Does Interpersonal Communication Carry Its Own Reward In Civil Society?
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If marketization is changing the nature of NPOs and the volunteer work that takes place in them, then what happens to the relationships between people in the organisations?

1. RATIONALE & BACKGROUND
The conditions non-profit organisations (NPOs) exist under are changing. According to Eikenberry & Kuhs (2004) market values increasingly influence NPOs, and this can be seen as a threat to their contribution to building and maintaining a strong civil society.

Building social capital is one way NPOs can contribute to civil society. Social capital is also important for the existence of the NPOs, because building strong local networks of trust (i.e. good relations between people) is traditionally needed to mobilise collective action amongst volunteers.

My aim is to take a closer look at these relations between people, through a study of their interpersonal communication and the context it takes place in. I hypothesise that one reason people choose to work voluntarily (i.e. unpaid) in NPOs is because this type of work offers different interpersonal communication and relations than their paid work.

Market values from the private and public sector are increasingly influencing the NPOs in the third sector; one could argue that the differences between paid work and volunteer work are becoming smaller in terms of social capital and interpersonal relations. One could ask if non-profits traditionally have built stronger social bonds than for-profits, but this is changing, what is then left for the non-profits to keep their volunteers engaged? Although oversimplifying the differences between profit and non-profit sector, this hypothesis forms the background of my project.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
This study’s overall purpose is to develop distinctly communicative explanations for non-profit phenomena—like social capital—and to understand the role different types of organisations play as context for this research.

This focus is inspired by Koschmann (2012), who argues that communicative explanations, which can “complement, challenge, and extend existing theoretical frameworks”, can be seen as an important aspect of research in civil society. By using a micro level analysis of interpersonal communication between volunteers, the study seeks to explain what specific context this communication takes place in, and importantly how this communication and this context is experienced by the volunteers.

3. METHODOLOGY
The study is planned to be a case study (Malterer, 1994) where a small group of people will be followed in both their paid and volunteer work.

Field notes, photos and video recording will be used to document the field work, and micro level analysis of the interpersonal communication will be conducted with among others Conversation Analysis (Fenia Nielsen & Beck Nielsen, 2004) and theories on Facework (Goffman, 1955).

The micro level analysis of the communication will be combined with interviews (Alvesson, 2003; Kvale, 2007) where the volunteers’ own understanding of their choice to volunteer, the different types of organisations they are part of, and their understanding of the communication with other volunteers will be explored.

REFERENCES

4. INTENDED FINDINGS
I will follow the same person in their paid and volunteer work respectively, and will be conducting micro level analyses of interactions taking place in the two contexts, along with analysis of the two contexts. My understanding of the interaction will look at both a content dimension (what are they talking about) and a relation dimension (what is the relationship between the people talking). Importantly, I will also interview the person about their own understanding of the interaction and the context, and will discuss the results from my analysis with this person.

1) I aim to find:
1.1) Distinctly communicative understandings and explanations of a group of people’s volunteer work.
1.2) Differences between-paid and volunteer work that make a difference. In a time where the lines between paid work and volunteer work are becoming blurry / aim to contribute with an insight into aspects, which are important to keep separate.

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