

2009 School Seminar Series

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



Transparency as Societal Accountability: A Critical Analysis of Transparency as a Corporate Account Technology

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze how societal accountability is being defined, produced and staged by contemporary organizations in their pursuit of social legitimacy and accreditation. Throughout our analysis, we use corporate transparency—that is, the notion, the ideal, and the expectation of increased openness and responsibility in corporate practices—as an exemplar of how the societal call for accountability is handled communicatively in the current business landscape. Specifically, we analyze how transparency is defined and enacted by organizations, how the demand for increased transparency is "translated" into corporate strategies and routines, and how the notion of transparency as a consequence takes on new meaning over time.

Lars Thøger Christensen (Ph.D., Odense University, 1993) is Professor of Communication at the Department of Marketing & Management, The University of Southern Denmark. Also, he is Adjunct Professor at The Copenhagen Business School where he established the CBS Center for Corporate Communication. His research and teaching interests include critical and postmodern approaches to the broad fields of organizational and corporate communications, for example identity, issues management, integration, advertising, and transparency. In addition to six books, his research appears in *Organization Studies*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication*, *The Handbook of Public Relations*, *Communication Yearbook*, and elsewhere.

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