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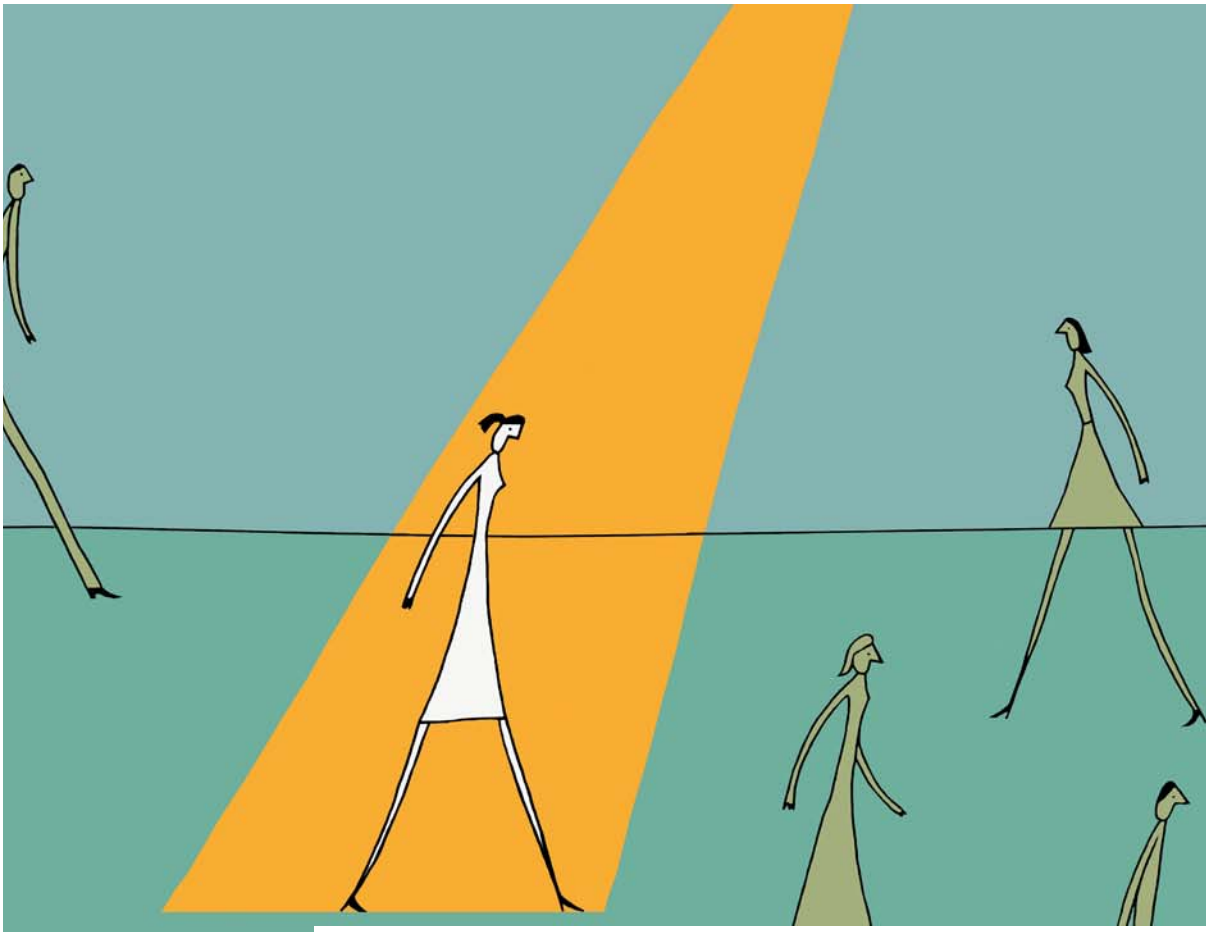

Management by Recognition

An Interactionist Study of Normative Control in Voluntary Work

ANNA SARAH PFEIFFER
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION | LUND UNIVERSITY

Management by Recognition

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An Interactionist Study of Normative Control in Voluntary Work

Anna Sarah Pfeiffer

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
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Abstract

Many contemporary work organizations are concerned with how they can influence employees' intrinsic motivation. Their quest follows a widespread realization that people do not necessarily work harder because of monetary incentives or direct commands. Instead, people's inner motives, their urge to self-realize and get recognition, are seen as key factors influencing workers' mindsets and behaviors. In order to stimulate and shape such inner motives, management scholars and practitioners increasingly bring 'recognition' forward as a management tool.

This thesis labels this trend 'Management by Recognition' (MbR). MbR refers to the idea and practical effort of achieving organizational ends by making individuals feel recognized and affirmed for who they are and how they work. Based on an ethnography of the voluntary organization Communa, which aims to enhance a 'culture of recognition', this study analyses the mechanisms and effects of MbR. For this purpose, MbR is seen as a particular form of normative control that aims at shaping volunteers' moral orientation towards the organization by creating experiences of enjoyment and self-affirmation.

Exploring MbR in the light of current academic debates, this thesis problematizes a prevalent managerialist 'win-win' thinking, according to which MbR will ensure happier workers and enhanced control. At the same time, the thesis rejects the deterministic management-focused view of control found in the critical/interpretivist literature. Instead, my study examines MbR through an interactionist lens. It suggests that MbR is not simply an activity that managers 'do' and the managed 'receive'. On the contrary, MbR is seen as a collective accomplishment in the sense that both managers and voluntary workers work on recognition attempts in order to perform their selves and influence others.

My study shows how MbR is neither a simple good for an organization (as the managerial literature suggests) nor an all-pervasive form of normative control (as some critics suggest). I argue that the complexity of MbR stems from the nature of recognition as something that cannot be put to instrumental ends: the very nature of recognition places limits on its instrumental/managerial use. Such limits, however, cannot be known in advance, but are decided and experienced in interactions. The study contributes to theory and organizational practice in four ways: 1) it creates a space for discussion by coining the concept of MbR, 2) it enhances understanding of how different actors collectively accomplish control in organizations, 3) it offers a more optimistic reading of normative control, while acknowledging possible distressing effects, and 4) it provides new insight to interested practitioners about the complexity of MbR, and possible unintended organizational dynamics.

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Malmö, February 2016

Anna Pfeiffer

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Annika is a volunteer. She works as a mentor in a German-Turkish mentoring project where she meets Dennis, a child of Turkish descent, approximately once a week for a few hours. They spend time with each other, play games, cycle through the city, and go to the museum. They talk about life and the purpose of going to school, about religion and about Turkish or German festivities. Annika voluntarily gives time, creativity, energy, knowledge, affection, and enthusiasm to Dennis. Arguably, her mentee has limited access to cultural and economic resources in Germany due to his migrant background, unlike Annika who was born in Germany, and who made a career as the director of a local health center. Annika engages to make it easier for Dennis to find his place in German society–to help him experience success and belonging.

Annika gives her time not only to Dennis, but also to Communa, the German voluntary organization that has designed the mentoring project, and which facilitates it. In order to receive funding, and to pursue altruistic goals, Communa is dependent upon the voluntary engagement of individuals like Annika. However, representatives of Communa see the bond between the organization and their volunteers as very fragile. Volunteers, it is commonly argued, are tricky to retain, motivate, and reward, due to the lack of monetary incentives. A pressing question for Communa is: What should volunteers receive in return for their engagement?

Communa addresses this important managerial dilemma through efforts to create an organizational environment where individuals feel *recognized*. Broadly put, Communa conceptualizes recognition as the active appreciation of what volunteers do and who they are. It is seen as a positive affirmation of volunteers' work efforts and personal identities. Recognition takes multiple forms and expressions, such as giving flowers, making little presents, saying appreciative words and words of gratitude, having personal conversations, publishing newspaper articles about individual volunteers, and so on. From Communa's perspective, expressions of recognition are supposed to both make the volunteer feel socially valued and self-secure, and, in so doing, motivate them to further engage.

In Annika's case, Communa wanted to honor her voluntary engagement at a large ceremony in the local town hall. Voluntary organizations, such as Communa, are regularly approached to suggest volunteers to be honored in public. One Project

Manager at Communa selected Annika to be praised at this event. Sending volunteers to such events is part of an explicit management strategy that Communa followed in its efforts to build up a 'Culture of Recognition and Appreciation'.

At the ceremony, a well-known local politician handed over a recognition certificate and flowers to Annika. A famous TV moderator read out loud how her engagement deserved special attention, before she was asked on stage, accompanied by the applause of circa 500 people who had attended the ceremony. I participated in the event as an observer, and found that Annika looked lost on stage, a bit embarrassed, yet also proud and flattered. To better understand how this grand effort of recognition impacted Annika, I asked her later in an interview, how she felt on stage. She responded:

> *Stupid!* I mean what do I have in common with this politician? You know, I tried to have a little conversation with him. . . .I've known him for a long time because he was responsible for the district where my orphanage was located. You know, a relaxed conversation about my former work, I told him that I was the director there. These kind of things, where you think everyone can relate to them. But he was not capable of talking to me on this level. And I was standing there like a moron on stage . . . He was not interested at all. . . .There are big words said and they engage some people who are in a higher position. Nice words, I mean he gave a very nice speech, no?. . . But the relationship to the people is not there, is it? Perhaps he was already thinking about the next event in his head . . .I mean this is not meant as a strong criticism, but I find this is somehow a little bit, well. *For me it's not the right thing!* (Annika, emphasis added)

The quote suggests that Communa's recognition effort (in cooperation with political authorities) achieved the opposite: rather than making Annika feel valued and held in high social esteem, she described feeling unimportant or uninteresting to someone who was honoring her on a superficial level. She expected a much more personalized form of recognition (e.g. a conversation about her former work). This, however, did not occur, as the politician was perhaps already thinking about 'the next event' (Annika). The empirical example draws attention to the intricacies of giving recognition as part of a managerial strategy. Apparently, what is given to someone as positive/confirmative can be received in very different ways, especially if the expressed forms of recognition appear detached from individuals and construct them in ways that oppose their self-views. Arguably, Annika saw herself as an interesting conversation partner for the politician, but this was not acknowledged.

Despite such straightforward rejection, I remember that I met Annika right after she had been on stage, in the audience. My fieldnotes (date anonymized) state:

> Also Annika seems to be quite happy. She stands around in a smaller group and chitchats with people. She looks euphoric. And when I approach her and ask her how she is doing, she says 'really good'.

My observations suggest that next to distressing emotions (e.g., embarrassment of being on stage, disappointment about impersonal recognition), Annika experienced *simultaneous* enjoyment in this recognition event. It is difficult to say, of course, whether such enjoyment was related to being on stage, or to possibilities for socializing with like-minded people in the after-party, or to the flowers that Annika received (she said she loves flowers). The point is that recognition expressed as part of a managerial strategy to enhance volunteers' commitment does not follow simple stimulus-response logic, but involves dynamic social interactions. It is in essence, those interactional dynamics that I set out to explore in this thesis.

Management by Recognition

The background for my interest in 'recognition' is the observation that recognition practices are increasingly mobilized in work organizations as part of an explicit and growing management trend that I term 'Management by Recognition' (MbR). MbR can be conceptualized as the idea and practical effort to achieve organizational ends through making individuals feel recognized and affirmed for who they are and how they work. Such MbR, I argue, merits investigation because Annika's experience, as well as Communa's recognition efforts, are no isolated empirical phenomena. Volunteer and general management scholars (e.g., Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008; Shin & Kleiner, 2003; Ventrice, 2003) promote recognition practices such as praise, attention or publicity in order to better access and stir individuals' intrinsic motivations—their thoughts, emotions and individual identifications—at work.

These claims are impacted by the insight that there are elements of autonomy 'within' workers that escape classic control forms like direct supervision, monetary incentives, technological control, or bureaucratic rules (Edwards, 1979; Tomkins & Cheney, 2006). Simply put, managers and management scholars suggest that in order to align workers with organizational goals, high salaries or strict procedural rules are not sufficient. You cannot 'seduce' individuals with mere external stimuli or 'command' workers to give their best for the organization. Instead, workers need to give their talents, knowledge, creativity, or élan voluntarily: motivation needs to come from 'within' people (Nelson and Spitzer, 2003; Chapman and White, 2011). Managerial efforts to access and stir such intrinsic motivation are widespread in contemporary organizations.

In order to enhance control over workers' intrinsic motivations both in paid or non-paid work contexts, organizations have developed elaborate ways to *shape the underlying experience* of people at work: their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. The concept of 'normative control' (Kunda, 2006) captures a broad array of discourses and practices applied in organizations to create such an 'experiential transaction' (Kunda, 2006, p. 11). Normative control denotes how subtle, culture-oriented and apparently 'soft' practices (e.g., teambuilding exercises, socializing events, the promotion of organizational values) are used to create a 'moral orientation' of workers to the organization (Kunda, 2006, p. 11). The idea is that through such moral orientation, workers' self-management is stimulated so that they, apparently without external force, act in line with organizational interests.

As I suggest in this thesis, MbR can be seen as a particular form of normative control that aims at shaping volunteers' moral orientation towards the organization by creating experiences of enjoyment and self-affirmation. The empirical instance has shown, however, that attempts to manage by recognition can create highly ambivalent experiences amongst voluntary workers (e.g., enjoyment, embarrassment, and disappointment simultaneously). This raises several issues that I explore in this thesis, such as the effectiveness of MbR and its impact on workers. MbR also raises concerns about the ethics of harnessing individuals' inner worlds—their vulnerable relations with themselves and perhaps their striving for self-affirmation—by managerial recognition practices. To sum up, the empirical instance above mirrors a growing trend present in both general and volunteer management theory, to manage workers by recognition. In what follows, I further outline this trend and its relevance as a study subject by specifying problems in how MbR is framed and evaluated in public discourse and different academic traditions.

Applauding the Volunteer

Volunteering is a widespread phenomenon in contemporary Western societies (Dekker & Van den Broek, 1998). Arguably, a neo-liberal restructuring of many European countries since the mid to late 1980s has placed a bigger responsibility on the shoulders of individuals (Baines, 2010; Rose, 2000). Due to increased market deregulation and privatization of the social sector, amongst others, individuals are called upon to voluntarily fulfill tasks formerly performed by the social welfare state (Dekker & Van den Broek, 1998). Various actors such as governments, business corporations, or non-governmental organizations thus emphasize the importance of volunteering in contributing to an integrated society of active citizens. In Germany, for instance, the Family Ministry has adopted a *National Engagement Strategy* to

stimulate voluntary engagement. In relation to this, former minister Kristina Schröder stated:

> We need the [voluntary] engagement of the citizens. . .. Their work creates solidarity in a way that the state could never do. *This merits our entire support and recognition!* (Schröder, 2010, emphasis added)

Schröder's quote neatly shows how individuals who volunteer are discursively constructed as subjects worthy of social recognition. It is argued that volunteers deserve special affirmation, due to their indispensable service to society. Other actors also acknowledge this idea of paying tribute to volunteers. For instance, during the 2011 *European Year of Volunteering*, 'extraordinary stories' of 'ordinary people' who engaged voluntarily were presented on a homepage (European Union, 2011). Similarly, the German President Joachim Gauck invited 4000 volunteers to his residence as 'honorary guests' in 2012. Opening his speech with the words 'today. . . I applaud you' (Bundespräsidialamt, 2012), he used this occasion to express his gratefulness to the volunteers. Thus, Annika is not the only volunteer to be singled out and publicly recognized.

Recognition in these examples is essentially about positively affirming engaged citizens and making them visible as valued individuals. Because responsibility for society is seen to lie increasingly with the volunteering individual, s/he has also become the main focus of the broad promotion of volunteering. Arguably, individual recognition, and/or the promise thereof, present an important mechanism for mobilizing and managing an urgently needed voluntary workforce. In targeting the individual's sense of self as a responsible and respectable member of society, recognition has thus become a central constituent of the broad and increasingly individualized discourse of volunteering. Embedded in this general discourse, recognition has been further fleshed out and promoted as a managerial principle. Interestingly, Management by Recognition is not only promoted by voluntary sector scholars, but ties into a broader managerialist view that employee recognition is key for enhancing organizational performance.

Managerialist Perspective

There is a growing body of literature in volunteer and general management thought that makes a case for managing volunteers by making them feel recognized (e.g., Chapman & White, 2011; Shin & Kleiner, 2003; Ventrice, 2003). What I label 'managerialist perspective' are views of authors who express great trust in management's ability to create, shape, and execute recognition practices. Such a recognition-intense work environment, in turn, is argued to 'reduce employee

turnover', 'improve attendance and productivity' (Chapman & White, 2011) and contribute to people's 'well-being' (Farmer & Fedor, 1999) or 'increased competitiveness' of the organization (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003). In short: Management by Recognition is said to create a win-win situation by making volunteers happy whilst simultaneously improving organizational performance.

While there are notable differences between the voluntary and for-profit sectors, such as less stable membership models and a greater focus on altruism in volunteering, there is an overall shared concern in both sectors with how to manage workers' intrinsic motivations. Behind calls for MbR stands the idea that managers need to gain influence over workers' conduct, feelings, and thoughts in ways that go beyond classic forms of control (e.g., legal contracts, direct commands, bureaucratic rules). This insight is linked to realizing certain autonomy or self-determination when it comes to how, and how much, effort workers put into their organization (Ventrice, 2003).

