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Organisational Communication Practices in International Development Cooperation: A Literature Review

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Abstract: This article examines how the scientific literature conceptualises and discusses organisational communication practices in the context of international development cooperation. Its objective is to identify the theoretical perspectives employed, describe the cultural, institutional and relational dimensions of these practices, and examine the contribution of the Anthropology of Organisations to understanding communication as a social and institutional practice. Methodologically, it adopts a qualitative, bibliographic and interpretive approach structured as an integrative literature review. The corpus comprises scholarly articles, books, book chapters and institutional documents from the Anthropology of Organisations, Organisational Communication and Development Studies. The analysis was organised around six thematic strands and sought to identify convergences, divergences and complementarities among the contributions examined. The findings indicate that communication is not confined to information transmission or administrative coordination: it contributes to the constitution of organisations, the construction of institutional identity, the interpretation of development guidelines, and the negotiation of relationships and meanings. In the context of cooperation, particular emphasis falls on processes of mediation and translation between institutional guidelines and local realities, as well as tensions associated with participation, representation and the unequal distribution of authority. The literature on digital communication, in turn, shows that adopting platforms does not, in itself, amount to organisational transformation or effective participation, since technological appropriation depends on cultural, material, economic and sociotechnical conditions. As a conceptual synthesis, the article proposes seven interdependent analytical dimensions: organisational culture and identity; communication practices and routines; institutional actors and relationships; the negotiation and production of meaning; power and representation; sociocultural mediation; and technological mediation. It concludes that these dimensions make it possible to interpret communication as a constitutive, relational and culturally situated practice. The bibliographic and interpretive nature of the study, together with the absence of original empirical data, limits its conclusions to a theoretical synthesis of the literature examined.

Keywords: *Organisational Communication; Anthropology of Organisations; International Development Cooperation; Institutional Culture; Communication Practices.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organisations, communication is not limited to the transmission of information or the dissemination of activities. It contributes to work coordination, the development of shared understandings and the negotiation of meanings that guide collective action. Through interactions, discourse and documents, actors interpret guidelines, legitimise decisions and build relationships. This perspective, developed within constitutive approaches to communication, makes it possible to understand organisations as being continuously produced and reproduced through communicative processes (Taylor & Van Every, 2000).

This approach is relevant to organisations operating in international development cooperation. Such organisations bring together international agencies, funders, public institutions, non-governmental organisations, professionals and local partners whose positions, resources and conceptions of development do not always coincide. In this context, communication is a space for institutional coordination and translation, but also for negotiating priorities, representation and power.

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The Anthropology of Organisations makes it possible to examine institutions as social and cultural realities constituted through everyday practices, values, relationships and interpretations. Wright (1994) questions the reduction of culture to a management instrument, while Czarniawska (2014) draws attention to processes of organising through which practices and guidelines are continuously interpreted. In the field of development, Mosse (2005) and Lewis and Mosse (2006) show that aid policies are not simply implemented: they depend on processes of mediation, translation and legitimation. Escobar (2012) and Ferguson (1990), through distinct critical approaches, highlight the political assumptions and power effects embedded in development discourses.

Research on communication in nonprofit and development organisations adds further dimensions to this debate. Ihm and Kim (2021) relate organisational culture to the use of traditional and digital media; Changwony et al. (2025) examine digital media use and public engagement in organisations in Sub-Saharan African countries; Kim and Divya (2026) analyse policies of visibility and representation in the digital spaces of non-governmental organisations; and Joshi (2026) discusses strategic communication in community development projects. These studies shed light on relevant dimensions, although they address different objects and scales of analysis.

Against this background, it is important to understand how the literature conceptualises organisational communication practices and relates them to work routines, institutional culture, relationships among actors, and mediation between international organisations and local contexts. The guiding research question is therefore: how are organisational communication practices conceptualised and discussed in the context of international development cooperation?

The overall objective of this article is to understand how the scientific literature approaches these practices. More specifically, it seeks to identify the theoretical perspectives employed, describe the cultural, institutional and relational dimensions involved, and examine the contribution of the Anthropology of Organisations to understanding communication as a social and institutional practice. To this end, it brings together contributions from the Anthropology of Organisations, Organisational Communication and Development Studies.

II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- *Organisations as Social and Cultural Constructions*

Organisations cannot be understood solely in terms of their formal structures, regulations or organisational charts. They are also social and cultural realities, produced through the relationships, practices and meanings that actors construct in everyday life. Wright (1994) draws attention to the limitations of instrumental conceptions of organisational culture, highlighting the importance of cultural differences, local knowledge systems and social relationships. This perspective prevents culture from being treated as a homogeneous set of values shared by all members.

