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 & Klaver (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 may 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 value from the private and public sector are increasingly influencing the NPOs. In the third sector, non-profit work is being scrutinised by market assumptions. I argue that a careful look at these relations, will provide valuable knowledge about how the differences between paid work and volunteer work are becoming smaller. If market values from the private and public sector are increasingly influencing the NPOs, then 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-profit traditions have built stronger social bonds than for-profits, but this is changing, what is then left for the nonprofits to keep their volunteers engaged? Although simplifying 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 type of work. This focus is inspired by Kuschinske (2012), who argues that communicative explanations, which can "complement, challenge, and extend existing theoretical frameworks" (Kuschinske, 2012, p. 139) are missing in non-profit research. Social capital specifically, is according to Lewis (2005) a central example of a non-profit phenomenon, and I argue that an important understanding of social capital can be found through micro level analysis of interpersonal communication. Where social capital is, described as: "the collective value of the set of primary social relations within which people can rely on one another to provide help, trust and aiding" (Koschmann, 2012, p. 139), interpersonal communication can provide us with a deeper understanding of how the differences between profit and non-profit sectors are changing. Combined with analysis of the organizational context and with interviewing volunteers, the study seeks to explain which 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 (Målebø, 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 (Femø Nielsen & Beck Nielsen, 2005) and theories on Facework (Goffman, 1955). The micro level analyses of the communication will be combined with interviews (Målebø, 2003; Kvale, 2007) where the volunteers own understanding of their choice to volunteer, the understanding of the organisation they are part of and their understanding of their communication with other volunteers will be explored.

REFERENCES