Volunteer-management scholars, for example, bring forward the 'free will proposition' as a key characteristic of voluntary work. This proposition expresses that people volunteer due to individual choice, rather than external force (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002). Because of the volitional nature of unpaid work, authors describe managerial influence as limited. They describe problems to secure continuous engagement and enthusiasm of volunteers, and argue that volunteers cannot simply be 'commanded' (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Wilson & Pimm, 1996). Therefore, scholars agree that one of the 'best practices' for nonprofits is volunteer recognition (Chapman & White, 2011). Recognition practices are argued to satisfy volunteers' 'need for self-fulfillment and self-esteem' (Shin & Kleiner, 2003). Therefore, recognition is argued to increase volunteers' emotional attachment to the organization and moral responsibility to perform in line with organizational demands (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008).

Even though the free will proposition is less obvious in paid work, concerns with how to manage employees' 'inner worlds'—their need for recognition and their social aspirations—are equally present in the corporate world. Since the beginning of industrialized mass production, we can observe an interest in creating subtle control mechanisms that generate less resistance by integrating workers' inner worlds into dominant economic logics (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006). Thus, also in contemporary capitalism that is characterized by increased creative, decentralized or 'knowledge-intensive' work (Alvesson, 2004), organizations are concerned with managing workers' autonomy. For instance, IT-firms are highly dependent upon the imaginative potential and technical expertise of product developers. Yet, managers—who are likely to hold less technical knowledge than the 'geeks'—cannot simply demand that product developers be creative (Schaefer, 2014).

Thus, there are common managerial concerns in how to deal with workers' autonomy in paid and unpaid work, despite certain structural differences (e.g., work contracts, salary). Both sectors regard Management by Recognition as an important tool to target peoples' intrinsic motivations at work that escape classic control modes. Instead of seeing MbR as exclusive to volunteering, I regard it therefore as a broader people-management trend concerned with aligning workers' mindset and behavior to organizational goals.

This view is supported by different bodies of literature in the traditions of Human Resource Management (HRM), work psychology, and popular management accounts that call for employee recognition. Over 70 years ago, Maslow's (1943, p. 381) famous 'hierarchy of needs' already established that workers seek 'recognition, attention, importance or appreciation' by others. Tying into this idea, also contemporary studies in HRM and work psychology (Luthans and Stajkovic, 2000; Semmer & Jacobshagen, 2010) discuss how appreciative practices such as giving constructive feedback enhance employee loyalty. Additionally, over the past 10 years, popular management books (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003; Wagner & Harter, 2006) have been published to give managers advice on how to best recognize employees. Here, recognition is not only promoted as an extremely efficient management tool that 'energizes' the workplace and creates a 'loyal, motivated, and productive workforce' (Ventrice, 2003, p. 4); recognition is also seen as an inherently humane management tool, as the opposite of 'coercion' and 'fear' (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003, p. xx).

Overall, authors in these different fields promote a broad array of practices to enhance recognizing work environments. Recognition could be verbal expression such as saying 'thank-you' or 'well done' (Shin & Kleiner, 2003). But also creating publicity (e.g., publicly honoring workers, giving awards, writing newspaper articles about workers), giving task-oriented support, showing 'personal interest', providing trainee and education offers or informal occasions to socialize (Farmer & Fedor, 1999) are promoted. In most descriptions there is an assumption and trust that positive management practices affirm individuals in a stimulus-response fashion, and hence create an overall win-win scenario: happier workers and successful organizations. In my view, however, such an understanding is too simplistic and ethically questionable. As I suggest, MbR involves complex, tension-loaded social dynamics that are not likely to remain in the hands of 'management'.

Problematizing Managerialism

How MbR is advanced from a managerial perspective is, in my view, problematic essentially because of *two inherent blind spots*: first, the promotion of a win-win scenario, and second, the dominant managerial prerogative that seems to rely upon

too straightforward an interpretation of stimulus-response thinking. By drawing upon management scholars who investigate organizations from a critical interpretivist perspective, I want to extend and clarify my critique.

My first critique of MbR concerns the strong belief in a win-win scenario. Management scholars with a more critical orientation (Barker, 1993; Costas & Kärreman, 2013; Willmott, 1993) point out how apparently positive and 'soft' culture-oriented management approaches—as reflected in MbR—regulate workers' thoughts, emotions and behavior in ways that can be distressing or detrimental for the individual. Authors have shown how work environments that are managerially designed to be, for instance, non-coercive, fun, friendship-, or family-like, regulate workers in subtle yet extremely powerful ways. By creating images of how one should be as an 'ideal employee' (Casey, 1999), by emphasizing responsibilities that people have towards each other (Papa, Auwal & Singhal, 1997), or even by stressing individualism (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009), organizations have created new modes of control beyond direct command or bureaucratic rule. Instead, workers control themselves (Muhr, Pedersen, & Alvesson, 2013) in their attempts to live up to desired identity positions created by the organizations such as being a skilled and independent networker.

As mentioned before, the concept of 'normative control' (Kunda, 2006) captures the various ways in which organizations attempt to target workers' behavior by cultural means. Critical management authors argue that such subtle self-oriented forms of control increase anxieties, experiences of stress, and exclusion or rivalry in the workplace, while being so diffused that resistance proves difficult (Casey, 1999; Ray, 1986; Willmott, 1993). A key point is thus that managerially promoted win-win scenarios (i.e., increased self-realization and greater organizational control) do not materialize in organizational practice. There are 'losers', most notably morally dominated workers, because promises made by soft culture-oriented management approaches are contradictory. Behind apparently sincere attempts to enhance individual freedom at work we find the goal of cultural homogenization that leaves little space for self-realization (Willmott, 1993).

Tying into such critical perspectives, we can first look more skeptically at MbR. We can say that approaches to shape *organizational cultures of recognition* (Ventrice, 2003) reflect well-documented managerial efforts to engineer family-cultures (Casey, 1999), friendship-cultures (Costas, 2012), or fun-cultures (Fleming & Sturdy, 2011). Just as those critical studies problematize how positively connoted concepts are instrumentalized by organizations to achieve control, the question emerges in my study how an instrumental underpinning of MbR can be aligned with ethical claims for the authenticity and goodness of recognition itself. Differently put: can recognition as an idea that has a strong humanist orientation (like friendship or family) be achieved at all within instrumental control logics? I do not suggest, like

many critical authors would, that workers have little chance to 'win'. But I want to draw attention to tensions underlying MbR, given their large absence in the managerialist perspective. I suggest that these tensions between functionalist ends and claims to authenticity of recognition need to be carefully studied in order to evaluate the effects of MbR.

Secondly, I regard the ways in which MbR is promoted through a stimulus-response scheme as too straightforward, failing to grasp the complex social interaction that is at stake here. When looking at managerialist accounts, we get the impression that 'managers' are key agents for 'giving' recognition that stimulates desired attitudes/behaviors amongst workers (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003; Ventrice, 2003). The underlying assumption here is that individuals have an 'inner need' to be recognized, and that managers can address such need by the right stimulus (Chapman and White, 2011). Opposed to such a managerial prerogative, I highlight in this thesis from a social interactionist perspective (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1969) how there are no isolated or fixed 'inner' needs. What makes people feel recognized is continuously recreated and negotiated as people act towards each other–and not only towards 'management'. This means that recognition practices are embedded in much more diffused power relations than the managerialist perspective suggests. For instance, singling out a worker at a recognition ceremony is not only a highly symbolic means to say 'you are special'. In addition, such a public gesture also integrates that person into a larger collective. It carries a potentially exclusive evaluation of others (e.g., the audience) in relation to the recognized person. Those others, in turn, may be impacted by the 'ideal worker image' communicated in a recognition ceremony (e.g., by striving to fulfill it to be the next one on stage). But the audience may also ridicule such events, perhaps devaluing their importance for those who have been singled out.

My point is that organizational control based on MbR emerges in complex social interactions, and is hence not likely to remain in the hands of 'management'. Critical/interpretivist scholars acknowledge the active part that organizational members play in interpreting normative control efforts, and point to a variety of 'micro actions' that workers deploy to resist organizational grips, such as humorous disidentifications or the separation of work from non-work identities (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Thomas & Davies, 2005). Thus, managers can *attempt* to impact workers' behavior/attitudes by targeting their self-view through recognition practices, but they are not 'omnipotent' in molding individuals' inner worlds (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 621). Despite a broad poststructuralist-inspired emphasis on dispersed power relations, I will show in Chapter Three that normative control is often studied as a binary, looking at managerial discourses and individual identification processes as somewhat separate units (see Kenny, 2010 or Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, and Beverungen, 2009 who make a similar point).

Instead of going down the route of exploring how discursive power is related to the subject (e.g., Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kenny, 2010), I investigate normative control as an *interactive and practical accomplishment*. My approach is not necessarily opposed to dominant studies in normative control, but I focus explicitly on the collective accomplishment of social life: on how symbolic and targeted recognition practices unfold in organizations as different members act towards each other (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959). By making interactions that follow the intent to manage by recognition my key unit of analysis, I focus less on either side of the 'management-managed' binary, but more on what happens *in-between*. This, I argue, encourages an overall more open, less deterministic analysis of organizational control efforts.

Control as an Interactive Accomplishment

Kunda's (2006) widely cited study makes a case for studying normative control by investigating how 'face-to-face' interactions (e.g., speeches, workshops, meetings) between management and subordinates unfold as 'presentational rituals' (p. 93). Drawing upon interactionist scholar Erving Goffman (1959), Kunda points out that social life unfolds according to predefined, often ritualized patterns in performances of everyday life. Understanding the rules and dynamics of such performances provides, in Kunda's (2006) view, important insight into control as an interactively accomplished phenomenon.

Kunda's application of an interactionist angle remains, however, one-sided. Kunda (2006) sees 'management' as the main author of organizational control scripts that set out action-expectation for the subordinate organizational members. He further points out that it does not really matter whether individuals identify with prescribed action frames, or whether they distance themselves from those (e.g., through cynicism, humorous performances). In Kunda's view, workers ultimately perform in line with managerial demands, and their attempts to break free from organizational grips are merely part of a balanced self-performance (Kunda, 2006). Other management scholars make similar arguments (Contu, 2008; Fleming & Sturdy, 2009; Poulter & Land, 2008). Fleming and Spicer (2003), for instance, point out how micro acts of resistance towards normative control, like cynical distancing, cannot be seen as subversive when people reinstate corporate ideologies in their actions. Taken together, prominent scholars who investigate normative control evaluate its effectiveness by noticing that workers largely *act as if* they have accepted corporate cultural demands.

My inquiry of MbR as a form of normative control departs from this interest in how organizational members interact in relation to MbR attempts. In my view, it is promising to explore, like Kunda (2006), routinized action-patterns to understand the workings of normative control. Different from the work of the above scholars, I

seek to advance a more open reading of individuals' performances in interactions, which follow the intent to manage by recognition. By this I mean that I approach those interactions without foreclosing the possibility that MbR attempts are also twisted or overturned as they are carried out. Rather than seeing workers as left with the possibility to 'make sense' of or 'respond' to managerial control efforts, I draw on Goffman's (1959; 1967) idea that people cooperatively perform their self in everyday life. This approach highlights different facets and expressive dynamics that individual performances can take and draws attention to the importance of 'non-managerial' actors in realizing MbR.

According to Goffman, individuals engage in ongoing performances in their efforts of establishing a 'positive social value' of oneself as well as in sustaining interactions where involved participants can maintain face (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). In so doing, workers' performances may have conservative effects and contribute to maintaining distressing normative orders in organizations. As I will outline in Chapter Eight and Ten, I also felt this effect: I found myself often working harder for Communa than—on reflection—I felt comfortable with. While conducting my study, I had the sense that I remained rather distant and analytical towards Communa's recognition efforts. But Communa's recognition culture exerted 'after-recognition discipline' on me, making me strive to keep up a high performance level for which I had been praised early on (see Chapter Ten). The results of my study thus partly confirm what normative control theorists suggest, namely that employees get subsumed under an organizational logic, even if (or *especially* if) they think they remain autonomous (Fleming & Spicer, 2003).

However, these disciplining effects are only one part of the picture. In addition, my study reminds us how MbR is an *attempt* to exert normative control over volunteers and as such it is not totalizing. I base this argument especially on two insights that I have gained from exploring MbR as an interactive accomplishment. My first insight is that because MbR targets peoples' emotive relations with themselves and others (similar to other normative control efforts that draw on concepts like friendship/family), it is also the subject to constant interrogation by all involved parties. Thus, the authenticity of recognition is constantly at stake in MbR and managers alone cannot ensure its 'realness'. This means that MbR may be more totalizing than classic control forms in its attempt, but it also vulnerable to getting 'cracks' when it is carried out. Whenever individuals in my study get the impression that recognition is used instrumentally, it is no longer accepted as 'real recognition'. This tension will return again and again in the empirical chapters of this thesis. In that sense, I emphasize how MbR as a control attempt is far from risk-free for those who manage: it is in constant danger of being twisted or overturned.

The second important insight from my study is that individual performances—even when they appear to align with cultural demands of the organization—have different

effects on individuals and organizations *simultaneously*. We could, for instance, read Annika's empirical instance introduced earlier as subordination to the cultural demands placed on her at the recognition event. Even though she described ambivalence, skepticism, and being on stage as stressful, she did not act in ways that would have made such stance clear (e.g., refusing to shake the politicians hand on stage, publicly questioning the instrumentalism of the event). We could thus argue with prominent scholars (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Kunda, 2006) that MbR colonized her, even though she claimed independence.

However, my empirical study suggests that such interpretation is too quick in evaluating individuals' distancing as a form of false consciousness (see Fleming & Spicer, 2003). For Goffman (1959) performing does not mean that we are faking; performed selves are not different from 'real' selves because it lies in the nature of being human to perform. This suggests that we have to take everything seriously: Annika's performance when expressing that she felt 'stupid', when expressing that she felt 'really good', as well as the fact that she went on stage. 'Compliance' or 'resistance' towards organizational demands, I therefore suggest, are insufficient categories to make sense of how people act in interactions that follow normative control intents.

In addition, my study shows how MbR also controls managers and how it is too simple to put individuals on the 'upper part' of the hierarchy under a general suspicion of following only instrumental goals. Even though managers cannot alleviate the general tension between instrumentalism and authenticity in MbR, my study shows how they do so momentarily, and that managers can, of course, have *real* recognition for workers. In line with these insights, my goal in this thesis is to explore the spaces *in between* binaries such as managers-managed, compliance-resistance, or the 'real' and the 'fake' in performing. For this purpose, I work with interactionist ideas and dramaturgical vocabulary such as the 'script', to explore how different parties involved in interactions that follow a MbR intent use cultural scripts as 'acting material' (Voswinkel, 2001).

Research Purpose

I began my exploration by introducing an empirical phenomenon that I observed during my ethnography in a voluntary organization. By embedding Management by Recognition within academic discussions around 'how to' manage workers, I formulated the problems that MbR authors largely promote a simplified and too-management focused understanding of control, not recognizing ethically problematic implications and overall more complex social dynamics in which such MbR is embedded. Critical and interpretivist management scholars have helped me to specify

a critique of using a humanistic concept such as 'recognition' for normative control intents. Yet, these studies also tend to exaggerate managerial influence over workers, and reproduce a binary image of control.

In relation to these different literatures, I propose that experiences of recognition as part of a managerial control strategy are not something that can be *brought into* social interactions, but that they are *created in* human encounters. In order to better—that is, more openly—understand the workings of normative control attempts and their implications for both the organization as well as individual workers, I suggest investigating individual performances more closely that are related to the attempt to manage by recognition. In line with this suggestion, *my research purpose is to gain an enriched understanding of the social interactions that constitute and challenge MbR as a form of normative control.* By drawing upon extensive empirical material from my engagement in a 3-month ethnographic study in one voluntary organization that attempted to build up a 'culture of recognition and Appreciation', I provide insights of how MbR unfolds in organizational practice. The guiding research question reflecting my purpose statement is:

How do organizational members perform in interactions that emerge from the intent to manage workers by recognition?

I explore this question based on a theoretical engagement with the different bodies of literature outlined so far, that is, managerialist literature and interpretivist/critical management studies, as well as authors in an interactionist tradition. Moreover, I use insights from my ethnographic study that reflects prominent calls for MbR.

Ethnographic Study

In order to develop an interactionist understanding of recognition, I engaged in a three-month ethnographic study (September-December 2012) in the context of one particular voluntary organization, a community foundation, which I name 'Communa' (to ensure anonymity). Community foundations are a specific type of voluntary organization with the self-declared aim to improve people's quality of life in a distinct geographic area. In line with the volunteer management canon, the studied organization explicitly aspired to create and sustain a *culture of recognition and appreciation* to compensate for the lack of monetary rewards for most of its members (approx. 400 volunteers). A volunteer-management group was created at the time of my study. This group had the task to further develop such a culture of recognition through various initiatives (e.g., centralized HRM mechanisms, the organization of social events, the issuing of recognition certificates, volunteer visibility campaigns, etc.).

My field engagement was officially termed a 'research internship'. As part of this internship, I became a member of this volunteer-management group. I participated in their work meetings where I contributed with a few administrative tasks, and was put on their mailing list. Moreover, I volunteered in Communa's intercultural mentoring project, where I became the assistant of the project leader and worked on various project related issues (e.g., volunteer recruitment, public relations). My engagement thus had the character of a full-time job, where I dealt with volunteers on a day-to-day basis. In particular, I used participant observations and interviews to gain empirical insights about MbR interactions.

