concern: structuration theory (Giddens 1984)**
  (focus: constitutive aspects)

- **identification of generic communication processes**
  (‘message flows’ / ,interaction processes‘)

- **differentiation between complex organizations vis-à-vis less complex / formal groups**
Four types of interrelated interaction processes
(‘types of message flows’) (I)

Four types of interrelated interaction processes
(‘types of message flows’) (II)

• membership negotiation
  - reciprocal alignment of the role of members / membership
  - organization/social entities as the result of human communication,
    or rather, ‘human agency’ (Giddens)
  - example: socialization processes

• organizational self-structuring
  - organizations are not merely the result of reflections, but reflexive
    control / design
  - example: organizational charts

• activity coordination
  - results to a large extent from organizational self-structuring
  - example: aligning joint activities

• institutional positioning in the social order of institutions
  - core interest: outside world / ‘institutional backdrop’
  - example: product presentations (cf. Steve Jobs)
The model offers fruitful ground for future research by our OaC network

- **commensurable with existing theoretical perspectives**
  (structuration theory, neo-institutionalism etc.)

- **communicating as constitutive of organizing?**

- **ad hoc critique / outlook for future research**
  - flows are not free of overlaps
  - ‘complex relationship of them [flows]’, but no elaboration upon the complexity per se
  - interface between ‘groups of patrons’ and ‘complex organizations’ remains vague

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