

Paper proposal

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Communication of the commons and organizations: three premises

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Abstract: This paper aims to make a theoretical contribution to the literature on collaborative action and the management of the commons (Dolšak & Ostrom, 2003; Foster, 2011; Ostrom, 2009). It draws on the communication studies' perspective to identify three key premises and to propose them to be observed by any organization under the paradigm of the commons. The starting point is that all organizations have to deal with some of the commons to an extent – in terms of knowledge, environment, social justice, public health, or other fields. Communication and management are at the heart of making-sense processes, so the author adopts the framework of the communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) (eg. Cooren, et al., 2011; McPhee, 2004), to draw on how communication configures the organization and acknowledges, or not, the commons as such. The author takes a constructivist approaches to organizational theories and considers organizations as places of sense making. As far as the issue of “organizational identity” is concerned, the paper points to narratives and storytelling as the places where these processes take place (Boje, 2014; Castelló, 2019; Czarniawska, 1998). It is argued that, if the commons are to be recognized and accordingly managed, organizations should change the way they use them to communicate and incorporate three premises: a) acceptance of the blurring boundaries of organizations and the role of storytelling; b) a new and integrative approach that opens up organizations to their so-called “the publics”; c) the true democratization of decision-making processes, which must be open communication systems, not only available or transparent. The paper ends with a call for a shift in organizational culture by challenging three features of neoliberal logics: identities – embedded in storytelling practices –, their audiences – the nature of which needs to be reconsidered –, and their governance – which requires consistent and fair feedback from all agents. The author argues that communication processes are at the basis of this change. The contribution would be summarized in the idea that it is how we communicate at an organizational level where we (re)cognize the commons as such.

Keywords: Communication, Nonprofit Organizations, organizational communication, communication of the commons, constitution of the commons.

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Short bio:

Enric Castelló is Associate Professor at the Department of Communication of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Tarragona, Spain). He was awarded his PhD in Communication by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He has also been an invited researcher at the Glasgow Caledonian University and Loughborough University. He was given the ‘Article of the Year Award 2007’ by the *European Journal of Communication*. His research has been published in international journals such as the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Journal of Consumer Culture or Media Culture and Society*, and by reputed publishing houses such as Routledge, Palgrave MacMillan or Edinburgh University Press. He specializes in strategic communication, storytelling, media and identities. His latest book is in press: *Comunicación y ser de la organización*, València: Tirant lo Blanch, 2019.