The insight that workers desire being recognized, or 'being noticed as human beings' (Sennett, 2008, p. 242), seems to be particularly relevant at Communa in light of the voluntary nature of the work. Even though I earlier dissolved the strict borders often drawn between 'voluntary' and 'paid' work, with regards to the ways in which organizational control unfolds, it is important to emphasize the non-paid nature of my empirical context from a methodological perspective. Arguably, my empirical study of Communa provides a particularly suitable context for studying normative control efforts (e.g., messages by management, socialization initiatives, employee awards, etc.) in more isolation from direct, monetary, or bureaucratic control. In contemporary business organizations, usually different forms of control co-exist (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004; Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995). In my empirical context, however, there is less overlap between different control forms, and a focus on the 'inner' aspects of work behavior prevails (De Cooman, De Gieter, Pepermans, & Jegers, 2011). This offers the advantage to study normative control in a 'purer' form than in business organizations.

Outline

This thesis consists of eleven chapters: this introductory chapter, three theory chapters, one method chapter, four empirical chapters, a discussion chapter and a conclusion.

In the first of the theory chapters I discuss and problematize the idea of Management by Recognition based on my reading of the voluntary work literature and the mainstream and popular management literature. In particular, I show how most accounts assume that MbR is based on win-win logic. In Chapter Three, I draw on studies of normative control to problematize this idea. In particular, I argue that MbR constitutes a form of control where the managed do not necessarily 'win', as mainstream literature suggest. However, I also challenge the idea that the recipients of MbR are colonized victims of control efforts, as some in the debate on normative control suggest. Instead, I argue that an interactionist perspective is best suited for

exploring MbR in practice. This is the focus of Chapter Four, where I discuss interactionist theorists, notably Mead and Goffman, in relation to the idea of MbR.

Chapter Five is my method chapter, where I outline my (auto)ethnographic study in terms of participant observations, my field notes, and the semi-structured interviews conducted for this study. I further reflect on the process and decisions that I made in analyzing my data. Throughout the chapter, I include reflections on my role in the research process, and how the empirical material that I draw upon is the intersubjective result of my encounter with the people and culture at Communa.

In the first of the empirical chapters, Chapter Six, I present the organization, the community foundation Communa, where I did my fieldwork. I also sketch the institutional and national context in which Communa operates. Following this, I discuss in Chapter Seven the managerial attempts at Communa to create a culture of recognition, as well as the underlying motives behind these attempts. In particular, I show how MbR at Communa is organized by means of scripts which outline how recognition efforts are to be implemented in practice. In Chapter Eight, I discuss these scripts in terms of their interactions with volunteers that are the subject of recognition efforts. The main finding presented in this chapter is that managers have limited control over the ways in which scripts play out in practice, e.g. scripts may break down or are used in unforeseen ways. In the final of the empirical chapters, Chapter Nine, I show how volunteers establish 'counter-scripts' in their interactions with MbR efforts. These are scripts on how to react to managerial recognition efforts. Taken as a whole, my empirical chapters show how volunteers, subjected to MbR, are not to be seen as passive receivers of recognition; they actively take part and shape how recognition efforts play out in practice.

In the discussion, Chapter Ten, I explore my empirical findings in relation to the different bodies of literature introduced in Chapter Two, Three, and Four. The basic argument, around which my discussion is organized, is that tensions in MbR (most notably that between authenticity and instrumentalism) put an immanent limit on its potential to exert totalizing normative control over individuals. I further argue that in relation to such irresolvable tensions, not only 'managers', but all organizational members in the given interactions act upon them. This makes MbR a collective accomplishment, not in the sense that all actors harmonically strive towards the same goal, but in the sense that different organizational members share the need to make recognition 'real' and meaningful. Lastly, I categorize and evaluate the various effect of MbR based on Voswinkel's (2001) distinction of recognition in terms of respect, esteem, appreciation, and admiration. I use these categories to draw out how MbR creates simultaneous experiences of exclusion, enhanced obligations, inclusion, and self-worth.

The discussion chapter is then followed by the conclusion, Chapter Eleven, where I summarize my main findings and implications for the literature and provide a broader

evaluation of the MbR trend in the current volunteering landscape. I argue that my study contributes in four overarching senses to the literatures discussed in this thesis and to organizational practice: 1) it creates a space for discussion by coining the concept of MbR, 2) it enhances understanding of how different actors collectively accomplish control in organizations, 3) it offers a more optimistic reading of normative control, while acknowledging possible distressing effects, and 4) it provides new insight to interested practitioners about the complexity of MbR, and possible unintended organizational dynamics.

Chapter 2 – Management by Recognition

There is a growing body of managerialist literature that recommends managing volunteers and corporate workers by making them feel recognized. The appreciative management practices that are proposed in this literature target volunteers' conceptions, experiences, and feelings of themselves. The aim of this chapter is to both shed light on and problematize the idea that recognition is a successful management tool. I problematize the way in which Management by Recognition (MbR, as introduced in Chapter One) is promoted on two main grounds. My first critique is that MbR brings forward a 'win-win' scenario, implying that it is simple to improve organizational performance by making people feel good about themselves. As I will show, the difficulty of achieving such a 'win-win' lies in the fact that the managerialist literature glosses over some tensions in its account of MbR. Second, I question the managerial prerogative found in the MbR literature, which assumes a simplistic 'stimulus-response' scheme. I argue that this perspective fails to see that individual experiences of recognition belie complex interactions that are not exclusively in the hands of management.

This chapter consists of three sections. In the first part, I highlight the managerial rationale for engaging in discourses and practices that communicate recognition in both the voluntary and for-profit sector. The second section focuses then on how recognition is promoted as a 'best practice' in different bodies of literature (e.g., volunteer management literature, personnel management literature, popular management literature). In the third and final section of this chapter, I problematize the MbR literature on the grounds summarized above. This critique of the MbR literature paves the way for investigating MbR from the perspective of normative control, which is the focus of the next chapter.

Targeting Workers' Autonomy

My point of departure for exploring MbR is a widespread argument made by (volunteer-) management scholars and practitioners alike. The gist of the argument is

that managers need to gain influence over workers' conduct, feelings, and thoughts in ways that go beyond classic forms of control such as legal contracts, direct commands or bureaucratic rules (see Chapter Three for an elaboration of those forms of control). While traditional control modes are thought to help keep workers in line with organizational interests, management authors and practitioners notice that there is something 'inside' people (some call it intrinsic motivation) that appears to escape the grip of these more straightforward controls. Differently put, there is an important element of autonomy or self-determination when it comes to how, and how much, workers engage for their organization (Ventrice, 2003).

This observation of autonomy applies to volunteering work where the difficulty of using direct managerial force is often described (Farmer & Fedor, 1999; Wilson & Pimm, 1996). But this apparent deficit of control is also prominently registered in contemporary knowledge-intensive, creative, or service-oriented work contexts. Authors often note that workers' knowledge or creativity cannot just be 'commanded'. Rather, valuable contributions are assumed to come from 'within' people when they work voluntarily, often beyond what is officially demanded (see Schaefer, 2014). In that sense, knowledge/creative work has important resemblances with volunteering, and these resemblances become particularly visible when looking at how MbR is promoted in diverse bodies of literature. In essence then, MbR is proposed as a tool for influencing and stimulating workers' voluntary conduct, and their intrinsic motives in non-paid as well as paid work. Before showing how MbR is promoted in different literatures, I first elaborate on and connect the apparent managerial difficulties of managers stimulating intrinsic motivation in both voluntary and paid work.

'Free Will' Assumption in Volunteering

It is often suggested that volunteering follows a different logic from paid work, since volunteers do not receive significant monetary compensation for their engagement. Therefore it is apparently more difficult to tie volunteers to organizational goals through classic (e.g., legal contractual) membership models (Chapman & White, 2011; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Leete, 2000). In addition, volunteers often lack regular spatial and temporal work set-ups (e.g., such as having an office, having fixed working hours). Therefore they appear to have overall less binding relations with the voluntary organization for which they engage. (McNamee & Peterson, 2014).

The assumed difference between voluntary and paid work is closely tied to what can be labeled a 'free will' proposition. That is, the assumption that volunteering is a matter of intrinsic motivation and individual choice, rather than external circumstances/pressure (e.g., monetary rewards) (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley's (2002, p. 47) state for example:

> There is a volitional nature to unpaid work that goes above and beyond any economic or social necessity; volunteers choose to engage in unpaid work simply because that is how they choose to spend their leisure time. In contrast, paid work is subtly coercive in its origin.

The widely assumed volitional element of volunteering makes this type of work apparently less responsive to 'coercion' or managerial claims than paid work (see also Farmer & Fedor, 1999; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011). Wilson and Pimm (1996) argue that 'normal levels of management' and 'control' in voluntary organizations 'are either unusable or so weak that they can be accepted or ignored, according to mood and conditions' of the volunteers (p. 24). Overall, the conditions of voluntary work can create a particularly challenging/fragile relationship between the volunteers and those assigned with the task of 'managing' them, given that direct commands, as well as technical, or bureaucratic means of control are largely inapplicable (Leete, 2000; McNamee & Peterson, 2014; Wilson & Pimm, 1996).

Against this background, many authors suggest, like Chapman and White (2011), that 'one of the "best practices" nonprofits can follow includes volunteer recognition and appreciation' (p. 140). Shin and Kleiner (2003, p. 70) advise to 'Recognize, Recognize, Recognize' as volunteers 'need to know that they are appreciated and that they make a difference'. In a similar vein, Farmer and Fedor (1999, p. 355) elaborate:

> Since nonprofits usually offer little in the way of remuneration or tangible benefits, perceiving support from the organization in the form of recognition, being valued, and feeling the organization cares about one's well-being becomes even more important.

Based on the view that volunteers' presence and engagement is highly uncertain, and the awareness that they can leave the voluntary organization at any time, volunteer management should build upon words, objects, or rituals that express recognition and provide symbolic rewards (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008; Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Sherer, 2004).

Thus, MbR is suggested to stimulate volunteers' intrinsic motivation in the sense of ensuring that people work to meet organizational demands, not because they are forced to do so, but because they freely choose it. There are, however, also authors who question the image of a pure and unlimited free will in volunteering and who point out that even those who are unpaid may experience strong social and cultural demands to behave in certain ways (O'Toole & Grey, 2015). Conversely, workers' autonomy often described as particularly pronounced in volunteering is also observed in paid work contexts, as I will show now. Therefore both the perspective that voluntary work is based upon untainted 'free will' as well as the perspective that paid work is necessarily more 'coercive' appear limited. Instead, I see a considerable amount of common managerial concerns in how to deal with workers' autonomy in

paid and unpaid work, despite some discernible structural differences (e.g., work contracts, salary).

Autonomy in Paid Work

Business contexts tend to expose higher degrees of formal bureaucratic or direct forms of control than voluntary organizations (McNamee & Peterson, 2014). For many individuals there is, without doubt, a material necessity to sell their labour, which appears to make their choices to behave in certain ways 'less free' and more 'controllable' by management. Some authors argue therefore that employees in business organizations are more strongly coerced by outside forces such as direct commands, bureaucratic rules, etc., than volunteers (Farmer & Fedor, 1999). If we consider this argument further, there would be little need for practicing managerial recognition towards paid workers, given that there are other effective 'hard' control modes at hand. Yet, it appears that 'recognition' just as promoted by voluntary sector scholars is becoming an increasingly hot topic in popular and scientific business discourse, as I further discuss in this chapter (see for example Chapman & White, 2011; Ventrice, 2003).

To explain this trend, I want to suggest that even though business organizations have more diverse, and materially more powerful control modes at their disposal, such as direct or bureaucratic control, concerns with how to manage the 'inner' worlds of employees—their need for recognition and their social aspirations—are equally dominant in the corporate world. Ever since industrialized mass production, there is a concern with how to create control over workers that is less overt and less likely to create resistance (e.g., strikes) towards the capitalist system (Daft, Murphy, & Willmott, 2014; Roberts, 2007). This search for unobtrusive forms of control has arguably increased with shifting production logics towards more creative, decentralized, service-oriented, or 'knowledge-intensive' work (Alvesson, 2004).

For instance, to enhance organizational creativity, managers are not only supposed to control whether their employees meet deadlines, but they are also expected to manage spaces of freedom, in such ways that workers unleash their creative force in profitable ways for the organization (see Schaefer, 2014). Take the example of IT product development, where management cannot always follow, simply put, what inventions their creative 'geeks' are working on (Schaefer, 2014). They cannot directly command product developers to be creative and put up strict standards and regulations. Yet management strives to find modes to facilitate creativity and innovation as it generates important competitive advantage. Such facilitation often involves moving the locus of control 'from the outside of the worker to the inside: to consensual approval' (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004, p. 152). Managers increasingly attempt to manufacture an organizational experience by targeting workers' values, aspirations,

social relations, and emotions. The goal is to hereby align workers' goals with corporate ones.

Hence, paid work contexts also contain important aspects of worker autonomy (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004) and paid workers can be seen as 'volunteers' when managers are concerned with influencing their free will and intrinsic motivation. Thus even though it is important to acknowledge structural differences between the sectors, there is a danger of overestimating the uniqueness of managerial concerns in volunteering. As I have pointed out, there are similar concerns in both sectors with how to manage workers' autonomy, how to address their inner worlds, and secure their voluntary cooperation. And just as there are these common concerns, both sectors regard Management by Recognition as an important tool to target such autonomy at work that escapes classic control modes. Thus, instead of seeing 'Management by Recognition' as exclusive to volunteering, I regard it as a broader people-management trend concerned with aligning workers' mindset and behavior to organizational goals.

Despite these common concerns across different literatures, I place my empirical focus on how MbR unfolds in a voluntary work context. The reason for my focus on volunteering is importantly a methodological one. I regard studying a voluntary work context as particularly insightful for understanding MbR, given that volunteer organizations deploy MbR as a more exclusive strategy to manage people. In corporations, MbR is always promoted in combination with other measures such as monetary rewards or clear bureaucratic rules of career advancement. The study of a volunteering context provides in my view a particularly promising empirical foundation, an intense case, where recognition can be studied in a fairly pure form.

Recognition as 'Best Practice'

This section highlights how MbR is promoted as a 'best practice' to manage workers in different bodies of literature. First, I discuss the literature in volunteer-management. Second, I highlight how recognition is promoted in the traditional 'Human Resource Management' and work psychology literature that studies employee motivation and commitment. The third body of literature concerns practitioner-oriented popular management accounts. As I have argued earlier, all these bodies of literature deal with questions of workers' autonomy. They all propose managerial recognition as an important means for targeting workers' inner worlds in order to increase organizational effectiveness/performance.

Recognition in Volunteer Management Literature

In volunteer management thought we can make a broad distinction between authors who emphasize 'altruistic' reasons to engage (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Farmer & Fedor, 1999; Snyder & Omoto, 2008), and authors who see volunteers' engagement primarily as 'egoistic' or functional/utilitarian (Clary & Mark, 1999; Handy, Cnaan Ram, et al., 2010). The first perspective assumes 'altruism is a central motive where the reward is intrinsic to the act of volunteering' (Bussell & Forbes, 2002, p. 248). The other view that volunteers engage out of 'egoistic motives' has become increasingly influential in voluntary sector research (Peglow, 2002).

Even though the argument for altruistic motives has merit, the second perspective proposes that individuals engage voluntarily mostly to satisfy their individual economic, social, and psychological needs (Peglow, 2002; Taylor & McGraw, 2006; Wilson & Pimm, 1996). This may include the gaining of career-related experience, the possibility of self-expression, or receiving social approval by creating a good impression of oneself (Clary & Mark, 1999; Handy, Seto, et al., 2010). Hustinx (2010) elaborates how the politics of self-actualization that came along with modernization have increasingly entered the third sector and created a form of 'new volunteering' (Peglow, 2002). Volunteering, authors suggest, has made a 'basic shift from habitual and dedicated involvement toward more episodic, noncommittal, and self-oriented types of participation' (Hustinx, 2010, p. 236). Volunteering is thus increasingly seen as an individualized activity where individuals are driven by their 'need for self-fulfilment and self-esteem' (Shin & Kleiner, 2003, p. 70).

While the distinction between egoistic and altruistic orientations is often evoked, some authors acknowledge it is not clear-cut, as motives overlap in practice (Handy, Seto, et al., 2010). Nevertheless, it is important to realize the prominence of the 'egoistic motives' view. The reason is that it forms an important premise upon which authors build to promote MbR. As shown, the 'egoistic motives' view considers volunteering as essential for people to self-actualize and gain self-esteem. Boezeman and Ellemers (2008) argue that experiences of recognition heighten 'affective' and 'normative' commitment to the organization. Thus people feel emotional attachment (e.g., being part of the 'family') and moral responsibility to perform well if they are recognized. Because it creates such commitment, recognition is considered to enhance organizational performance.

What then are forms or practices of recognition? Shin and Kleiner (2003, p. 70) mention 'saying thank you, making the volunteer feel part of a team, showing personal interest in their life, providing a good working environment' (p. 70). Boezeman and Ellemers (2008, p. 169) argue that commitment is fostered 'by letting volunteer coordinators communicate (e.g., in a regular newsletter) that the organization appreciates the volunteers' donations of time and effort (emotion-

oriented support) or by compiling a manual that provides guidelines for the volunteer activities that have to be carried out (task-oriented support)'. Thus recognition can be communicated through spoken language, emotional engagement by showing 'personal interest', or guidance and support including information and training events.

Other authors (Chapman & White, 2011; Cuskelly et al., 2006) provide examples of material expressions of recognition, such as issuing certificates, handing over flowers, or sending out birthday cards, as well as bodily expressions of recognition ('smile'). Also award ceremonies are promoted, that aim at making the volunteers publicly visible, as well as putting their story into the newspapers (Cuskelly et al., 2006). In addition, Boezeman and Ellemers (2008) suggest arranging informal social meetings for volunteers to get to know each other better, and receive feedback from the beneficiaries of their efforts. Others promote integrating different recognition measures into formal organization-wide recognition programs (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Liao-Troth & Dunn, 1999).