It is useful to distinguish between institutional structure, organisational culture and organisational practices. The first comprises formal arrangements of authority, responsibilities and procedures; the second encompasses values, assumptions and symbolic references that may be shared or contested; and practices refer to the concrete ways in which actors implement, interpret or challenge guidelines. These dimensions condition one another: structure frames action, culture guides interpretation, and practices may reproduce or transform both.

Czarniawska's (2014) processual perspective, centred on the concept of organising, shifts the analysis away from the organisation as a fixed entity towards the processes through which it is enacted. Garsten and Nyqvist (2013) develop this reading by highlighting the diversity of positions, interests and forms of authority within complex organisations.

Côté-Boileau et al. (2020), Van Maanen (2011) and Ybema et al. (2009), in turn, emphasise the value of ethnography for understanding actual practices, informal relationships and the potential gap between prescribed procedures and everyday activities. Taken together, these contributions support an understanding of the organisation as a relational, culturally situated process shaped by internal differences.

- *Organisational Communication as a Social and Constitutive Practice*

Organisational Communication studies encompass instrumental, interpretive and critical perspectives. Instrumental approaches prioritise information flows, channels and coordination; interpretive approaches examine the production of meanings, symbols and narratives; and critical approaches question the relationships between discourse, authority, ideology and power.

Mumby and Stohl (1996) show that this field addresses issues of voice, rationality, organisation and the relationship between organisations and society. This makes it clear that communication also involves defining who is entitled to speak, be heard and participate in decision-making.

The Communication Constitutes Organization (CCO) approach deepens this understanding by arguing that communication does not merely take place within already established organisations: it contributes to constituting them. Taylor and Van Every (2000) explain that organisations emerge through the articulation of conversations, texts and communicative activities. Putnam and Nicotera (2009), in turn, show that this approach brings together different explanations of how interactions produce patterns of organisation and coordination. Cooren (2015) adds that discourse, documents and meetings can help define responsibilities, legitimise decisions and stabilise institutional commitments.

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This reasoning converges with the anthropological attention to everyday relationships developed by Garsten and Nyqvist (2013): coordination depends not only on formal channels but also on interactions through which actors interpret procedures, negotiate commitments and respond to unforeseen situations. The distinction between formal and informal communication is therefore not an absolute separation. Everyday conversations may change the interpretation of a formal decision, just as documents and procedures shape interactions. Eisenberg et al. (2014) help explain this tension between participants' creativity and institutional constraints.

In international cooperation organisations, these issues take on added significance because communication connects departments, funders, local partners and communities. It is therefore important to examine not only the content being transmitted, but also the actors authorised to produce it, the instruments used, the conditions under which information circulates, and the effects of these processes on coordination and the distribution of authority.

- *International Development Cooperation*

International development cooperation is a field of institutional relationships and social practices shaped by different conceptions of development and negotiations over power. Although it involves funding, technical assistance, planning and evaluation, its implementation depends on specific historical and sociocultural contexts.

Ferguson (1990) questions the depoliticisation of social problems when they are recast as technical issues; Escobar (2012) analyses development as a historically constructed discourse through which certain societies are represented and turned into objects of intervention. Despite the differences between their approaches, both make it possible to question the neutrality of policies and intervention models.

Relationships among funders, international agencies, governments, implementing organisations, local partners and communities are conditioned by differences in resources, authority and decision-making capacity. Mosse (2005) demonstrates ethnographically that the continuity of policies depends on everyday work involving interpretation, legitimation and relationship-building. Lewis and Mosse (2006) further examine the role of brokers and translators in the circulation of ideas and intervention models. Olivier de Sardan (2005) adds that programmes encounter social contexts already organised around their own norms, interests and forms of knowledge; local appropriation therefore involves adaptation, negotiation and, at times, resistance.

Participation also requires critical examination. Cornwall (2007) shows that concepts such as participation and empowerment may carry different meanings and serve different institutional interests. The existence of consultations or meetings does not, in itself, demonstrate that actors influence priorities and decisions; it is necessary to examine who participates, under what conditions and with what capacity to intervene.

In the field of Communication for Development, Reis and Hostin (2019) identify a shift from models centred on the diffusion of innovations towards participatory, dialogical approaches attentive to mediatization. Carniello et al. (2016) broaden this debate by relating communication to regional development, empowerment and community practices.

The OECD principles (2024) on support for the media and the information environment link cooperation to freedom of expression, access to information and participation, while also recognising risks associated with disinformation, unequal access and the concentration of power.

For this review, these contributions make it possible to situate communication within development processes: it plays a role in the circulation of policies, the negotiation between technical and local knowledge, and the construction of institutional legitimacy.

- *Communication Practices, Institutional Culture and the Production of Meaning in Development Organisations*

In this article, communication practices are understood as recurrent ways of producing, sharing, interpreting and negotiating meanings in the course of organisational activity. They include meetings, work-related conversations, reports, strategic documents, correspondence, public narratives and interactions among professionals, partners and communities.

