Does Interpersonal Communication Carry Its Own Reward In Civil Society?
Frederiksen, Dennis Jim

Publication date: 2014

Document Version
Accepteret manuscript, peer-review version

Link to publication from Aalborg University

Citation for published version (APA):
Frederiksen, D. J. (2014). Does Interpersonal Communication Carry Its Own Reward In Civil Society?. Poster præsenteret ved Civil Society and the Citizen, Münster, Tyskland.
1. RATIONALE & BACKGROUND

The conditions non-profit organisations (NPOs) exist under are changing. According to Eberlein & Klu-ner (2008), market values increasingly influence NPOs, and this can be seen as a threat 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 mobilize collective action amongst volunteers.

My aim is to take a closer look at the relations between people, through a study of their interpersonal communication and the context it takes place in. I hypothesize that one reason people choose to work voluntarily (i.e. unpaid) in an NPO 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, and therefore their interpersonal communication and context it takes place in. I aim to contribute with an insight into aspects, which are important to keep separate.

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 what different types of organizations play as context for the NPOs' interpersonal communication.

This focus is inspired by Koschmann (2012), who argues that communicative explanations, which can “complement, challenge, and extend existing theoretical frameworks” (Koschmann, 2012, p. 130) are missing in non-profit research. Social capital specifically, is according to Lewis (2005), a central example of such a non-profit phenomenon, and I argue that an important understanding of social capital can be found through micro level analysis of interpersonal communication. When local capital is described as “the ability to fulfill the expression of needs” (Salamon 1997, para. 13) it is obvious that micro level analysis of interpersonal communication between volunteers can show in what way the volunteers in organizations choose trust and reciprocity.

Combined with analysis of the organizational context and with interviewing volunteers, the study seeks to explain what specific context this communication takes place in, and importantly how the communication and this context is experienced by the volunteers.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is planned to be a case study (Malabaila, 1996) 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 analysis of the communication will be combined with interviews (Alvesson, 2003; Kvale, 2007) where the volunteers own understanding of their choice to volunteer, of their understanding of the organisations they are part of and of their understanding of their communication with other volunteers will be explored.

REPRESENTATIONS

REFERENCES


4. INTENDED FINDINGS

I aim to find:

1) Distinctly communicative understandings and explanations of a group of people's volunteer work.

2) Differences between paid and volunteer work that make a difference. 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.

Does interpersonal communication carry its own reward in civil society?