Overall, we can see the repertoire of suggested expressions of recognition is broad. Generally, MbR is seen to work essentially according to a principle of reciprocity: upon giving affirmative gestures as an immaterial reward, a positive *reception* is implied, which in turn assists individuals to self-actualize, and to establish a positive sense of self. Overall then, there is an assumed return on investment, as the self-affirmed individuals reciprocate recognition through being more engaged and committed. On a first glance, it seems like we have a 'win-win' scenario. Not only does recognition assist in securing volunteer-commitment, it is also seen as an inherently ethical management tool, as it is about giving something 'good' or 'positive', rather than coercing the individual. Interestingly, this 'win-win' idea of using recognition to manage people is not exclusively found in the voluntary sector. General and popular management thought also promotes the idea that in order to motivate employees, managers should use recognition and appreciation as instruments.

Recognition in Human Resource Management Literature

Since the 1990s, recognition is suggested to effectively manage people in business organizations (Roberts, 2007), but the roots of this idea can be traced back further to early Human Resource Management (HRM) thought. Maslow's (1943) famous 'hierarchy of needs', formulated over 70 years ago, has informed much theorizing about how to manage and motivate people in organizations (Bersin, 2012; Chapman & White, 2011). Maslow's basic idea is that humans are need-driven (1943). He argues that if basic needs such as 'physiological' ones (need for sleep, drink, food), 'safety' (the establishment of predictability), or 'love, affection and belongingness' are

met, humans then strive for 'esteem' and 'self-realization'. Here we see close connections to the MbR idea in volunteering. Maslow (1943, p. 381) states: 'All people in our society (with a few pathological exceptions) have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, (usually) high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others.' He further states that people seek 'recognition, attention, importance or appreciation' by others to feel 'self-confidence, worth, strength, capability' (Maslow, 1943, p. 381).

Much of the later Human Resource Management literature that explores how to attract, motivate, and retain workers, builds upon Maslow's fundament. Levinson (2003, p. 111) for instance, argues that management should target a person's 'needs, wishes, and personal aspirations' and find out '[w]hat will make her feel good about herself?'. According to the author, 'the highest point of self-motivation arises when there is a complementary conjunction of the individual's needs and the organization's requirements.' (Levinson, 2003, p. 111). This argument reflects a broader insight that has come to dominate much HRM thought. That is, the insight that managers cannot directly control workers' motivation, but need to create an environment in which workers manage themselves in such a way that is profitable for the respective organization (Roberts, 2007).

This idea of stimulating workers to manage themselves has, more recently, been explicitly linked to recognition. HRM authors, in the tradition of Maslow, promote 'social recognition' (Deci, 1972) to foster conditions under which workers regulate themselves in line with corporate interests (e.g., work overtime even though it is not officially demanded). Luthans and Stajkovic (2000) argue that 'contingent recognition' by management through acknowledging, approving, or appreciating the work of others is a powerful form of controlling human behavior at work. As management efforts have been increasingly concerned with targeting workers' inner worlds, the MbR literature promises a highly efficient mode to achieve such control. By attempting to make individuals feel self-affirmed, according to the managerial logic, individuals will work towards organizational goals, not because they are openly forced to do so, but rather because they voluntarily act in ways they know will bring them more social recognition.

Even though this basic assumption is widespread, there are few studies that investigate how appreciation or recognition practices play out in organizational life. In work-psychology there is an increased empirical interest in the theme of recognition and appreciation. A few recent studies (Semmer & Jacobshagen, 2010; Stocker, Jacobshagen, Semmer, & Annen, 2015) show how appreciative practices such as constructive feedback, assigning responsibility to individuals, or asking for advice 'boost' self-esteem. This apparently leads to an overall increase in employee well-being and the reduction of work stress, which in turn is argued to enhance employee loyalty. These studies provide overall empirical support that MbR leads to a win-win,

but also point out that it is a process that needs to be managed correctly, as wrong management techniques could even 'hurt' or 'demotivate' employees (Semmer & Jacobshagen, 2010).

Recognition in Popular Management Literature

Popular management authors also increasingly write about recognition as a powerful opportunity to influence people. On websites and blogs that discuss the latest developments in the corporate world, terms such as 'employee recognition', 'recognition-rich culture', or 'recognition programs' are common (Bersin, 2012). Increasing number of books are published about how to best recognize or appreciate employees. These books primarily target 'managers' or 'leaders' as the ones responsible for giving recognition.

For instance, Chapman and White (2011) develop in their book 'The 5 Languages of Appreciation' a whole programmatic approach on how managers can properly recognize and appreciate organizational members, with the goal to impact employees' 'satisfaction and increased productivity' (p. 12). In times where 'no one has extra time or money to waste' (Chapman & White, p. 32), communicating recognition is seen as a highly efficient way for enhancing organizational performance. Ventrice (2003, p. 4) makes a similar point:

> Recognition that works does this: it energizes and revitalizes the workplace. It creates a loyal, motivated, and productive workforce. And a loyal, motivated, and productive workforce makes your job as a manager easier.

Wagner and Harter (2006), who write about the twelve 'Elements of Great Managing' identify 'recognition and praise' as the fourth element. They argue 'employees who do not feel adequately recognized are twice as likely to say they will leave their company in the next year' (p. 52). Thus recognition is argued to 'reduce employee turnover', 'improve attendance and productivity' (Chapman and White 2011, p. 41). MbR is argued to be a 'win' for the organization or those managers concerned with realizing organizational interests.

But MbR also promises gains for the workers. Most popular accounts demonstrate how recognition makes the workplace more humane. Chapman and White (2012, p. 22) argue that 'each of us wants to know that what we are doing matters' and that 'without a sense of being valued by supervisors and colleagues, workers start to feel like a machine or a commodity'. In order to avoid treating workers in a machine-like fashion, they promote appreciation measure with the goal of securing workers' 'psychological survival'. Recognition is thus promoted as an essentially humane measure. MbR is seen as the opposite to organizational control that builds on 'coercion, fear and threats' (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003, p. xx).

In addition to the 'win-win' argument, popular management authors assume a particular responsibility of management for making people feel recognized. Managers are the ones who provide the 'stimulus' (e.g., praise, attentive listening, material or symbolic presents) that brings about a desired 'response'. Ventrice (2003, p. 55, emphasis added) argues:

> Recognition from all sources is important, but it doesn't carry the same weight as recognition that comes form the managers. In fact, my research shows that *70 percent of the most meaningful recognition comes from a manager.*

The author suggests that recognition follows a hierarchical logic, meaning more when it is given by people 'higher up the organizational ladder' (Ventrice, 2003, p. 17). Just as leaders can shape the vision and direction of an organization, they are assumed to have great power to set examples, and inspire employees to create together a corporate 'environment that contains inherent recognition' (Ventrice, 2003, p. 77).

An Underexplored Management Trend

To summarize, there has been since approximately the end of the 1990s an upsurge and interest in MbR. It has become especially fashionable in contemporary popular management discourse and recent volunteer-management thought to promote recognition programs. There are important parallels between the corporate world and the voluntary sector, as both see direct control mechanisms as 'increasingly ineffective motivational tools' (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003, p. xx) and recognition as an important tool to facilitate control against this background. Overall, the suggested recognition forms and concrete practices in both voluntary and for profit research are so varied that I do not elaborate upon them in-depth. Table 1 provides an overview of the most common forms of recognition that are suggested by different authors discussed in this chapter.

Acknowledging the intensive engagement with recognition in the managerialist literature, it can be said that MbR presents a distinct and rather 'soft' form of control. Interestingly, even though there are multiple studies that investigate similarly soft, culture-oriented forms of control (e.g., Kunda, 2006; Barker, 1993; Casey, 1999), this specific trend of MbR has received only little critical attention in academic research. The existing accounts (as presented above) draw mostly on functionalist quantitative studies and/or literature reviews to claim positive correlations between recognition, intrinsic motivation, and organizational performance.

To manage by recognition, however, involves complex human interactions that need to be acknowledged in studies, which offer rich empirical descriptions, rather than just questionnaire-answers. It cannot be assumed that just because something 'positive' results from a stimulus by management, individuals will feel, think and

perform in desired ways. The prevalent functionalist/managerialist understanding of recognition leaves little space for exploring the more surprising and contradictory ways in which recognition practices (as promoted above) play out in organizational life, or to explore what impact MbR has on individuals and organizations. Also, the question emerges how humane the practices are that aim to exert control over individuals, and how the positive rhetoric of recognition potentially conceals more deeply-seated struggles over power in organizations. These problems of the MbR literature are the focus of the next section.

Table 1.
Overview of Recognition Forms

	Description	Example of Practice	Example of Author
Verbal Praise	Words are used to communicate a positive message about someone to another person. Verbal praise can be expressed directly towards a person, but it can also be expressed in front of others (a group, a larger audience). Verbal praise can be expressed through spoken as well as written words.	Say to someone 'I admire this about you' or 'You have done this so well, thank you!' Describe outstanding achievements or personality traits of someone to others in the presence of the praised person Write a positive feedback mail (in 'cc' to others)	Shin and Kleiner, (2003); Chapman and White (2011); Luthans and Stajkovich (2000)
Individual Care	Express to someone (through words, actions, gestures) that s/he is 'sympathized', 'felt with', 'seen' and 'cared for'.	Give a person your focused attention in a personal talk and find out how the person is doing Pass by the office, and say 'hello' and 'how are you?' Take care of someone who is ill or who is not doing well, and show empathy (e.g., reducing their workload) Offer reflection talks Make sure you know a person and his/her particularities	Ventrice (2003); Chapman and White (2011)
Shared Experience	Encounters are created were individuals can meet like-minded people, exchange experiences, develop commonalities and get a sense of belonging to a community.	Organize a 'retreat' with the team Go out for regular lunches and/or 'after works' Organize parties and events for volunteers, e.g., on Christmas Offer supervision and feedback groups for mentors working with Turkish children	Boezeman and Ellemers (2008); Ventrice (2003)
Material Gifts	Material things are handed to someone as a present.	Give flowers, chocolate, birthday cards, wine, etc. Give vouchers to individuals to enjoy, for instance, a concert, a sport event or a massage Issue a recognition certificate that individuals can keep, for instance, as a proof of their volunteering experience to be shown to others (a future employer, etc.)	Cuskelly et al. (2006); Wagner and Hartner (2006)
Personal Development	Opportunities are given to individuals where they can develop their traits and skills, and thus 'personally develop'.	Send volunteers to workshops to learn new presentation skills, workshop moderation skills, project management skills, or how to make a home-page Organize panel discussions, information evenings and the like about topical themes where volunteers are invited to Offer workshops where volunteers can gain knowledge and skills related directly to their volunteering task (e.g., on intercultural communication)	Semmer and Jacobshagen (2010); Chapman and White (2011)

Assign Responsibility	Individuals are assigned with a task that involves a considerable degree of responsibility and that therefore communicates that this person is highly trusted and esteemed.	Assign someone to be a project leader Give people a high degree of autonomy and responsibility when doing their voluntary task (e.g., developing project proposals, leading other people) Ask people for help Give voice to individuals, by letting them, for instance present their projects to Communa's board	Boezeman and Ellemers (2008); Semmer and Jacobshagen (2010)
Visibility	Individuals are made 'seen' or made 'visible' to others through a broad range of activities, especially through Public Relations work.	Make 'portraits' of volunteers who have engaged and publish those in internal or external publications (e.g., local newspapers) Design a wall in the reception area, where pictures of all volunteers are put up	Cuskelly et al. (2006)
Guidance	Individuals are guided in such a way that they can smoothly execute their work tasks and do not encounter unnecessary problems.	Create working conditions in which people can fulfill their task in the best possible way (e.g., to cover travel expenses, to provide a good working desk, a fast running computer, internet access, a contact list of teammates) Assign someone with a mentor/direct supervisor	Boezeman and Ellemers (2008); Semmer and Jacobshageb (2010)
Physical Touch	Individuals can also be affirmed through non-sexual recognizing touches.	Put your hand on someone's shoulder Do a 'high-five', give a hug after a successful presentation, etc.	Chapman and White (2011)
Rites/Ceremonials	Recognition rituals and ceremonies involve a specific physical arramngement and a certain order, a beginning and end, where things happen (e.g. going on stage, other people clap, award is handed over, etc.). Rituals/ceremonies can integrate various other expressions of recognition such as 'verbal', 'material'). Here it is about the overall composition of how things come together that give ceremonies a special touch to express recognition in heightened form.	Volunteer receptions by local politicians Entry and Exit rituals for volunteers Have a stage that people are placed on (higher than the rest of the audience) To decorate rooms nicely (e.g., for Christmas)	Cuskelly et al. (2006); Wagner and Harter (2006)

Problematizing Management by Recognition

There are a number of problems that emerge with the promoted idea of MbR. The current literature falls overall short in addressing these problems, as I see it, because of two inherent 'blind spots'. The first blind spot is the unbroken underlying belief in a 'win-win' scenario—the trust that everyone will gain from MbR. This perspective does not acknowledge that work processes involve conflicts of interest, not only between two parties (i.e., 'management' and 'workers') but between all actors involved in a work context. Ignoring such underlying tensions can lead to problematic propositions about how recognition works. The second blind spot in the literature promoting MbR is its managerial prerogative. The idea that management is key in giving recognition draws upon static thinking in terms of two units (i.e., the manager versus the worker) and simple motivational theory that sees individual conduct connected essentially to the satisfaction of needs by the right stimuli given by management. But when MbR is practiced in organizational life, arguably, complex social regulation mechanisms are at stake that cannot be grasped by such two-dimensional need-satisfaction logic.

More Than Individualization

Authors often emphasize the most effective way to make workers feel recognized is to take an individualized approach to recognition. For instance, Wagner and Harter (2006, p. 58) stress discovering 'the forms of feedback that mean the most to [the employees]'. Similarly, Chapman and White (2011, p. 24) argue that for recognition to work, the 'all-important ingredient is individualization'. The authors outline different preferences or different 'languages of appreciation' that people have. For instance, while some may be touched by public 'Words of Affirmation', others need to be recognized with 'Quality Time' created in social events, and others again by 'Tangible Gifts' like a voucher for the movies (Chapman & White, 2011). The authors emphasize the importance of hitting the *right* appreciation language, to avoid recognition becoming meaningless.

There are examples in the literature when recognition efforts miss the mark because they do not align with an individual's preferred recognition language. For instance, material expressions of recognition (e.g., voucher to a Friday night sports event) can miss the mark if they do not align with the lifestyle of the targeted person (e.g., a father whose Friday night is a holy family night), or if that person would prefer to be verbally praised rather than given presents. It is often warned that public recognition (e.g., ceremonies, awards) can have detrimental effects when given to introverted or shy people (Chapman & White, 2011; Nelson & Spitzer, 2003). Doing recognition right is thus regarded as a matter of determining the personality and preferences of

the respective worker. To find the 'right fit' between an individual person and the given recognition form is arguably the manager's task, for instance, by observing workers carefully and showing an interest in them (Chapman & White, 2011; Ventrice, 2003). Even though some authors emphasize that recognition given by co-workers is important too (e.g., Chapman & White, 2011), they do not question the fundamentally vertical character of the MbR where 'managers' are seen as the key actors to initiate recognition (Ventrice, 2003).

Overall, the emphasis on individual preferences is interesting, as it adds nuance to an otherwise quite simple framework of the workings of recognition. The individualization argument clarifies this: not every act of recognition will make people necessarily feel good, self-enhanced, and hence more willing to cooperate towards organizational goals. There may be tricky aspects, where the message is interpreted differently on the side of the 'receiver' than intended by the 'sender'. Hence several authors acknowledge the important interactive dimension of recognition. Interestingly, it is particularly the popular management accounts, rather than academic articles in HRM, that highlight nuances and emerging problems. They acknowledge that recognition may have contradictory consequences and instead of a 'win-win', the organization may lose. For instance, Nelson and Spitzer (2003, p.195) warn that in spite of the best intentions 'recognition can go wrong' with negative consequences such as 'decreased morale, lowered performance, customer service problems, and a decline in profitability'.

The problem with these reflections is however that authors do not escape managerial logic. Even though it is acknowledged that there may be 'losses', only those on the side of the organization are considered important. But what about, for instance, the impact of recognition efforts on individuals who are exposed to it? What if people feel, for example, 'insulted' by the wrong recognition, as Nelson and Spitzer suggest? Or what if recognition creates exclusion by singling out individuals? What are the implications of this for the power relations in organizations and/or for the effectiveness of this type of 'soft' control? Do individuals resist recognition? Do they perform nevertheless (and even if so, does that imply that they are compliant)? These types of questions are not addressed in the current research into MbR, which is promoted as an effective form of control over workers. My impression is that power relations at work have received too little attention by the proponents of MbR. In addition, even though it is acknowledged that we are dealing with a complex human communication process, the proposed solutions to deal with problems ignore the complexities. The answer seems to be in finding the right 'fit' between two units: the person here, the recognition-form there. 'Management' is supposed to connect those two units and then everything is solved and we are back to win-win.

Hence, there is limited understanding of MbR as a trend that is embedded in and influencing a dense network of social relations, where control is located in collective

norms that are continuously affirmed and/or re-shaped by individual members. It is too simple to assume that management can 'connect' these relations in ways that create the assumed positive effects for everyone. In particular, two 'blind spots' lead, in my view, to the prevalent complexity-reducing view of recognition: first, the view that morality can be offered in exchange relations without restrictions, and second, the idea that managers have tight control over recognition efforts.

Authentic Exchange?