Their significance lies not only in the information conveyed but also in the relationships and procedures that make coordination possible. This reading brings together Czarniawska's (2014) processual perspective and the analysis by Mosse (2005) and Lewis and Mosse (2006) of the everyday translation of development policies.

Institutional culture takes shape through the relationship between declared values, narratives, routines and actors' interpretations. Organisational documents are not neutral descriptions of reality: they select problems, justify interventions and construct images of the organisation for funders, partners and communities.

Everyday interactions, in turn, may confirm or modify these guidelines. Institutional identity is therefore continuously negotiated and is not necessarily interpreted in the same way by managers, professionals and local actors.

The sociocultural dimension of communication becomes evident when institutional models encounter local languages, knowledge and practices. By bringing Folkcommunication into dialogue with Communication for Development, Santana, Escudero and Fernandes (2023) emphasise forms of communication rooted in social contexts.

Carniello et al. (2016) reinforce the need to consider the interfaces between institutional, community and public communication. These contributions make it possible to understand that the reception of a message depends on

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actors' experiences and systems of meaning, not merely on the formal clarity of its content.

The representation of communities is also a matter of power. Reports and communication materials define who is presented as a target group, which needs are recognised and which forms of knowledge are considered legitimate. Cornwall's (2007) critique of the institutional use of participation helps question the gap between representing a community as a participant and its actual capacity to influence decisions. The tension between creativity and constraint discussed by Eisenberg et al. (2014) also reminds us that professionals interpret and adapt guidelines while operating within hierarchies and unequally distributed constraints.

- *Digital Communication and the Transformation of Organisational Practices in Development Cooperation*

Digital communication encompasses practices of producing, circulating, sharing and interpreting information through digital media and environments, both in internal communication and in relations with external actors (Castro, 2025). It should be distinguished from digitisation, understood as the conversion of information and procedures into digital formats, and from digital transformation, a broader process that may alter structures, routines, coordination and institutional relationships. The use of platforms alone does not demonstrate that organisational transformation has taken place.

Tufte (2017) proposes an approach to communication and social change centred on citizenship, participation and actors' capacity to intervene. This orientation makes it possible to assess digital media beyond the reach of messages: the relevant question is whether they expand dialogue and whether public contributions influence decisions.

Ihm and Kim (2021) show that technological appropriation also depends on organisational culture and modes of operation. Changwony et al. (2025), in their study of non-governmental organisations in Sub-Saharan African countries, identify differences in digital media use and public engagement, although indicators of platform presence and activity cannot, on their own, reveal internal communication or the quality of relationships with communities.

Akemu and Abdelnour (2018) demonstrate that digital artefacts may simultaneously serve as records of interactions and as spaces in which organisational activity takes place. Beneito-Montagut, Begueria and Cassián (2017), for their part, show that team ethnography can combine online and offline observation without assuming that one replaces the other. These contributions are relevant to geographically distributed organisations in which email, videoconferencing and shared documents form part of coordination and decision-making processes.

Digital incorporation nevertheless depends on infrastructure, equipment, skills, financial resources, working languages and conditions of access. Inequalities between international organisations and local partners may be reproduced in digital environments, particularly when control over communication channels and the capacity to produce and circulate information remain concentrated among certain actors.

The OECD (2024) draws attention to both the opportunities and risks of the digital information environment. Technology should therefore be analysed as a sociotechnical dimension of organisational practices, without technological determinism and without reducing digital communication to social media management or institutional promotion.

- *Theoretical Articulation: Communication, Organisational Culture and Development Practices*

Bringing together the Anthropology of Organisations, Organisational Communication and Development Studies makes it possible to understand communication practices without reducing institutions to homogeneous structures or information-transmission systems.

The Anthropology of Organisations focuses on everyday practices, meanings and culturally situated relationships; Organisational Communication explains how interactions, texts and discourse contribute to the constitution and coordination of organisations; and Development Studies situates these processes within historical and political relationships shaped by different conceptions of development and asymmetries among actors.

On the basis of this articulation, the article proposes seven interdependent analytical dimensions for examining organisational communication practices: (i) organisational culture and identity, concerning the values, narratives and references through which an institution defines itself; (ii) communication practices and routines, encompassing formal and informal modes of interaction; (iii) institutional actors and relationships, taking into account positions, responsibilities and networks of interdependence; (iv) the negotiation and production of meaning, through which guidelines and experiences are interpreted; (v) power and representation, relating to the authority to define priorities, produce discourse and make certain voices visible; (vi) sociocultural mediation, involving the translation of institutional guidelines into specific contexts; and (vii) technological mediation, considering the role of digital media in the circulation of information and the organisation of interactions.

