

35th Colloquium of the European Group of Organizational Studies (EGOS)
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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Standing Working Group “Organization as Communication”

**Sub-Theme No. 05: “Organization as communication:
Exploring the communicative incarnation of organization”**

Please find further info on submissions (from 09/2018 onwards) at www.egosnet.org

Convenor Team

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Keywords

CCO, communicative institutionalism, creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation, new forms of organizing, organization theory, organizational communication

Sub-Theme Description

Over the past years, the idea that communication plays a constitutive and formative role in creating organization and organizing has gained increasing momentum in management and organization studies. This scholarly perspective has become known under the notion of “communication as constitutive of organization” (or, in short, CCO) – see also the description of EGOS Standing Working Group (SWG) no. 5: [Organization as Communication](#).

From a CCO viewpoint, organization and organizing can arise spontaneously out of communicative interactions of various kinds. In this regard, CCO scholarship puts forth a

“low threshold” view on what an organization is (Schoeneborn & Vásquez, 2017). However, even if CCO scholars emphasize the emergent and ephemeral character of organization, most of their empirical research is still centered on well-established forms of organizations (e.g., large business firms, governmental, or non-governmental organizations).

In this sub-theme, we suggest switching the focus of attention to the communicative beginnings of organization; in other words, the aim is to explore how organizational phenomena initially emerge and gain a continued existence through talk and text. This may involve, for instance, studying the constitutive and formative role of communication in the early stage of entrepreneurial business ventures (e.g., Cornelissen & Clarke, 2015) or in allowing for the rise of new and alternative forms of organizing (e.g., Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015; Wilhoit & Kisselburgh, in press). At the same time, a focus on the incarnation (as well as continuous re-incarnation) of organization via communication can also include looking at well-established organizational settings – but with a particular emphasis on the creative and innovative potential of communication (Martine & Cooren, 2016) in giving rise to and in institutionalizing novel organizational practices, processes, or routines (cf. Wright, 2016). In this regard, the sub-theme also offers opportunities to combine CCO scholarship with neighboring theoretical streams in management organization studies, for instance, in blends like “communicative institutionalism” (see Cornelissen, Durand, Fiss, Lammers & Vaara, 2015) or by revealing the communicative underpinnings of process or practice views on organization (see Schoeneborn, Vásquez & Cornelissen, 2016).

We are inviting paper submissions that address the particular focus of the sub-theme – or that are concerned with the constitutive and formative relations between communication and organization more generally. Below is a list of indicative, but not exhaustive, topics and questions related to the sub-theme:

- At what point does communication become “organizational”?
- How can we theorize the creative and foundational potential of communication?
- How can something as ephemeral and processual as communication lead to the formation of more stable organizational phenomena?
- How to overcome the chicken-or-egg problem to theorize the constitutive relation between communication and organization without presuming the pre-existence of organization in the first place?

- What is the role of communication in creating new business ventures or alternative forms of organizing – and in institutionalizing novel and innovative practices as part of more established organizational settings?
- How can we better understand under what conditions communication is likely to remain “just talk” or is likely to have stronger performative effects, in the sense of generating traction and bindingness among organizational members?
- How can we expand CCO scholarship in fruitful ways and make it suitable to study the emergence and perpetuation of processes, practices, or routines?

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Convenor Bios

Dennis Schoeneborn is Professor of Organization Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg (Germany) as well as Professor of Organization, Communication, and CSR at Copenhagen Business School (Denmark). In his current research, he is concerned with the communicative constitution of new, alternative, and rudimentary forms of organizing. His work has been published in the *Academy of Management Review*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, and *Organization Studies*, among others.

Boukje Cnossen is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Leuphana University Lüneburg (Germany). In her doctoral thesis, she has focused on organizing practices of creative entrepreneurs working together in creative spaces, and investigates how new organizations come into being in such settings. She is furthermore part of the emerging scholarly network on “entrepreneurship-as-practice”.

Joep Cornelissen is Professor of Corporate Communication and Management at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands). The main focus of his research involves studies of the role of corporate and managerial communication in the context of innovation, entrepreneurship and change, and of social evaluations of the legitimacy and reputation of start-up and established firms. In addition, he also has an interest in questions of scientific reasoning and theory development in management and organization theory. His work has been published in the *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization Science*, and *Organization Studies*, among others, and he has written a textbook on corporate communication (*Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, Sage) which is now in its 4th edition.