The first blind spot is the assumption that moral motivations can remain pure in economic exchange relations. As highlighted extensively, MbR is conceptualized as both a humane and effective managerial tool. However, the question arises how an economic underpinning of recognition, based on transactional principles, can be aligned with an ethical claim for the goodness and authenticity of recognition. Arguably, the largely normative treatment of recognition in terms of what it can do to satisfy basic human needs (e.g. developing self-esteem) is mixed with a strong functional interest to control individual conduct (e.g. commit individuals to engage). These interests can stand in conflict to each other.

Many authors promoting MbR argue that a deep 'sincere' (Nelson and Spitzer, 2003, p. 197) or 'authentic' (Chapman and White, 2011, p. 23) concern for each individual worker is a precondition for making recognition work. Individual workers should feel that they are truly 'valued', 'seen', and 'respected' as who they are by others (Ventrice, 2003, p. 17). Hence, before any strategic concern, managers should simply spend time with their subordinates, get to know and value them. Ventrice (2003, p. 20) advises: 'Stop and listen . . . , get to know something about each person who works with you, and you show respect'. In addition, recognition is argued to work best when it is given spontaneously, and should not be too formal or bureaucratic (Nelson & Spitzer, 2011).

These calls for sincere and spontaneous recognition, however, create some tension. While authors promote a highly subjective 'on the spot' way of practicing recognition, they explain simultaneously 'objective criteria' for making recognition work by planned culture engineering (Nelson & Spitzer, 2011, p. 20). Another major issue comes to light when normative calls to deliver sincere recognition are incorporated within a broader economic argument that goes like this: if you recognize individuals out of a sincere humanist motive, you will automatically get a return because recognized individuals will be more motivated (Shin and Kleiner, 2003). Thus, the case for sincerity and authenticity is made from an economic point of view. Authenticity is proposed to help make recognition work and thereby secure control over workers' conduct. This raises the question 'how authentic authenticity can be' when it is promoted to realize organizational interests, and also what the implications

are, when individuals interpret recognition as an exchange, something that is performed towards them with a functionalist motive. Thus despite all positive rhetoric, MbR is not as straightforward as its proponents suggest.

In addition, the way in which recognition management may exert power over individuals in rather unobtrusive, yet powerful ways needs more critical interrogation. This need for further research is highlighted by the example of a volunteer in my pilot study. She had decided to quit her paid work in order to devote time to raising her children and managing the household. In her privileged environment where several women could afford to stay home, she told me, that nobody just sits at home and does 'nothing'. One was expected to engage in altruistic activities in order to be recognized as a valuable community member – a cultural script picked up and reproduced by voluntary organizations that work with MbR (e.g., see Chapter Six and Seven). Her voluntary engagement however, where she experienced gender-related mobbing situations and overwork, stressed her to such an extent that she had 'sleepless nights' and often asked herself why she did not 'just quit'.

It could be argued that individuals, in their desire to be recognized, may subject themselves to potentially self-injurious norms of recognition (Butler, 1997; Kenny, 2006). This does not need to be the case and individuals may well feel self-enhanced by managerial recognition initiatives (most likely self-enhancement and subjection cannot be separated). I merely suggest opening the study of the MbR for critical approaches towards power and normative control in organizations (e.g., Kunda, 2006; Fleming, 2009). MbR is an example *par excellence* for studying how apparently 'soft' and culture-oriented management approaches unfold in organizational life. In my view, what is needed is a more skeptical discussion of the harnessing of individuals' inner worlds by means of recognition.

Who is in Control?

Even if MbR is brought forward as a strategy for managers or leaders to secure control over organizational members, the assumption that recognition is in the hands of management also needs critical interrogation. It is arguably more than just the interplay of two parties (i.e., the manager and the worker) that determines how recognition plays out in organizational life and whether there is a 'fit' that ensures everyone is working towards the same goal. Recognition is always embedded in a broader context of social norms and values. By looking at the aspect of 'fairness' I want to highlight this.

Ventrice (2003) remarks that 'recognition, by its very nature, singles out individuals or group of individuals' (p. 168). Hence, recognition stands in contrast to the idea that everyone should be treated identically. Praising someone publicly, for instance, communicates not only how a person is different, but implicitly also better than

others. This can lead to conflicts within a workforce where individuals 'compare' themselves to others via the recognition expressed to them (Nelson and Spitzer, 2010).

Beyond these practical problems (e.g., how to deal with exclusion, rivalry, jealousy), the issue of fairness highlights the way in which recognition has become embedded in broader social dynamics and diffused power relations. Let us assume that 'management' recognizes one particular worker in a public speech. Even then, all other members of a given collective are simultaneously evaluated on their worth as human beings in relation to that 'outstanding' person. Intended recognition may have unintended 'side-effects' in a work context that cannot be fully controlled by those who strategically set out to recognize someone, because people also interact with each other (e.g., telling each other how ridiculous public recognition events are).

Arguably, people's evaluation of recognition, and the meaning they attach to it, is not a matter of 'inner' needs or preference. Instead, such preferences and needs are continuously created in interactions with others. Pop-management author Ventrice (2003) makes an interesting argument when it comes to the importance of creating meaning when expressing recognition. Ventrice (2003, p. 12, emphasis in original) argues:

> Employees are looking for meanings, *not things*. They see tangible awards as a vehicle for *delivering* recognition, but they don't regard the rewards themselves as recognition.

Ventrice (2003) elaborates, based on several examples (e.g., giving bonuses to employees, giving perks, plaques and awards), that all those actions in themselves are not recognition. On the contrary, they may even be regarded as favoritism or empty management gestures (Ventrice, 2003, p. 13/14). But bonuses, awards, and praise can become a 'highly valued part of the recognition experience' when individual employees understand what they signify (Ventrice, 2003, p. 15). For example, when managers, instead of just inviting their workers to an after-work dinner, hold a speech during the dinner where they communicate explicitly what people have accomplished to be invited to this dinner. Ventrice (2003, p. 15, emphasis in original) advises therefore:

> Focus only on the tangible award, and recognition will most likely fail. Focus on the *meaning* behind the award, and employees will receive recognition that works.

Ventrice points towards the importance of human interaction and meaning-making for achieving organizational control. It can be said that she describes the task of people who are, in a formal sense, up the hierarchical ladder, as that of 'managing meanings' (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). The task of the 'managers' and 'leaders' to

whom Ventrice speaks in her book becomes apparently that of 'defining reality in ways that are sensible to the led' (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, p. 259).

Thus, organizational control based on Management by Recognition is not a direct coercive type of control. It is not secure and fixed. Instead, control needs to be understood as emerging from a complex social process where 'leaders' or 'managers' *attempts* to impact the meaning and definition of a particular context, and especially how individuals see themselves within those contexts. Because this process of establishing control is essentially social and involves complex power relations, management is arguably not 'omnipotent' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 621).

To sum up this chapter, I have reviewed the relevant literature about MbR in the context of both non-profit and for-profit work. I have argued that MbR is an attempt to shape contextual/cultural meanings in order to achieve organizational control (e.g., by making individuals think and feel they are special, needed, highly valued, unique within a particular group of people). As I show in the next chapter, if we go down this route, the concept of 'normative control', becomes key.

Chapter 3 – Management by Recognition as Normative Control

In order to address the problematic assumptions about a 'win-win' and managements' prominent role inherent in the MbR literature, I suggest conceptualizing MbR as a form of 'normative control'—a phenomenon widely investigated in Management and Organization Studies. In line with this suggestion, the goal of this chapter is to highlight how MbR can be better and more critically understood through a normative control lens. The normative control literature helps me to clarify and expand my critique of MbR. It does so by highlighting the detrimental effects that managerial efforts, which target workers' emotional responses and view of themselves, may have on individuals. Thereby, the normative control literature helps me address especially my first point of critique of a 'win-win' scenario, showing how there may also be 'losses'.

When it comes to my critique of the prevalent management-focus, the picture becomes more complex. Most authors who critically investigate normative control acknowledge that management is not 'omnipotent' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 621) in molding individuals' inner worlds and that organizational members are 'active' in interpreting ideologies (Kunda, 2006, p. 21). Despite emphasizing a 'post-structuralist' or 'Foucauldian' notion of dispersed power, however, we encounter a dominant concern with 'management' as a key agent in the literature on normative control. To balance the prevalent focus on management, I suggest studying organizational control as an intersubjective accomplishment, generated in everyday life performances.

The chapter unfolds as follows: in the first section I discuss the notion of normative control and its origins. This is followed by a discussion on how normative control operates through creating belonging and individual difference. Here, I first reflect upon cultural control, which is concerned with creating shared orientations, as well as critiques raised against it. A discussion of more individualized forms of control that explicitly target people's identities, including critiques towards it, follow this. I then consider the different forms of micro-resistance against normative control that have been suggested in the literature. In the final section I critically discuss the idea that contemporary normative controls are totalizing, in the sense that resistance would no

longer be possible. This final discussion highlights the importance of an interactionist approach (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934) to MbR, which is the topic of the next (and final) theory chapter.

The Origins of Normative Control

Broadly speaking, 'normative control' is a term used to describe and investigate forms of managerial influence that are seen to work beyond direct coercion, technological control, classic bureaucracy or economic rewards (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Casey, 1999; Costas, 2012; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004; Kärreman, Sveningsson, & Alvesson, 2002; Kunda, 2006; Rennstam, 2007). The basis for understanding normative control in this thesis is Kunda's (2006, p. 11) well-known definition: 'Normative control is the attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experience, thoughts, and feelings that guide their actions.' According to Kunda's definition, the result of normative control is that organizational members act, apparently, voluntarily in the interest of the company, rather than because they are forced to, or because they act instrumentally with an eye on material rewards (Kunda, 2006).

Kunda's definition provides a useful umbrella term for various orientations within a broad field of inquiry about subtle, apparently 'soft' or 'positive' management practices that aim to elicit compliant mind-sets and behaviors from members. Because such compliance is achieved through an 'experiential transaction' (rather than an economic transaction), where 'symbolic rewards are exchanged for a moral orientation to the organization' (Kunda, 2006, p. 11), it is often judged to be extremely effective as it 'appears to be the natural convention' (Clegg, 1979 as cited in Tomkins & Cheney, 2006, p. 106). Concepts, which reflect and/or refine the basic premises of the normative control idea are, amongst others, 'concertive control' (Barker, 1993; Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1995), 'ideological control' (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988), 'clan control' (Ouchi, 1979), 'socio-ideological control' (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004), 'unobtrusive control' (Bisel, Ford, & Keyton, 2007; Tomkins & Cheney, 2006), 'identity regulation' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002), or 'neo-normative control' (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009). All those concepts are typically defined in contrast to other more direct or bureaucratic forms of control that have developed since the offset of industrialization (Edwards, 1979).

This section provides a brief historical contextualization of the concept of normative control, particularly focusing on how it has been distinguished from traditional forms of control, such as managerial attempts to control the workers' bodies in, for instance, Taylorism. The section then continues with the idea of controlling workers' inner worlds, which has been argued to be an essential idea of normative control. I end this

section with some reflections on the relevance of the notion of normative control for this present study.

Controlling Workers' Bodies

In this section, I distinguish various types of control analytically to present broad developments. Before doing so, it is important to note that these different forms of control do not neatly follow one after another, or in pure forms in organizational practice. Rather, the labels that I introduce now help us to think of different tendencies and responses to particular managerial problems.

The main goal at the offset of industrialized mass-production was to control the workers' bodies by synchronizing workflows in order to increase labour productivity (Clegg, 1989; Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006). 'Scientific Management', as suggested by Frederick Taylor, reflects different modes to achieve such control over workers' behavior. Taylorism drew upon what can be called *simple control*, implying the open and personal exercise of power through direct supervision (Edwards, 1979). Moreover, *technical control*, based on machines and other physical technologies at the workplace (e.g., the assembly line), was advanced by Taylor, and simultaneously practiced in, for instance, the automobile and meatpacking industries (Edwards, 1979; Salaman, 1978). These first two conceptions of control can be thought of as fairly direct, or 'obtrusive' (Tomkins & Cheney, 2006). The practices associated with simple and technical control are straightforwardly perceived by workers as power exercised over them. Hence, overt resistance (e.g., strikes) towards those power relations often presented a major problem to capitalist production.

Another mode of control that grew in importance during the rise of industrialization is *bureaucratic control* (Edwards, 1979). As opposed to fairly direct control practices, bureaucratic control is more 'unobtrusive' (Tompkins and Cheney, 2006). Instead of securing control through direct sanctions, bureaucratic control emphasizes rationality, and the possibility to advance at work through a legally regulated system (Weber, 1978). Such a system is highly de-personalized, hierarchical, rule-governed, and specialized (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004; Ouchi, 1979). Work processes are organized along the lines of those who are skilled and 'manage' things, and those who execute standardized tasks (Roberts, 2007).

Even though these different modes of controlling workers have been overall effective and highly influential in organizing industrial relations, they have encountered ongoing critique and reformulations, based on two grounds: 1) for not being efficient or flexible enough to accommodate an increasingly internationalized, competitive, democratic, and knowledge-intensive work environment, 2) for establishing inhumane work conditions. Basically, ever since these classical industrial control modes came into being, they have been scrutinized.

It is in this ethically and functionally motivated critique that I introduce now that we find the origins for what is now commonly known as 'normative control'. That is, the move away from controlling workers' bodies and behavior through direct power or rationalized systems, towards promoting worker's satisfaction, facilitation and empowerment. Rather than aiming at bodily discipline, the goal with normative control is to make use of workers' inner worlds – their 'souls' – in the production process (Clegg, 1989; Ezzamel, Lilley, & Willmott, 1994).

Controlling Workers' Inner Worlds

With the rise of Taylorist management principles, parallel voices grew that challenged technocratic exploitation of a work force. The 'Hawthorne Studies', originally designed to study the influence of illumination of the workplace on workers' output, are famous. Instead of technological improvements, standardization, output-related salary, and so on, these studies showed that workers' productivity increased as individuals realized that the researchers were paying attention to them (Daft, Murphy, & Willmott, 2014; Roberts, 2007). The studies of the Hawthorne Works played an important role in discovering workers as 'social persons' who crave recognition from other human beings (Mayo, 1933). The rhetoric of workers' satisfaction, facilitation and empowerment accompanied these new insights. Researchers in the tradition of the so-called 'Human Relations' approach began to study workers not as interchangeable parts of an organization, but instead emphasized how psychological aspects and workers' relationships with each other were important to understand and foster motivation.

But this focus on workers' satisfaction and empowerment has been seen as an equally or perhaps even more powerful form of control (Barley & Kunda, 1992). Sennett (2008, p. 242) states that 'Mayo's business clients were more interested in obedience than quality; happy workers keep at their tasks and do not go on strike'. The discovery of the human aspect in/by management is thus ambivalent: on the one hand, inhumane standardized working conditions for mass production were challenged, while at the same time the insights about individuals' social needs were strategically used. The key to productivity, according to the basic insight from the Hawthorne Studies, that differs from other forms of control outlined earlier, is to cater to the social needs of persons (Mayo, 1933). Thus control is not so much about creating the right external working conditions, but about targeting the self-understanding of the worker who 'craves the attention of the manager, and who, as social being, is found to be highly responsive to the pressures brought to bear by his or her work group' (Roberts, 2007, p. 44). The concept of normative control, as in Kunda's definition cited above, captures this criticism.

The different types of control described in this section cannot be neatly separated in organizational practice. Barley and Kunda (1992, p. 363) challenge, for instance, the dominant claim that 'managerial discourse has moved progressively from coercive to rational and, ultimately normative, rhetorics of control'. Thus, even though management may be increasingly occupied with social-psychological aspects at work, rational images and practices of management (i.e. as in Scientific Management or Systems Rationalism) have never vanished, but have interplayed in consecutive waves with normative control (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Kärreman et al., 2002).

Management by Recognition as an 'Experiential Transaction'

In light of the different control forms, I conceptualize the labour that went into engineering a 'Culture of Recognition' at Communa (largely in line with the MbR literature outlined earlier) as the attempt to establish normative control over voluntary workers (Kunda, 2006). As already mentioned, Kunda (2006, p. 11) understands the 'transaction' between workers and their organization as 'experiential' and emotional rather than economic or behavioral. As I see it, MbR, as promoted in the literature and as practiced in the empirical setting of this study (e.g., praising volunteers, creating public visibility as described in Chapter Three), involves such an experiential transaction. That is to say that efforts in MbR are directed, in essence, at enhancing workers' conceptions of their selves. Recognition is supposed to make individuals experience admiration, care, and respect by their interaction partners; it addresses the way people feel about and see themselves. MbR is directed at integrating workers' inner worlds into work processes.

Thus, normative control appears to be a suitable theoretical framing to better understand the fragile control relationship between 'management' and 'workers' so often discussed by voluntary sector research. Interestingly, while it is not a big stretch to conceptualize managerial practices in voluntary work through a normative control lens, there are surprisingly few studies that take such an approach. It is even more surprising that a normative control lens has not been worked with so far, given that even authors within the more mainstream volunteer management literature increasingly recognize how social structures, and workplace norms impact volunteer conduct (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008; Sherer, 2004).

This is, of course, not to say that my study is dealing with a completely new topic. There are scholars in the field of Management and Organization Studies (e.g., Kenny, 2006; Kornberger & Brown, 2007; Villadsen, 2009) who study voluntary organizations with a critical and usually poststructuralist orientation. They show, for instance, how discursive formations (especially around ethics and altruism) are powerful in determining workers' identifications and conduct in line with cultural norms. In that sense, there are some studies that acknowledge cultural and identity-

constituting aspects that impact individuals' choice to volunteer beyond the 'free will' assumption (O'Toole & Grey, 2015). Yet, to my knowledge, these studies do not deal with targeted culture-control or explicit management initiatives such as MbR as studied in the case of Communa. Hence, conceptualizing MbR as a normative control strategy to manage people's inner worlds and to investigate how this plays out in organizational life positions my study in a largely unexplored field. To better understand the concept of normative control, I turn now to the broad body of conceptual and empirical work within critical/interpretivist Management Studies that engages with it.