These dimensions do not constitute a previously validated model or a set of isolated categories. They represent a conceptual synthesis developed within this review, intended to guide the reading of the literature and support subsequent qualitative research. Their value lies in relating communicative processes to institutional culture, work practices, power relations and the sociocultural conditions of cooperation. The technological dimension cuts across the others without replacing the social relationships that give communication its meaning.

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III. METHODOLOGY

The article adopts a qualitative, bibliographic and interpretive approach, structured as an integrative literature review. The study involved identifying, reading, analysing and critically bringing together scholarly contributions from three disciplinary fields: the Anthropology of Organisations, Organisational Communication and Development Studies. This methodological choice made it possible to bring together different theoretical and conceptual perspectives in order to understand organisational communication practices in the context of international development cooperation.

The bibliographic corpus comprised scholarly articles, books, book chapters and institutional documents relevant to the discussion of the subject. Classical and contemporary contributions were included on the basis of their theoretical relevance and explanatory value. The authors examined include Wright (1994), Taylor and Van Every (2000), Mosse (2005), Lewis and Mosse (2006), Czarniawska (2014), Cooren (2015), Ihm and Kim (2021), and Changwony et al. (2025), among others.

The analysis was organised around six thematic strands: (i) organisations as social and cultural constructions; (ii) organisational communication as a social and constitutive practice; (iii) international development cooperation; (iv) communication practices, institutional culture and the production of meaning; (v) digital communication and the transformation of organisational practices; and (vi) the theoretical articulation of communication, organisational culture and development.

Within each strand, the selected contributions were examined in terms of their conceptual assumptions, central arguments and potential for interpreting the phenomenon under study. The analysis sought to identify convergences, divergences and complementarities among the authors' perspectives, relating communicative processes to everyday practices, institutional cultures, power relations and mechanisms of mediation between international organisations and local actors.

The interpretive synthesis made it possible to develop a conceptual framework that understands organisational communication through five interdependent dimensions: as a constitutive practice of the organisation, an expression of institutional culture, a negotiation of relationships and meanings, a manifestation of power relations, and a form of mediation between institutional guidelines and sociocultural contexts. The digital dimension was also incorporated into this interpretation, taking into account its implications for interaction, coordination and the circulation of information.

The approach has limitations arising from the epistemological diversity of the works examined and the absence of original empirical data. Consequently, the findings constitute a theoretical and interpretive synthesis of the literature and do not amount to an empirical assessment of the communication practices of specific organisations.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- *Profile of the Literature Examined*

The analysis of the literature reveals an interdisciplinary approach to organisational communication practices in international development cooperation. The studies and documents considered address communication from different perspectives, making it possible to understand its presence in institutional relationships, coordination processes, the interpretation of organisational guidelines and the construction of shared or contested meanings.

The literature examined varies in terms of publication type, including theoretical works, ethnographic studies, scholarly articles, book chapters and institutional documents. Its temporal scope extends from 1990 to 2026, bringing together contributions that make it possible to trace different approaches to organisations, communication and development processes. This diversity does not, however, represent a homogeneous distribution of themes, contexts or methodological perspectives.

At the disciplinary level, four fields of knowledge can be identified: the Anthropology of Organisations, Organisational Communication, Development Studies and Communication for Development. Bringing these fields together makes it possible to examine communication practices beyond their technical dimension, while also considering the cultural, institutional, political and relational factors that shape organisational activity.

With regard to the contexts examined, the references include aid and development organisations, non-governmental organisations, cooperation institutions and networks, as well as initiatives undertaken in community and local settings. The inclusion of studies on non-governmental organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa, the implementation of aid policies and regional development initiatives demonstrates the diversity of institutional and social settings addressed in the literature.

Analytically, this diversity makes it possible to identify two complementary movements. The first is to understand organisations as social and cultural realities whose dynamics cannot be reduced to formal structures and administrative procedures. The second is to examine communication as a cross-cutting dimension of cooperation, present in the articulation among actors, the circulation of information, the negotiation of priorities and the adaptation of interventions to different contexts. Bringing these movements together provides the main basis for organising the following interdependent analytical dimensions: organisational culture and identity; communication practices and routines; institutional actors and relationships; the negotiation and production of meaning; power and representation; sociocultural mediation; and technological mediation.

These dimensions are neither isolated compartments nor successive stages of a communication process. They are analytical categories that make it possible to understand

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different aspects of the same reality: communication as a social practice that helps organise relationships, construct meaning and coordinate interventions in the field of international development cooperation.

- *Theoretical Perspectives on Organisations and Institutional Culture*

The literature reveals a convergence around a processual, relational and culturally situated conception of organisations. This perspective moves beyond an understanding of the organisation as a formal structure made up of hierarchies, rules, responsibilities and predefined procedures.

Although these elements are fundamental to institutional coordination, they are not sufficient in themselves to explain the actual dynamics of organisations, since their functioning also depends on the interpretations, behaviours and relationships established by actors in everyday life.

One issue identified is the distance between formally established structures and the concrete practices that shape organisational life. Institutional rules and guidelines are not necessarily implemented uniformly. They are interpreted, adjusted and, in certain circumstances, contested in light of the interests, experiences and cultural references of different actors. This observation makes it possible to understand the organisation not merely as an administrative structure but as a reality continuously constructed through interactions and social practices.

Institutional culture emerges in this context as a constitutive dimension of organisational functioning. The analysis shows that it should not be understood as a homogeneous set of values and behaviours shared by all members. Rather, it encompasses different cultural references, interpretations and forms of authority, which may coexist, be negotiated or come into conflict.

The diversity of positions and interests makes organisational culture a space for the production of meaning, but also for differentiation and contestation. This reading is supported by the approaches of Wright (1994), Czarniawska (2014), and Garsten and Nyqvist (2013), whose contributions make it possible to question homogenising conceptions of culture and institutional structures.

Another finding concerns the importance of everyday practices for understanding organisations. Examining informal relationships, non-formalised routines and the adjustments made by actors makes it possible to identify dimensions of institutional functioning that are not always visible in regulatory documents or official discourse.

In this regard, the anthropological approach offers tools for examining the relationship between prescribed guidelines and the practices actually carried out, taking into account the contexts in which actors interpret and fulfil their responsibilities. The contributions of Côté-Boileau et al. (2020), Van Maanen (2011) and Ybema et al. (2009) underpin this attention to practices, relationships and meanings produced in everyday organisational life.

Bringing these perspectives together makes it possible to identify an interdependent relationship between institutional culture and communication. Communication does not merely transmit an organisation's values, rules and guidelines; it also contributes to their construction, reproduction and transformation. Through interactions, discourse, coordination practices and relationships among actors, understandings are established, positions are defined and the meanings of institutional action are negotiated.

The main finding in this area is therefore that understanding organisations requires an analysis that connects formal structures with everyday practices, social relationships and a plurality of cultural references. In international development cooperation, this perspective makes it possible to examine how institutional guidelines are interpreted and adapted in different contexts, avoiding a reduction of organisational functioning to the linear application of rules and procedures.

- *Organisational Communication as a Constitutive and Relational Practice*

The literature shows that organisational communication performs functions that go beyond information transmission and activity coordination. Communication practices contribute to the construction of institutional relationships, the definition of responsibilities, the production of identities and the negotiation of meanings that guide collective action. This finding makes it possible to understand communication as a constitutive practice of organisational reality, rather than merely as a resource used by pre-existing structures.

The studies examined reveal different dimensions of this reality. In its operational dimension, communication ensures the circulation of information and the coordination of activities. In its interpretive dimension, it intervenes in the construction and negotiation of meanings through discourse, narratives and interactions. In its critical dimension, it makes visible relationships of authority, mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, and inequalities that condition actors' participation. These dimensions are interconnected in organisational functioning, showing that communicative processes are simultaneously functional, symbolic and political.

One prominent finding concerns the relationship between communication and the distribution of institutional authority. The possibility of participating in communication processes does not necessarily mean having an equal capacity to influence decisions. The analysis reveals differences among actors in terms of their legitimacy to speak, their chances of being heard and their ability to define which issues are treated as priorities.

Communication practices therefore do not merely bring participants together; they may also reproduce power asymmetries and limit the involvement of certain groups.

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This interpretation is supported by Mumby and Stohl (1996), whose approach relates organisational communication to questions of voice, rationality and the relationship between organisations and society.

The constitutive dimension of communication is also expressed in the way organisations establish and maintain their institutional commitments. Conversations, documents, meetings and other communicative processes help define responsibilities, legitimise decisions and stabilise cooperation relationships.

Organisations therefore do not simply use communication to carry out activities: they are also built and maintained through these practices. This observation is consistent with the Communication Constitutes Organization (CCO) perspective developed by Taylor and Van Every (2000) and further explored by Putnam and Nicotera (2009), according to which communication contributes to the production and maintenance of the organisation itself.

The analysis also shows that communicative processes involve a tension between actors' capacity for initiative and the constraints imposed by institutional structures. Although participants may interpret, negotiate and reformulate guidelines, their involvement takes place in contexts shaped by rules, procedures and relationships of authority.

Documents, discourse and meetings play a decisive role in this context by formalising decisions and defining the limits of institutional action. This interpretation is consistent with the contributions of Cooren (2015) and Eisenberg et al. (2014), which make it possible to understand the relationship between communicative practices, organisation and institutional constraints.