Cultural control

This section is primarily concerned with control attempts through culture engineering. But before I discuss this management idea/practice, let me briefly elaborate on the distinction that I make between culture-oriented and individualized approaches to normative control. There are different angles to studying and explaining the workings of normative control. Some authors take a more 'clan' (Ouchi, 1979) or 'culture' oriented approach (Kunda, 2006; Ray, 1986). A key idea here is that normative control is created through fostering shared orientations among members, and giving individuals a feeling of belonging (Barker, 1993). Others emphasize how normative control efforts shape workers' self-definition, how they 'regulate' individual 'identities' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). These studies show for example how managerial discourses and practices target people's 'aspirations' of who they want to be (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Costas & Kärreman, 2013). Thus, closely interlinked with the idea of creating control through *shared orientations and belonging*, is the idea that normative control is established by giving people a sense of *difference*, uniqueness and individuality. For analytical purposes, I distinguish therefore in my thesis between cultural control (control through belonging) and more individualized forms of control (control through individual difference) that explicitly target individuals' identity.

Management by Recognition arguably draws on both mechanisms: the creation of belonging and difference. MbR encompasses initiatives to make people feel recognized through creating inclusion via a social entity (e.g., through parties, dinners) as well as initiatives that emphasize the individuality of a person (e.g., the nomination of one person for a public award). I draw conceptual differences between cultural control (e.g., often drawing on 'family' or 'clan' rhetoric), and individualized forms of control (e.g., often promoting 'authenticity' or 'difference'). But they are ultimately closely related: normative control, even when addressing apparent individual traits, tends to operate in relation to what is valued, accepted, and desired

in a community. Thus, the distinction applied here is not always clear-cut, but it helps me to work out broader trends in the literature discussing normative control. Now I turn to the first broad orientation in normative control to create communal belonging.

Corporate Culture Engineering

The term 'culture' has been defined in a multitude of ways, but captures overall the informal, socially shared and engrained dynamics by which individuals relate to each other (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2007; Martin, 2002). Culture refers to the 'amalgam of beliefs, ideologies, language, rituals and myth' that infuse a particular organizational setting (Ray, 1986, p. 288) and has often been linked to managerial control efforts. One of the earlier scholars to engage with the idea of normative control is Etzioni (1975). The author points out that compliance in organizations is importantly achieved through 'leadership rituals, manipulation of social and prestige symbols' (Etzioni, 1975, p. 4). Those who attempt to 'manage' or 'control' workers face the apparent need to communicate, simply put, *how things are done and what is valued around here* through indirect and highly symbolic cultural communication.

During the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, a major upsurge of large-scale management interventions and thought occurred that endorsed 'organizational culture' initiatives (Daft et al., 2014; Kunda, 2006; Willmott, 1993). Against the background of intensified internationalization, financial instability, and the growths of creative and knowledge-intensive aspects in advanced capitalism, 'engineering' an organization's culture and thereby creating a 'preferred employee character type' (Casey, 1999, p. 160) was seen as a promising way to achieve normative control.

Corporate culture initiatives followed a widespread managerial belief (Peters & Waterman, 1982) that cultural artifacts can be 'used to build organization commitment, convey a philosophy of management, rationalize and legitimate activity, motivate personnel, and facilitate socialization' (Smircich, 1983, p. 345). Popular management authors such as Peters and Waterman (1982) argued that 'strong' cultures based on quality and individual excellence would, overall, enhance employee attendance, productivity, and contribute to higher revenues and profits. Based on the creation of cultural belonging, individuals would make it their personal responsibility to contribute to corporate success (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). But how can an organizational culture be shaped or engineered in desired ways? A number of researchers, often fairly skeptical towards the corporate culturalism wave (Willmott, 1993), point out that organizational value communication and socialization processes play a key role here.

Value Communication and Socialization

Critical authors document a number of ways in which management may communicate organizational culture. Alvesson and Willmott (2002, p. 629/630) state that normative regulation works by 'providing a specific vocabulary of motives' and 'explicating morals and values'. Kunda's (2006) prominent study of normative control shows how managers communicated values of loyalty, high commitment, self-reliance, and fun through the use of various cultural media. Such cultural media included organizational manuals, TV-screens, glossaries, buttons and stickers, top-management presentations, and workshops. According to Kunda (2006, p. 52), all these practices and artifacts simultaneously express and bring to life an organization's ideology, that is, the 'authoritative system of meanings' prevalent in a certain social context.

Kunda (2006) moreover highlights how normative control is exercised through rituals. Ritual can be thought of as 'a rule-governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance' (Lukes, 1975, p. 291 as cited in Kunda, 2006, p. 92). Rituals make broader social meanings visible beyond the mundane, thereby strongly framing how people ought to think and, most importantly, feel in particular situations (Kunda, 2006). Hence, ritualized practices such as weekly meetings, career workshops or management presentations present a key mechanism to communicate desired organizational values.

Others (e.g. Martin, 2002) emphasize how, besides human interaction, organizational artifacts like the arrangement of furniture, dress codes, or architecture form an important repertoire for organizational value communication. For instance, work contexts that aim to communicate they are 'creative and fun' may decorate their workplace with cartoon characters or have assigned play-areas where people can engage in mini-golf or other activities (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009). Even the apparent absence of a particular type of artifact (e.g., no logos, no arranged seating order) or verbal message (e.g., no top-management speeches) conveys in itself a strong meaning – such as that of being non-hierarchical.

Closely related to such symbolic communication are socialization initiatives that aim at forming ideal workers. Various authors (e.g., Townley, 1993; Willmott, 1993) show how HRM initiatives that educate and train employees are key to achieve normative control. Socialization is usually described as the process by which new organizational members learn about and internalize values, attitudes, expected behaviors, and technical skills in an organizational context to participate as full members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Ouchi (1979, p. 837) suggests socialization in organizations is extremely important in order to subject workers 'not only to skill training but also to value training or indoctrination'.

Socialization, in this first specific sense, encompasses trainings, workshops or other initiatives during the 'period before or shortly after new participants join the organization' (Etzioni, 1975, p. 246). At these occasions organizational values are clarified and correct organizational behavior is practiced. In short, training for work initiatives produces 'subjectivities suited (and booted) for the labor process' (Poulter & Land, 2008, p. 65). Poulter and Land describe how a management consultancy used role-play exercises to make new employees envision possible situations in daily work. Through role-play, new employees are socialized into correct and 'uniform' corporate behavior; for instance, they learn how to communicate to clients at all times that they are 'high performers'.

Even though socialization initiatives may be particularly intense during a workers' initial period with an organization, socialization also encompasses on-going career-development and team-building initiatives (e.g., retreats, education offers, career-development workshops). Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008, p. 98) highlight in their study of volunteer socialization that 'the socialization process does not end as one joins the organization, but rather that a person continues to make sense, understand, learn, and change throughout the entire organizational experience'. Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) further highlight the importance of 'other players' such as the peer-group or clients in the socialization process. This is important because it highlights, in contrast to a more traditional notion of socialization (e.g., Ouchi, 1979), that there are aspects of socialization that escape a managerial grip.

Thus, authors describe a widespread trend where 'management' engages in a variety of HRM activities in order to achieve cultural control over workers. In addition to examining how such cultural control is managerially engineered, authors often assigned to the field of Critical Management Studies (CMS) engage skeptically with the theoretical propositions and practical implications the culture-wave has created. I want to look at this critique in more detail now. The reason is that the Management by Recognition trend described in the previous chapter shares many similarities with enthusiastic calls for corporate culture engineering. Looking at critiques towards such culture engineering can therefore provide us with a more sophisticated critical account of the Management by Recognition concept.

Critique of Cultural Control

Ray's (1986) prominent analysis of the growing culture engineering initiatives during the 1980s found that 'more than other forms of control (…) corporate culture elicits sentiment and emotion, and contains possibilities to ensnare workers in a hegemonic system' (p. 287). Ray (1986) conceptualizes corporate culture as an extremely powerful mode of control as it can set free religion-like emotions by drawing upon rituals and strong symbolism; turning organizations into 'sacred space' (Ray, 1986).

She sees the danger of corporate culturalism in individuals' readiness to subordinate or even sacrifice themselves for 'something larger than the self'.

In line with Ray's critique, Willmott (1993) depicts corporate culturalism as a particularly powerful hegemonic system that 'extended management control by colonizing the affective domain' (Willmott, 1993, p. 517). Willmott's critique is directed towards the contradictory promises made by corporate culturalism. The author draws parallels between culture-control and the totalitarian control described in George Orwell's famous novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Referring to Orwell's work, Willmott (1993) detects a 'doublethink' in corporate culturalism. Doublethink in Orwell's sense signifies the idea of brainwashing someone so that the person holds two contradictory beliefs in her mind simultaneously, and accepts both of them. Thereby the doublethink becomes a broadly accepted contradiction. With regards to corporate culturalism, Willmott contends that the doublethink is expressed in the belief that more cultural homogenization can create more individual freedom.

This critique of a doublethink is interesting for my study of MbR, which also promises both control and individual self-development – an overall 'win-win'. As Willmott (1993) outlines, culture enthusiasts see corporate success developing from 'corporate cultures that *systematically recognize and reward* individuals' for identifying with designed organizational values (p. 515, emphasis added). Proponents of strong cultures, just as those promoting MbR, embark on a humanistic project, making it their task to empower individuals. The management gurus Peters and Waterman (1982, pp., 238-9, emphasis in original, as cited in Willmott, 1993, p. 526) claim:

> There was hardly a more pervasive theme in the excellent companies than *respect for the individual*. . . . These companies give people control over their destinies. . . They turn the average Joe and the average Jane into winners. *They let, even insist, that people stick out.*

Interestingly, based on such 'doublethink', culture management seems to be able to reconcile dual desires of employees to 'stand out' yet be also part of a 'whole' (see Ray, 1986, p. 291). Such reconciliation, the 'win-win', is arguably also brought forward in the MbR literature. Yet, as various critical voices warn (see below), the apparent self-realization in uniform cultures is a detrimental matter. It can be alternatively read as a form of co-optation that generate high levels of stressful emotional involvement of those individuals who are targeted by culture management initiatives.

A variety of empirical studies underline this point. In a particularly influential study of 'concertive control', Barker (1993) documents how a small company called 'ISE' organized a major change from traditional hierarchical manufacturing structures to self-managing teams. A key contribution is Barker's detailed empirical description of how self-managing teams that are originally instilled by higher-level management begin to exert subtle control on their members. After having been trained in ISE's

new vision that emphasizes how everyone in the organization is a 'self-manager' (Barker, 1993, p. 420), Barker shows how teams began to powerfully evaluate whether their 'members' lived up to the ideal-worker image. According to Barker, these group dynamics cannot be understood as a traditional bureaucratic form of control, but rather as more complete form of control. This is because rules are connected to the teams and their ethos, rather than to vertical hierarchies. Based on these findings, Barker (1993, p. 435) concludes that 'the powerful combination of peer pressure and rational rules in the conceptive system creates a new iron cage whose bars are almost invisible to the workers it incarcerates'. Hence control is particularly powerful, and morally problematic, because individual members cannot fully grasp the subtleties by which their feelings and conduct are shaped.

Similar studies include Casey (1999), which shows how family-like relations have a strong regulatory impact on workers who feel normative pressure to stay loyal to the 'caring' but also highly demanding family. Also Papa et al (1995), show how a larger humanitarian cause can put considerable pressure on workers. Both studies highlight how responsibility for the community becomes highly individualized, resulting in psychic discomfort, extreme guilt and blame, and intense efforts of the worker to make up for their mistakes, for example, by working unpaid overtime.

Taken together, these critiques indicate that culture management initiatives have emotionalized work relations. Managers who attempt to install culture-control evoke particular themes to heighten emotional significance for achieving group integration. The 'family' and the 'team' are obvious constructions that elicit and demand high emotional involvements of individuals (e.g., feelings of guilt, responsibility, but also the expectations to belong, to be loved). In addition, also other more abstract discourses like the one of 'danger' (O'Toole & Grey, 2015), or having a 'higher social purpose' (Papa et al., 1995) may be powerful emotion-triggers, setting free feelings such as fear, love, or loyalty.

Such emotionalization of work relations has been critically interrogated, notably by Arlie Hochschild (1983). By drawing on the case of flight attendants, Hochschild shows how human feelings in service work have been increasingly commodified. This raises important questions about the marketization of feelings, and the possibility for authenticity when 'authentic' feelings become part of a corporate logic (e.g., when a stewardess is expected to give a 'sincere smile' to customers). Hochschild's conclusion is pessimistic, suggesting that individuals who sell their emotional labour run the danger of losing themselves to the corporation, of not knowing in the end what they 'really feel' (Hochschild, 2003, p. 198), or perhaps even who they are.

Hochschild's view of these forms of cultural and emotional capitalism reveals a deep skepticism of corporate attempts to govern the emotional life of their members. Her critique lines up with the authors presented in this section who overall challenge the promises of culture management. While classic corporate culturalism explicitly aims

at creating social cohesion and uniform celebrations of belonging, contemporary culture initiatives encourage individual 'difference' and 'authenticity' (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009), as well as more 'individualistic' and loose relationships amongst workers (Costas, 2012).

Individualized Forms of Control

While traditional corporate culturalism continues to play an important role in contemporary organizations, several authors have noticed the spreading of more individualistic normative control forms. As Fleming (2013, p. 285) suggests, 'legitimation processes of large enterprises have undergone significant changes'. It seems no longer sufficient to mobilize familial relationships and 'cult-like socialization tactics' in a business environment where individual workers have often developed a cynical awareness of what is culturally 'done' to them (Fleming, 2013, p. 285). From a managerial perspective, there is increased doubt about producing compliance to uniform cultures as it can impair creativity, critical thinking, innovation, and competitiveness in constantly changing markets. In line with these developments, corporate leaders and managers have arguably worked out novel, more individualized, modes of normative regulation (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009; 2011). The focus here is not on so much on the social unit that individuals belong to, but rather on 'who they are' and what makes them distinct. Arguably, there is a considerable degree of insecurity that individuals face in relation to those questions (Collinson, 2003), which makes them more responsive to managerial identity regulation efforts (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

Individual Insecurities

It is often said that today's meritocratic societies have contributed to a greater degree of individual insecurity about 'who we are, how we should live, and what "significant others" think of us' (Collinson, 2003, p. 529). Our status is less defined by birth than it used to be. Instead, new economic rationalities increasingly call upon individuals to discover and articulate who they are and how they are valuable members of society (Collinson, 2003).

The general demand on individuals to explore their selves and develop individual resources has also been termed 'self-management' (Muhr, Pedersen, & Alvesson, 2013). Self-management denotes how individuals explore and improve who they are, for instance by educating themselves, or by disciplining their body when training for a marathon. Work presents an important arena for people to construct a distinct

affirmative sense of self, such as being the breadwinner a successful networker or the like (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Volunteering experience, for instance, is often regarded as a 'proof' of employees' good character, curiosity, potential for self-management, and social connectedness (Handy et al., 2010), and could hence be used to construct such a positive sense of self.

While meritocratic societies provide increased freedom of self-definition, they have arguably also created new pressures, anxieties, and insecurities for individuals. We do not only have the option to 'self-realize' through work, we are increasingly expected to do so. This may exert pressure on individuals, especially when demands for self-definition and self-management meet increasingly insecure career trajectories (Sennett, 1998). When being faced with flexible and/or short-term work conditions, individuals may not only experience economic, but also symbolic insecurities and doubts about their self-worth, for instance, when a father is not able to fill the role of the 'breadwinner' (Collinson, 2003).

Identity and Aspirational Control

It is against this background of insecurity that identity control is thought to powerfully operate (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Collinson, 2003). The idea of identity control implies that that mechanisms and practices of control target individuals' 'identity work' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). 'Identity work' can be understood as 'people being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness' about who one is (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003, p. 1165). Arguably, identity control efforts appropriate individual insecurities by enhancing feelings of safety while making individuals feel distinctive (Casey, 1999). But such control is also exerted through amplifying ambiguities around who one is, hence stirring people into a constant search and striving for individual redefinition that serves organizational goals (e.g., through career paths) (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004). Because of insecurities individuals may have regarding their status in society at large, and work organizations in particular, their striving for self-exploration is argued to be vulnerable to co-optation by organizations.

The notion of 'aspirational control' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Costas & Kärreman, 2013) comes to mind here. Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) show how aspirational control is exerted on individuals when HRM tools (e.g., promotion rules, salaries, feedback talks, etc.) are used to regulate individuals by providing prospects of what they personally can become and make of themselves in a given work context. Muhr et al. (2013, p. 200) highlight in this regard how consulting firms work with management consultants' 'aspirations to move ahead, to become more competent and get recognition'. Typically, 'up or out' career-systems, ongoing performance

appraisals, and the articulation of organizational excellence provide an image of what individual workers may become if only they engage hard enough.