In international development cooperation, this relational dimension is particularly important because of the diversity of actors involved and the differences in resources, responsibilities and decision-making capacity. Communication provides a space for coordination among funding organisations, implementing institutions, local partners and communities, but it is also a site where priorities are negotiated, positions legitimised and the boundaries of participation defined. The quality of institutional relationships therefore depends not only on the existence of communication channels, but also on access to information, opportunities for expression and the effective influence of different participants.

- *Communication Practices in the Context of International Development Cooperation*

The literature review reveals that communication practices are a fundamental dimension of the coordination among the different actors involved in international development cooperation.

Relationships among funders, international agencies, governments, implementing organisations, local partners and communities are not established exclusively through plans, contracts or technical guidelines. Their implementation depends on continuous interactions through which guidelines are interpreted, priorities negotiated, expectations adjusted and decisions legitimised.

One of the main findings is the existence of a dynamic relationship between institutional guidelines and practices developed in local contexts. Cooperation policies and programmes establish objectives, procedures and intervention criteria, but their implementation involves processes of interpretation and adaptation to the specific conditions of each context. The implementation of initiatives therefore does not necessarily correspond to the full application of the models initially defined. Between the formulation of guidelines and their implementation, negotiations, adjustments and different forms of institutional appropriation take place.

In this process, actors who connect international organisations with local contexts perform a particularly important function.

The circulation of intervention models requires processes of interpretation and translation that relate institutional objectives to the social and cultural conditions in which programmes are implemented. The analysis therefore identifies mediation as a central practice in cooperation, since it shapes the understanding of guidelines, the articulation of interests and the adaptation of interventions. This interpretation is consistent with the studies by Mosse (2005), Lewis and Mosse (2006), and Olivier de Sardan (2005), which illuminate the relationships between formal policies, everyday practices and local knowledge.

Another issue identified concerns the tension between institutional procedures and the actual dynamics of implementation. While the former seek to ensure uniformity, predictability and control over interventions, everyday practices are shaped by local circumstances, participants' interests and different interpretations of established objectives. Communication intervenes precisely in the articulation between these levels, but it does not eliminate existing divergences or inequalities. On the contrary, it may make visible the differences between what institutions intend to achieve and what actors are able, or consider appropriate, to implement.

The analysis also shows that participation is a problematic dimension of communication practices in cooperation. The existence of consultations, meetings and information-sharing mechanisms does not, in itself, guarantee that local actors have an effective influence on decisions.

It is important to consider who defines the content of communication, which languages are used, which forms of knowledge are recognised and under what conditions participants can question or modify institutional priorities. Participation should therefore be examined not merely in terms of actors' presence in consultation processes, but

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above all in terms of their capacity to intervene in the definition, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.

In the field of Communication for Development, the literature examined points to the value of dialogical and participatory practices aimed at involving actors in processes of social transformation. This orientation makes it possible to recognise communication as a condition for public intervention, the strengthening of community relationships and the articulation of regional development with social participation. The contributions of Reis and Hostin (2019) and Carniello et al. (2016) support this reading, while the OECD's (2024) institutional guidance makes it possible to relate the information environment to access to information, freedom of expression and the conditions for public participation.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal a difference between the formal adoption of participatory principles and their implementation in institutional relationships. The inclusion of dialogue and participation in organisational documents and discourse does not necessarily mean that different actors have equal opportunities to intervene. Effective influence depends on the distribution of authority, access to communication resources, recognition of local knowledge and the openness of decision-making processes to negotiation.

- *Institutional Culture, Power Relations and the Production of Meaning*

The literature indicates that organisational meanings are constructed and negotiated through interactions among actors occupying different institutional positions. They are therefore not contents transmitted intact, but interpretations shaped by participants' experiences, interests and systems of meaning.

Declared values, strategic documents, reports and public narratives contribute to the construction of institutional identity by selecting problems, justifying interventions and projecting particular images of organisations. The meaning attributed to these materials, however, is not necessarily shared by all actors involved.

This production of meaning is related to the ways power is exercised in development cooperation organisations. Ferguson's (1990) critique of the transformation of political problems into technical issues, and Escobar's (2012) analysis of development as a historically constructed discourse, make it possible to question the neutrality of interventions. Although they begin from distinct analytical perspectives, both contributions show that institutional representations do not merely describe reality: they also help define needs, identify target groups and legitimise particular forms of intervention.

At the organisational level, power relations are expressed, among other things, in the authority to name problems, select indicators, establish priorities and determine which forms of knowledge are considered legitimate. The production of meaning thus takes place in a context marked by inequalities in resources, authority and capacity to influence. Analysing institutional communication therefore requires consideration not only of message content but also of the conditions under which messages are produced, the interests they represent and the actors whose interpretations receive greater recognition.

Participation is a revealing domain in which these relationships become visible. Cornwall (2007) demonstrates that concepts such as participation and empowerment may assume different meanings and be mobilised in accordance with different institutional interests. In this respect, holding consultations, meetings or listening exercises does not, in itself, justify the conclusion that communities exert effective influence over decisions. It is important to distinguish formal presence in institutional processes from the actual capacity to intervene in defining priorities, interpreting problems and choosing solutions.

This issue is also related to the local appropriation of development guidelines. The contributions of Olivier de Sardan (2005) and Lewis and Mosse (2006) make it possible to understand that institutional models and guidelines are not simply received and applied in local contexts. They are interpreted, adapted and negotiated by the actors involved and may also prompt forms of resistance. Local actors thus participate in the production and implementation of cooperation practices, although their capacity to intervene is conditioned by their positions and the resources available to them.

The dimension of representation deepens this analysis by showing how organisations discursively construct the place assigned to communities. Describing them as beneficiaries, participants or partners expresses different forms of institutional framing, but does not, in itself, clarify the degree of influence they exert over the definition of priorities or the circulation of discourse.

In this context, the literature makes it possible to distinguish between institutional legitimacy, supported by documents, procedures and accountability narratives, and relational legitimacy, which depends on the recognition of the actors involved and their effective participation in decision-making processes. This distinction is an interpretive inference arising from the articulation of the contributions examined; it is not a category empirically measured in the studies cited.

- *Digital Communication and the Transformation of Organisational Practices*

The literature examined makes it possible to understand digital communication as a sociotechnical dimension of organisational practices, whose influence extends beyond the use of platforms and technological tools. Digital media are involved in the production, circulation, archiving and interpretation of information, while also potentially changing work routines, coordination processes and relationships among organisations, partners and publics. From this perspective, digital transformation does not follow automatically from the adoption of technologies, but from

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the ways in which they are appropriated and incorporated into institutional practices.

This relationship between technology and organisational culture is highlighted by Ihm and Kim (2021), who relate the use of traditional and digital media to organisational modes of operation. Changwony et al. (2025), drawing on non-governmental organisations in three Sub-Saharan African countries, in turn introduce the question of public engagement in the use of digital media.

Taken together, these contributions make it possible to distinguish activity on platforms from the effective participation of publics in institutional processes. Digital presence and the circulation of messages may increase organisational visibility, but do not, in themselves, demonstrate that recipients participate in setting priorities or influence decisions.

The organisational dimension of digital communication is also visible in the relationship between face-to-face interactions and technological environments. Akemu and Abdelnour (2018) draw attention to the fact that digital artefacts simultaneously constitute records of interactions and spaces in which part of organisational activity takes place. Beneito-Montagut et al. (2017), for their part, highlight the importance of combining the observation of online and offline practices when examining team dynamics. These perspectives converge in recognising that digital environments do not necessarily replace face-to-face relationships, but become part of the settings in which work, communication and the production of meaning take place.

In the context of international development cooperation, this integration may facilitate coordination among geographically dispersed organisations, document sharing and communication among different institutional actors. However, the possibilities offered by technologies depend on the material, economic, linguistic and sociocultural conditions of their use.

The availability of infrastructure, equipment, financial resources and digital skills conditions actors' participation and may reproduce asymmetries between international organisations and local partners, particularly when control over communication channels and the capacity to produce and circulate information remain concentrated among certain participants.

Tufte's (2017) perspective, which relates communication, citizenship and social change, deepens this discussion by shifting attention away from the reach of messages towards the concrete conditions for dialogue and public intervention.

The combined contribution of the literature therefore lies in showing that digital transformation should be assessed not only in terms of the adoption of tools or the intensity of platform activity, but also through the changes it introduces in coordination practices, institutional relationships, opportunities for participation and the distribution of communicative authority. Digital communication is thus a dimension of organisational practices whose understanding requires simultaneous consideration of technology, institutional culture and the power relations that structure development cooperation.

- *Interpretive Synthesis and Answer to the Research Question*

The literature examined makes it possible to answer the research question by understanding organisational communication practices in international development cooperation as constitutive, relational and culturally situated processes.

Beyond ensuring the circulation of information and the coordination of activities, these practices contribute to the construction of institutional identity, the interpretation of development guidelines, the negotiation of meanings and the shaping of relationships among different actors. Communication thus occupies a structuring position in organisational life, since it intervenes both in the organisation of work and in the legitimation of interventions and relationships with local contexts.

A cross-cutting reading of the contributions examined makes it possible to identify five interdependent conclusions. First, understanding organisations requires moving beyond the observation of their formal structures and taking into account everyday practices, informal relationships and the differences that shape their internal dynamics.

Second, communication should be understood as a constitutive practice of organisations, insofar as it contributes to the formation of relationships, the construction of decisions and the definition of institutional commitments. Third, international development cooperation involves ongoing processes of translation and negotiation between institutional guidelines and local realities, in which meanings and priorities are not necessarily shared uniformly.