Arguably, also in classic culture management, people's work identities have been an important control target to achieve cultural cohesion. Yet, concepts such as 'identity regulation' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) highlight that it is not only compliant 'work selves' that are the contemporary target of normative control efforts. Instead, a more holistic and individualistic integration of people's work and non-work subjectivities (or even a dissolution of these categories) is at stake here. This merger of targeting not only people as compliant members of a particular organizational culture, but in addition, addressing individuals' 'non-work' identities is one of the main cornerstones for established critique of identity control, and/or 'neo-normative' (Fleming & Sturdy, 2011) control modes.

Critique of Individualized Forms of Control

A number of studies show how an individualized approach to normative control targets identities that are traditionally seen as belonging to the private (or non-work) sphere. For instance, Costas (2012) suggests that control is increasingly achieved by 'friendship cultures'. Different from classic culture management that attempt to create a 'family feeling' among employees, the various symbolic practices for establishing control here (e.g., team-building, entry rituals) have a extra-work nature such as going out for drinks with colleagues or creating spaces for 'socializing'.

In addition to a shift from 'families' to 'friendship' cultures, authors also describe a management trend according to which individual workers are increasingly invited to 'just be themselves' at work (Fleming, 2009; Fleming & Sturdy, 2011). Instead of expecting workers to comply with uniform organizational norms, expressions of authenticity, individual difference and even disobedience have become integrated in 'neo-normative' control regimes (Fleming & Sturdy, 2011). Instead of expressing loyalty and conformity, workers are expected to be entrepreneurial risk-takers, to be highly self-reliant, to express idiosyncrasies and creative sides, and overall show 'who they really are' at work. As an empirical illustration, Fleming and Sturdy (2009) describe a 'fun' work environment where cartoon characters, motivational games and parties are commonplace to support employees in unleashing their inner creative forces.

While such work settings suggest individuals have more freedom of expression, Fleming and Sturdy (2009) suggest that the contrary is the case. The active encouragement of people's individuality is argued to be merely part of a recent managerial rationale, according to which people who have the freedom to be themselves are more productive and give even more of themselves at work. Ironically,

'being oneself' turns into a new demand, as Fleming and Sturdy (2009, p. 579) highlight by a quote from their study at 'Sunray' corporation:

> Well, to "succeed" at Sunray you are basically gay, have to be really "alternative" and Sunray likes people who have different colored hair and who are into [in a sarcastic tone] "being themselves".

The quote shows that employees are confronted with the all-encompassing demands to be authentic. Some see the new rhetoric of empowerment, diversity, and workplace democracy function merely as a mechanism to enlist ever more private aspects of workers for corporate interests (e.g. Fleming & Sturdy, 2009). Overall, identity/neo-normative control is argued to work more powerfully on individuals than classic corporate culturalism as it subtly integrates the most private spheres such as friendship, sexual orientation, music taste or hobbies and forces subversion and resistance (e.g., humour, cynicism) into dominant production logics.

To sum up, I have shown how we can think of normative control as being exerted by various cultural means, and overall broadly oriented towards creating cultural coherence in a workforce on the one hand, as well as rewarding and promoting individualism on the other. The distinction between these two orientations is not always clear-cut. Yet, it helps to theoretically unpack a broad body of literature that describes various facets of normative control. Most authors discussed so far suggest normative control has become increasingly powerful to impact workers' emotions, thoughts, and conducts. Yet, to better assess this claim, we need to look more in-depth at how individuals respond to such control efforts.

Workers' Responses

When we think of responses to organizational control, we are often confronted with the view brought forward by Labour Process Theory that there is an inherent conflict between workers and capitalists/managers to structure labour relations (Braverman, 1974). Resistance then, is often viewed as an openly antagonistic action 'with a transformative anticapitalist stance' (Contu, 2008, p. 365). In line with this perspective, the dominant view in Organization Studies up to the early 1990s was that genuine resistance is 'openly expressed, organized, and class-inspired', for instance in form of strikes (Fleming, 2013, p. 476).

However, with growing awareness of normative control forms described in the previous sections, scholars began to point out that questions of resistance and compliance are highly conflated in such contexts. As various in-depths studies have shown, individuals do not merely resist openly or otherwise obey. Rather, individual

responses to normative control tend to be inherently 'ambivalent' (Kunda, 2006; Casey, 1999). Often, responses display a broad array of 'micro-acts' that can—depending on the overall context in which they are embedded—be read as actions of resistance and as actions that cement dominant power relations simultaneously (Westwood & Johnston, 2011). Daily, mundane and often spontaneous instances (Prasad & Prasad, 2000) such as humour (Butler, 2015; Westwood & Johnston, 2011), explicit over-identification and cynicism (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Collinson, 2003), or other practices like being 'carefully careless' (Prasad & Prasad, 2000) present possible micro-acts of resistance under normative control.

Scholars interested in normative control, and more generally in questions of subjectivity at work, have largely parted from the assumption that individual responses to control efforts can be captured by the notion of collective antagonistic class struggles. Instead, the effectiveness and individual impacts of contemporary control strategies are widely studied through a 'poststructural' or 'Foucauldian' lens where concerns with subjectivity, self-discipline, and the dispersed nature of discursive power take precedence (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995). Individual responses to normative control that are not straightforwardly 'resistant' or 'obedient' are typically conceptualized as identification processes. 'Identification' describes how subjects position themselves within dominant cultural scripts: the 'complex process of adaptation, subversion, and reinscription of dominant discursive forms' as Kenny (2006, p. iii) puts it. Following this idea, I will discuss now more specifically how various authors have described and evaluated such individual identification processes in relation to normative control efforts.

Inherent Ambivalence

Empirical studies of normative control and workplace subjectivity indicate that people's desires to become 'one' with the group may be one part of the story (e.g. Barker, 1993). Yet people's responses towards normative workplace demands appear overall much more varied and contradictory. Kunda's (2006, p. 21) study emphasizes 'members are never passive objects of control', they may 'accept, deny, react, reshape, retie, acquiesce, rebel, conform, and define and redefine' external cultural demands and most likely do all of this simultaneously. Other empirical studies (e.g., Costas & Kärreman, 2013) also argue that workers never fully internalize, nor fully reject, prescribed notions of 'ideal' identifications. One of Casey's (1999, p. 171) interviewees makes a telling statement:

> I would like to get the hell out of here, I would like to leave Hephaestus. . . because I would like to go into another mode, to enjoy life . But I have a commitment too, you know, here. It's real strong. . . . And I like it here, it's great. I don't know what else life would be like. . . I think a lot about leaving.

The quote reveals a strong distancing and identification with another non-corporate 'mode' of life, and yet a simultaneous 'real strong' commitment to the organization.

Such extreme ambivalence can be partly explained by incompatible demands that culture management often impose on workers (Willmott, 1993). Such contradictions are manifested, for instance, in the seductiveness of belonging to 'warm' egalitarian families and simultaneous competitive demands to be a high performer, where individuals may experience nepotism rather than objective evaluation criteria to cause career advancement (Casey, 1999). Also, the discourse around sacrificing oneself for the company is highly ambivalent. In this context, Kunda (2006) shows how 'burnout' has a double meaning, implying elevation of the individual and degradation at the same time. That is, while individuals who suffered from burnouts could on the one hand heroically indicate how they self-sacrificed themselves for the organization, burnout is also tied to being a loser, to not being in control of one's own commitments.

Dynamic Power Relations

Overall the critical/interpretivist literature on 'normative control' discussed in this chapter is fairly explicit in its aims to reflect a processual and dynamic understanding of management control. On a conceptual level, most authors discussed here agree there is no 'all-knowing master' who intentionally shapes others' behavior through luring them or forcing them to do something (Fleming & Spicer, 2003). Authors studying normative control are more interested with how 'everyday discourses, symbols and signs frame our subjectivity in ways favourable to dominant power relations.' (Fleming & Spicer, 2003, p. 160). 'Management', in that sense, is not considered *the* locus of power, at least, not from a theoretical point of view.

Drawing on a Foucault-inspired and/or 'poststructuralist' understanding of identification, many scholars such as Knights and Willmott (1989) suggest that how individuals think of themselves and continuously (re)position themselves towards the social world is the historical outcome of power-knowledge relations. Individuals are said to constantly shape themselves within dominant cultural scripts, and in so doing, also participate in the shaping of the very (discursive/social) forces by which they are surrounded and impacted (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kenny, 2006). One key idea, inspired by Foucault, is that discourses do not operate independently of individuals. 'Management' does not just 'design' discourses like 'we're a team' that automatically 'stick' to the workers. Rather, discourses are 'something in which we all collaborate, frequently unwittingly, in our day-to-day lives' (Kenny, 2006, p. 6).

Hence, the ways in which individual workers engage with discursive arrangements to which they are exposed, and how they relate those to their self-understanding have been of key interest to scholars. It is within those processes of identification that

scholars detect possibilities for individuals to distance themselves from or challenge normative control efforts. This can take various forms, but a key idea is that possibilities for subverting management control are 'at the level of meanings and subjectivities' (Kenny, 2006, p. 6). Individuals respond to management control by actively negotiating the ways in which their identities are constructed, and it is in these identity negotiations where micro-politics of resistance have the chance to unfold.

Micro Actions

As I have shown so far, authors usually do not detect straightforward affirmation or rejection of normative control efforts. Instead, individuals negotiate the ways in which their subjectivities are constructed in everyday practice, often in informal, inconspicuous ways. This can happen, amongst others, when individuals 'disidentify' (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996) with particular prescribed ideal work identities, and attempt to decouple themselves from those. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) describe the struggle of a female middle manager constructing a positive identity, in a setting where contradictory organizational discourses (e.g., being technocratic but also a culture oriented and creative organization) posed demands on her, which she rejected (e.g., facility-management tasks). The manager in this example distanced herself from such unwanted demands by actively rejecting those ascriptions as characteristic herself ('I am not a janitor), instead emphasizing her private life in a remote countryside house, and how that really described who she was.

Such forms of distancing are described also by others (e.g., Kunda, 2006). Thomas and Davies (2005) argue that individuals resist organizational demands often by drawing upon alternative subject positions, and presenting their 'self as other'. Thomas and Davies (2005, p. 699) show how individuals can 'exploit the looseness around meanings' by emphasizing other 'ideal' identities over those prescribed by the organization. One example is that of a female employee who does not accept the discourse of being an ideal committed worker to take precedence over her self-understanding as 'good mother' who is home on time, and therefore also accepts that she will be perhaps 'mediocre' in her job (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p. 699). Overall, individuals seem to be active in building 'psychological walls' and divide their self-understanding, often favoring 'private' or 'non-work' ascriptions as defining them (Collinson, 2003). This also comes through in Kunda's (2006) study where some participants report they never use work-computers at home, or explicitly refuse to talk about work over lunch (instead they discuss basketball), or where individuals fantasize about leaving the organization soon, for instance, by going back to 'teaching art' (see pp. 164-166). Such actions and rhetoric seem to provide individuals with a sense of protection from organizational constraints.

Another often-documented form of micro-resistance is that of deploying humour and cynicism (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Kunda, 2006; Westwood & Johnston, 2011), or overall more ironic, satiric or carnivalesque responses towards management control (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999). Authors (Tracy & Scott, 2006) describe how humour can play an important role for individuals in expressing superiority and independence, and overall interpret organizational expectations in self-affirming ways. Humour is often thought to function as a 'safety valve' in organizations (see Noon & Blyton 1997; Plester & Orams 2008, as cited in Butler, 2015) by giving people the opportunity to communicate discontent.

Thus, many authors have discussed micro practices as potentially subversive to normative control regimes, emphasizing dynamism rather than determinism as characteristic for the nature of unfolding of power-relations. Despite this, an overall totalizing impression prevails when reading normative control accounts, and is further enhanced by the argument that even if micro acts of resistance occur within normative control regimes, they do not radically alter or challenge those. On the contrary, individuals—alleviated by the idea that they are not 'really' obeying—continue to perform all the more in line with organizational demands.

Total Control Regardless?

Willmott's (1993) critical evaluation of the individual implications of culture management highlighted earlier echoes a common evaluation within much of the normative control literature. While Willmott (1993) acknowledges latent possibilities for micro-resistance (see Fleming, 2013), he argues that cultural control does not provide realistic options for individuals to choose between alternative value orientations. According to Willmott (1993) corporate culturalism reflects a 'continuing downward spiral of the Enlightenment project' (p. 518).

As outlined, the main tenor is that management approaches which target workers' thoughts and emotions 'could achieve the most subtle of all forms of control: moral authority' (Barely & Kunda, p. 364). Moral authority appears to not only be the most subtle but also most totalizing form of control, somehow 'tricking' people's whole personhood into alignment with organizational interests. In order to do so, corporations or 'managers' have apparently come up with ever more inventive forms of normative control. Most studies evoke the impression that complex disciplinary techniques have eradicated possible forms of resistance (Thomas & Davies, 2005) and that resistance remains 'largely unrealized (…) in the face of the onward, irresistible march of managerialism' (Mumby, p. 2005, p. 27). Those who see no escape from normative corporate grips argue importantly that 'micro actions' remain ineffective in challenging normative control regimes, or ironically perhaps even further sustain

those. This section takes a closer look at this argument and shows what is problematic about it.

The Double-Edged Nature of Resistance

The argument about micro-resistance as highlighted above is often visualized with the proverb: 'When the great lord passes, the wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts' (as cited in Mumby, 2005, p. 20). This supports the micro-acts argument that apparent acts of obedience (the bow) are often intimately connected to subtle forms of resistance (the fart). Other scholars, however, have pointed out the double-edged nature of such micro-forms of resistance. Contu (2008) argues subtle instances of expressing discontent are merely transgressive acts *within* liberal capitalist societies: 'decaf resistance' with no power to change existing ideologies (the peasant bows nevertheless). Micro-acts of resistance, according to Contu (2008), are individualized activities that do not risk anything substantial and hence do not succeed to change problematic collective ways of life.

Another widely cited author to point out the double-edged nature of workers' resistance is Fleming (see Fleming, 2009; Fleming, 2013; Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Fleming & Sturdy, 2009; 2011; Costas & Fleming, 2009). Similarly to Contu, he outlines the pitfalls of a research agenda that sees micro-acts of resistance everywhere (see Fleming, 2013). Flemings' key argument throughout his work is that contemporary corporations have increasingly co-opted the very notions (i.e., difference, autonomy, authenticity) upon which possible acts of resistance towards normative control rest.

For instance, while a 'micro-resistance' reading suggests that expression of skepticism/cynicism may shake up corporate power relations, Fleming and Spicer (2003, p. 160) view cynicism instead as a 'potentially conservative force in contemporary workplaces': 'When we dis-identify with our prescribed social role we often *still perform them*—sometimes better, ironically, than if we did identify with them.' (Fleming & Spicer, 2003, p. 160, emphasis in original). Because cynical employees may think of themselves as being autonomous, they are more likely to perform according to corporate demands nonetheless. For this argument, Fleming and Spicer (2003) draw upon Žižek (1989, as cited in Fleming & Spicer, 2003, p. 163-164) who states: 'cynical distance is just one way to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironic distance, *we are still doing them*'.

Based on Žižek's notion of ideology that indoctrinates what we do (the social activities people engage in), Fleming and Spicer argue that cynicism can lead to what Žižek calls an 'enlightened false consciousness' (Fleming & Spicer, 2003, p. 164). While people may cynically disagree based on an apparent inner source, they reinstate

and embody cultural ideologies in their practices. Ultimately, the authors argue that normative control has become ever more powerful: when individuals continue to '*act as if* they believe in the culture of the organisation' (p. 169), thus when questions of resistance and compliance are a matter of habitual practice rather than individual self-conceptions, organizations are not even dependent upon people's internalized consent. Other studies (e.g., Poulter & Land, 2008) support this argument, arguing that beyond expressions of dis-identification, what is at stake in organizational control efforts are people's performances.

Overall then, if even disengaged performances of individuals are co-opted by organizations, the options to have a meaningful work life, to experience joy, true autonomy, human dignity, or community support appear close to impossible in the corporate life depicted by Fleming and those who argue along similar lines. Against this background, one wonders what possibilities for self-realization and autonomy there are at work (see Ekman, 2010). While there may be temporary moments of freedom *through work* (e.g., individuals practicing ironic over-identification with corporate values) or freedom *around work* (e.g., leisure), Fleming (2009) is overall pessimistic that those moments will not be co-opted by corporations. The only meaningful option of resistance, increasingly practiced by employees, is for Fleming, the reduction of work time invested into the capitalist project. Fleming (2013, p. 490) argues that replacing a *politics of recognition*, where people want to be seen at work, made visible, and be integrated into decision making processes, there is a trend for people to opt out, a *trend towards 'post-recognition'*:

> The contemporary employee now rarely desires more, less, fairer or better work, but simply some kind of silent and unceremonial escape or exit for the scene of paid employment.

Because of this, Fleming (2013, p. 490) predicts that 'working time will cease to be the dominant social time'. If we come back to the ideas of cynical distancing and 'performing as if', it seems that only completely opting out and thus not 'performing' at all in the capitalist system gives individuals the chance to regain autonomy. Even if this line of reasoning is relevant and I agree there is a (small but important) trend for individuals to increasingly opt out of traditional work life, it is, in my view, problematic to equate 'performance' with compliance. As my study of Communa shows, different nuances and effects are implied by such performances.

Performances: More Than Compliance

From the literature discussed above, I get the impression that authors in the normative control field – despite the theoretical post-structuralist emphasis on dynamic identification processes – regard organizational control still as a fairly dualist

matter. Even if management is *theoretically* not considered the locus of power (but one out of many), authors studying normative control still frame 'managers' as key actors in exerting control, and 'subordinates' as the ones who respond to such control. Such responses are often evaluated in terms of whether *either* 'true' resistance and autonomy is achieved, *or* whether compliance and control ultimately dominates (e.g., Fleming & Sturdy, 2009; Kunda, 2006; Townley, 1993).