Fourth, participation, legitimacy and representation are related to power structures and to the effective capacity of different actors to intervene in communication and decision-making processes. Finally, digital media change the conditions under which information circulates and organisations coordinate their activities, but their effects depend on institutional cultures, available resources, infrastructure and the sociotechnical inequalities that condition their appropriation.

These conclusions reveal the connection between the theoretical perspectives identified, the cultural, institutional and relational dimensions of communication practices, and the contributions of the Anthropology of Organisations. In this sense, the review objectives are achieved at the conceptual level, insofar as the literature examined provides elements for understanding communication not merely as information transmission, but as a social practice through which relationships are organised, meanings are produced

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and positions are negotiated within institutions and between them and their partners.

The synthesis of the findings also makes it possible to revisit the seven analytical dimensions proposed in the theoretical framework: organisational culture and identity; communication practices and routines; institutional actors and relationships; the negotiation and production of meaning; power and representation; sociocultural mediation; and technological mediation.

Their articulation shows that communication practices cannot be understood in isolation, since they develop at the intersection of institutional modes of operation, relationships among actors, sociocultural contexts and available technological resources.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This literature review has made it possible to understand that organisational communication practices in international development cooperation are not limited to information transmission, institutional dissemination or administrative coordination. They constitute social, cultural and institutional processes through which organisations build relationships, interpret guidelines, negotiate meanings and legitimise their interventions.

Communication therefore participates in the very constitution of organisational reality, connecting formal structures with everyday practices and the relationships established among the different actors involved in cooperation.

In response to the research question, the literature conceptualises these practices from a multidimensional perspective in which operational, interpretive, relational and political functions intersect. Understanding them requires consideration not only of the channels and content used, but also of the contexts in which communication takes place, the actors involved, the positions they occupy and the conditions under which they can participate in decision-making processes.

In international cooperation, this approach is particularly important because the circulation of development guidelines and models involves processes of translation, adaptation and negotiation among different institutional and sociocultural realities.

The objectives established were achieved at the conceptual level. The review identified theoretical perspectives from the Anthropology of Organisations, Organisational Communication, Development Studies and Communication for Development; described the cultural, institutional and relational dimensions that run through communication practices; and examined the contribution of the anthropological approach to understanding organisations through their routines, informal relationships, interpretations and power dynamics.

This articulation made it possible to move beyond a predominantly instrumental understanding of communication and situate it within the set of practices through which institutions organise work and establish relationships with their partners and intervention contexts.

The article's main scholarly contribution lies in this interdisciplinary approach. The Anthropology of Organisations provides tools for understanding the diversity of experiences and meanings produced in everyday institutional life; Organisational Communication makes it possible to recognise the constitutive character of interactions, discourse and documents; and Development Studies situates these practices within historical, political and institutional relationships marked by asymmetries.

Their articulation resulted in a proposal comprising seven interdependent analytical dimensions: organisational culture and identity; communication practices and routines; institutional actors and relationships; the negotiation and production of meaning; power and representation; sociocultural mediation; and technological mediation. These dimensions constitute a conceptual framework to guide subsequent research, not an empirically validated model.

The limitations of the review must nevertheless be acknowledged. The epistemological and methodological diversity of the publications examined, as well as the heterogeneity of the contexts and objects studied, constrain direct comparison among their contributions. Furthermore, the study is bibliographic and interpretive in nature and does not include direct observation or empirical data collected within specific organisations.

Consequently, the conclusions should not be generalised to all international cooperation organisations or interpreted as demonstrating causal relationships between communication practices and development outcomes. The proposed analytical framework should subsequently be examined in concrete organisational contexts.

Future research may therefore adopt qualitative and ethnographic approaches to examine how communication practices develop through institutional routines, face-to-face and digital interactions, document production, and relationships among managers, professionals, local partners and communities.

Observation of everyday practices, combined with interviews and the analysis of organisational documents, may help clarify the points of convergence and tension between formal guidelines and actual experience. In this regard, future institutional research on Nigrizia could use the seven proposed dimensions to study its communication practices, considering the relationship among organisational culture, content production, institutional relationships, the representation of local contexts and the use of digital media. This possibility constitutes a research agenda, not a finding of the present review.

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Ultimately, understanding communication in international development cooperation requires shifting attention from its functional utility to its constitutive dimension. More than a resource at the service of organisations, communication is a social, cultural and institutional practice through which identities are constructed, relationships established, meanings negotiated and possibilities for participation defined.

It is also within this space that differences in authority, the limits of representation and the conditions for recognising local knowledge become visible. Recognising this complexity is a necessary step towards understanding cooperation organisations not only through what they declare or implement, but also through the relationships and meanings they produce in the course of their activities.

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