However, as Ekman (2010) points out, the categories by which control efforts are evaluated appear too absolute. At times they entail a romanticized notion of untainted freedom, and a readiness to adapt predefined normative positions, where instrumentality (by the corporation/managers) and authenticity (of the employees/subordinates) are juxtaposed, leading ultimately to a reproduction of 'usual suspects' (Ekman, 2010). Ekman (2010) challenges dualist assumptions and shows in her ethnographic study that an analysis of organizational power relations *simultaneously* entails contradictory aspects like 'authenticity' and 'instrumentality' or 'vulnerability' and 'dominance' for *every involved party*. More concretely put, she argues that we need to be open to the possibility that even management may be vulnerable to the ways in which employees strategically use and co-opt organizational discourses. Also, with regards to cultural control, Ekman (2010, p. 24, emphasis in original) points out that workers may experience '*both* control *and* increased maneuverability' within normative control regimes and that even if individuals' emotions are co-opted by normative control it does not mean that they are therefore 'not real'.

Also others reconceptualize the dualist separation between the resistance and control. According to Mumby (2005), neither the 'bow' nor the 'fart' should be studied as separate units, but rather how they 'intersect in the moment to moment to produce complex and often contradictory dynamics' (Mumby, 2005, p. 21). This argument is supported by Ashcraft (2005, p. 72) who argues that 'everyone who participates in discursive activity engages in control and resistance, sometimes simultaneously, and that participants derive their differential capacities to do so from their fluctuating positions vis-à-vis multiple discourses.' Authors studying, for instance, the role of humour in relation to organizational power (e.g., Westwood & Johnston, 2011; Butler, 2015) also point out that humour has a 'double-edged' capacity. It does not work in *either* resistive/subversive *or* conservative ways, but tends to be both at the same time.

Tying into the line of reasoning of the above authors who criticize overly dualist assumptions about organizational control dynamics, I want to return to the prominent argument made by Fleming and Sturdy (2009; 2011) as well as in Kunda's (2006) account of normative control. That is, the argument that workers, even if they disagree or disidentify with corporate cultures, still *perform as if* they agree (Poulter & Land, 2008) or engage in dominant corporate performances (Kunda, 2006). Overall,

such performance is evaluated as compliance. However, in my view it makes sense to open up such conception of 'performance as compliance', by asking: Are the ways in which individuals perform really the same? Does only 'management' write the scripts for social performances or are those more open? Is there no autonomy in acting? How do 'control performances' unfold in social interaction? Do individuals use their performance perhaps for their own benefit, for instance to strategically impact managers?

In my view, approaching normative control through the notion of performances as Kunda (2006) does in his seminal study is promising. A key idea here is that control emerges as humans *interact* (e.g., in everyday-life, in rituals), and the goal is to study such interactions and the social frames that guide them as closely as possible. Yet, the way in which such interactions tend to be studied with regards to cultural control appears overall too rigid, seeing 'management' as the sole or at least the main writer of the scripts/frames that outline how individuals should perform (Kunda, 2006). In many empirical studies, individual workers who are contrasted to 'management' are only left with the responsibility to 'respond' and 'make sense' of social frames or discourses. Yet, performances, even if they are 'twice behaved behavior' (Schechner, 2013) and therefore contain a high degree of predictability that arguably enables normative control, *also* entail moments of novelty as individuals come together in never exactly the same way as before.

Acknowledging the importance of much of the literature of normative control from a post-structural perspective, yet also noticing a broad dualist understanding of control in work conducted in this tradition, my study returns to the basic assumption of dynamism. Hence, I want to focus especially on how we can empirically study control as a dynamic interactive phenomenon. I will do so by focusing on how control unfolds through individual performances in social life, rather than solely studying how individuals interpret or make sense of control discourses in the first place (even though the individual interpretation of and positioning towards discourses can be part of individual performances). Drawing upon authors such as George Herbert Mead and Eving Goffman in an interactionist tradition, I suggest that going back to classic ideas about 'symbolic interactions' (Mead) and 'performances' (Goffman) which actually preface much of contemporary post-structuralist accounts, provides a promising way to broaden existing literature of normative control, stressing the importance of non-managerial actions and actors in the picture.

Chapter 4 – Recognition as Emerging in Interactions

As outlined in the previous chapter, my ambition is to overcome absolute and dualist assumptions in the study of normative control, as well as to understand how discipline and individual autonomy can emerge simultaneously (possibility even as the result of the same interaction). In order to achieve this, I focus on how normative control is collectively accomplished by the different parties involved in an interaction. My interest in the practical accomplishment of control ties into recent critiques that highlight even when workers 'disidentify' with managerial demands in organizations, they still *perform* in line with those (Fleming, 2009; Fleming & Spicer, 2003). In my view, this argument is made a bit too quickly and it is important to explore more carefully what such performances exactly entail. Differently put, I suggest inquiring into how different participants perform in interactions that follow an explicit intent to manage volunteers by recognition. The main goal of this chapter is to work out the conceptual grounding upon which an interactional approach to control rests. To do so, I draw primarily, but not exclusively, upon the thought of two key interaction theorists, George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman.

This chapter is structured as follows: in the first section I return and problematize Kunda's reading of interactionist theorists, which allows me to argue for a 'return' to interactionism in the second part. In Part Three I then discuss Mead's (1934) work on interactionism, and follow this up by drawing links between Mead and some more contemporary theorists who discuss the paradoxes of recognition. Then I discuss interactions as dramaturgical performances, based on a reading of Goffman's interactionism, and finally conclude by suggesting the 'script' as an important linking concept.

Kunda and Interactionism

This section argues that social interactions are a key unit of analysis to better understand the effects that MbR as a form of normative control has on individuals, as well as on broader organizational dynamics. By situating my inquiry within a

scholarly tradition that explores social interaction, I propose that important insights about both recognition and control (and control by recognition for that matter) can be gained by studying 'the "face-to-face" domain of dealings between embodied individuals' (Jenkins, 1996, p. 70). Kunda's (2006) work introduced in the previous chapter is a natural starting point here, as he draws heavily on an interactionist perspective.

Kunda (2006) argues that the workings of normative control can best be understood by investigating how direct interactions—such as speeches, workshops, meetings, or parties—between management and subordinates unfold as 'presentational rituals' (p. 93). The author (Kunda, 2006, p. 22) writes that

> the managerial search for normative control sets the stage for a definitional drama played out between the imposed and received images and experiences of appropriate membership. To understand and evaluate normative control, it is necessary to grasp the underlying experiential transaction that lies at its foundation: not only the ideas and actions of managers, but the responses of members.

The quote highlights that normative control can best be grasped by understanding the *interplay* between images and experiences 'sent out' and 'received'. Kunda thus suggests that normative control can be properly understood if the complex communication process, the way in which individuals act and act back towards each other, is followed carefully. Arguably, researchers should not only ask which texts or discourses frame individual experience, but engage with the behavioral/verbal responses that relate to management action (Kunda, 2006).

In addition, Kunda (2006) suggests that social interactions unfold according to certain predefined patterns that tell us more about the unfolding of normative control. Drawing on Erving Goffman, Kunda suggests that interactions such as 'top-management presentations', amongst others, develop 'as a sequence of stylized stages' (p. 107). If we stay with top-management presentations, the first stage involves a mode where people prepare for the main act. It involves how people sit in the audience, waiting for the main speaker to appear and run the show. In the meantime, they engage in light conversations, some chitchat, gossip. In this stage, the organizational grip of people to perform in line with an ideal employee character is weaker (Kunda, 2006). People can engage in light banter with each other, and express irony, mockery towards the event (Kunda, 2006).

As soon as the main act—that is the top-manager's speech—begins, all participants act closer together in making the control-ritual work (Kunda, 2006). Kunda describes how the manager's speech unfolds in clearly predictable patterns: the rules about who speaks when and for how long are clear and respected by everyone, and the audience knows their time for (skeptical) comments during the 'question and answer period'

(p. 99). Everyone, not only the speaker, is arguably on stage and knows what kind of performance is expected. For instance, the audience knows they should look interested; people nod, take notes and (pretend to) listen carefully (Kunda, 2006). Lastly, '[t]he final stage of the event is the post-meeting—a transition from ritual to routine, a return, perhaps, from the sacred to the secular' (p. 101).

In the above description of a top-manager's presentation, Kunda suggests, based on Goffman (Goffman, 1959), that normative control can work because social life unfolds according to dramaturgical rules. Workers are actors who 'voluntarily follow the rules for appropriate role performance' (p. 107), mostly embracing ideal worker roles, yet also distancing themselves from those. Kunda (2006, p. 107) suggests that people only 'perform' out of character if this is still part of a broader script:

> [R]ole distancing, for the most part, is subtly, playfully, or humorously expressed within recognized and mostly self-imposed boundaries that protect the ritual frame and the expression of role embracement form overt challenges or open contradiction.

In that sense, Kunda (2006) makes a very similar argument to that of Fleming and Spicer (2003) that individuals, even if they may disagree with cultural norms imposed on them, still tend to perform in *as if* they agree. Kunda (2006) sees individual workers as highly self-conscious and controlled actors who participate in larger corporate performances. Hence, even resistance becomes part of a 'balanced performance' where actions are largely pre-defined by existing social scripts (Kunda, 2006).

While I agree with Kunda that exploring the unfolding of interactions according to certain predefined patterns is fruitful, I find his account to be too management centered. In Kunda's account, normative control is accomplished in 'mini-dramas' where '*members acting as agents for corporate interests* . . . use various techniques . . . to suppress or redefine dissent, silence the deviants, and gain the participants' support' (p. 155/156, emphasis added). The problem is that Kunda conceptualizes primarily management representatives as those who actively shape the ritual framework upon which everyone else acts. In my view, this is a limited application. Kunda draws upon Goffman and the interactionist angle in a limited way, acknowledging on the one hand 'the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions' (Goffman, 1959; p. 15), yet, assigning 'management' such a key role that 'reciprocity' is silenced.

Return to Interactionist Authors

As I suggest in this chapter, retrieving some of the original ideas of the interactionist angle and staying close to some of its basic premises is promising when studying

MbR. It assists us in transcending the manager-managed binary, and instead allows for studying the effects of normative control efforts as the result of a collective accomplishment. Different from prominent normative control studies that tend to look at managerial discourses on the one hand, and workers' individual responses on the other, the interactionist study of control that I propose to retrieve here focuses on the collective elements of social performances. In addition, Goffman (1959) also emphasizes that social performances are not 'fake'. As I develop later, this insight helps us to gain a better picture of people's ambivalent performances in relation to MbR, and to evaluate role distancing beyond the argument that it is 'only' performed without any 'substance' to it.

As there is a broad body of literature in management studies that deals eloquently with identification processes, we can ask why I suggest returning to ideas formulated about the self and society 50 to 80 years ago. Key ideas of an interactionist stance, like the social nature of human experience are arguably also reflected in current literature normative control and identification inspired by post-structuralism (see Chapter Three). Nevertheless, I see advantages of an interactionist tradition in providing a pragmatic, action-oriented approach to study human meaning-making and its symbolic dimension by drawing on concrete social situations. In responding to critique towards such an interactionist angle, I want to strengthen this point first, before I then elaborate on key authors and relate their thoughts to my study of MbR.

Because of its focus on local meaning making, interactionist authors have been criticized for being too micro- and meaning-oriented, neglecting broader material concerns (see Kenny, Whittle, & Willmott, 2011). Another critique is that interactionism does not foster 'an understanding of broader social and cultural patterns' and makes it difficult to critique social structures and power relations (Prasad, 2005, p. 27). The tradition has also been criticized for overemphasizing the active, rational, and self-determined character of humans (Snow, 2001). But Mead's and Goffman's elaborations on the 'generalized other' and 'face-saving' activities, actually provide well-argued account of how social scripts and values powerfully impact individuals.

Thus, while some argue that interactionist authors like Mead and Goffman are too relativist/constructionist and hence do not allow for the issuing of social critique towards broader cultural patterns, this is not how I read them. Goffman (1967, p. 45), for instance, states:

> Universal human nature is not a very human thing. By acquiring it, the person becomes a kind of construct, built up . . . from moral rules that are impressed upon him from without. These rules, when followed, determine the evaluation he will make of himself and of his fellow-participants in the encounter, the distribution of his feelings, and the kinds of practices he will employ to maintain a specific and obligatory kind of ritual equilibrium.

The quote demonstrates how Goffman is well aware of how normative interaction orders may restrain individuals in their freedom. It suggests there is something inhumane about being pressed into social orders. The author argues that individuals' self-perceptions and actions are always directed towards their social environment, with the goal to impact people's reactions towards oneself. In so doing, individuals, in Goffman's (1958, 1967) view, strive for recognition, conceptualized as the intersubjectively acquired positive value of oneself. In that sense, Goffman's work allows the researcher to evaluate and also critique managerial practices that seek to shape experiences of recognition to impact people's inner worlds.

To engage in such social critique, it is important to clarify another point. Goffman (1959) calls the actions that individuals undertake to achieve such positive social evaluation 'performances'. Hence, there is a purposeful element to action, which opens the possibility for performances to be 'fake'; merely directed towards achieving social recognition. But even though Goffman's vocabulary may evoke the impression that there is nothing 'real' or 'essential' about how people perform, this is in my view a limited reading of the author. Goffman emphasizes, at different points, how often people do not 'perform' consciously, but rather habitually. In his view, it lies in the nature of being human to strive for social approval (see also Kärreman, 2001). This points to a 'depth' element in Goffman's constructionist framework. If 'the very structure of the self can be seen in terms of how we arrange for such performances' (Goffman, 1959, p. 252) and if those performances are directed towards gaining social approval, people are arguably involved in those performances with 'real' feelings.

Hence, in performing, people do not only 'fake' to be this or that person, even though pretending can be part of their performance. Instead, performances of self have an inherently moral character. They form the basis for moral claims towards a person's social environment. As Goffman (1959, p. 13) puts it, a performance places a 'moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect'. Performances are thus dependent on others, and emotional distress for the performing individual actor can arise, if their performances are disrupted or shaped in particular ways. This insight gives us the possibility to critique cultural patterns or management practices like MbR from an interactionist angle, especially when those practices impact the performances of individual workers in ways that are injurious or stressful for them.

My reading of Goffman could be critiqued by pointing out that if we follow the constructionist idea that there are no pre-given, inner, or essential selves, we cannot speak of emotions or states of being as given as I partly do in this text. Instead, we see individual responses to normative control as 'discoursive positioning', as 'a matter of claims, not characters' that serve to defend a 'self-referential truth, which maintains an ongoing position of status' (Ybema et al., 2009, p. 306). While I largely ascribe to

this constructionist view, I find critique of 'essentialism' that we encounter in many post-structualist/constructionist accounts of identity sometimes limiting. Many current identity/control studies put the researcher in a distant position for evaluating what people tell them or how people perform. For instance, study subjects *are* not 'happy', but *present* themselves in light of a particular (desirable) emotion.

While it is important to be careful about claims of study subjects, I also want to avoid a stance that suggests there is nothing behind what people say or do – that it is all mere image. Ybema et al. (2009, p. 314) state in this regard that 'amongst those "imagined selves" . . . lie imaged working self-conceptions that may help social actors to interpret and evaluate the full range of their current, former, and future actions and to express their hopes, fears, anxieties, pride and shame'. This quote is interesting, because it points to Goffman's argument that all performing places inevitably moral claims towards others and that there is always more than pretense in performing. Of course, will never be able to determine exactly what part of people's performances is 'real' and 'fake'. But still, Goffman's concept of performing as I read it, gives me the possibility to better understand what is 'in' there for people when performing and what effects (e.g., distressing, self-enhancing) normative control efforts have on individuals.

As I will argue in this chapter, an interactionist approach can thus be an important aid in making mechanisms of normative control visible, while simultaneously highlighting the dynamic and autonomous nature of human life, reflected in Mead's (1934) figure of the 'I'. In that sense, interactionism provides a synthesis where self and society, autonomy and social control, authenticity and pretense can be understood as 'different kinds of abstraction from the same phenomenon' (Jenkins 1996, p. 28). In drawing upon Mead and Goffman, I do not claim great novelty, but rather attempt to follow a comparatively down-to-earth, empirical and action-oriented methodology to overcome dualist schemes when studying normative control.

Selves and Society: Mead's Interactionism

Staying close to some basic ideas about social identification discussed in the previous chapter on normative control, I show now how Mead (1934) provides an account of how 'selves' and 'society' are inevitably entangled. Arguably, his insights preface much of the contemporary debate around subjectivities at work. Reviving some of his key concepts (e.g., about the generalized other, the 'me' and 'I'), I consider how 'selves' are created in symbolic communication, and what role recognition plays in there.

Social and Symbolic Communication

Symbolic or social interactionism is often described as a distinct approach to interpretivist scholarship that highlights how meaning is created in the interplay between individuals and their social context (Prasad, 2005). Much of the research in the SI-tradition is based upon the thought of George Herbert Mead (1934). One of his central arguments was that human inner experience and conduct had to be understood as dependent upon a 'dynamic whole' of society and its members:

> We attempt, that is, to explain the conduct of the individual in terms of the organized conduct of the social group . . . For social psychology, the whole (society) is prior to the part (the individual) . . . and the part is explained in terms of the whole . . . The social act is not explained by building it up out of stimulus plus response; it must be taken as a dynamic whole—as something going on—no part of which can be considered or understood by itself. (Mead, 1934, p. 7)

Dynamic social interactions, in Mead's view, precede the development of individual reflection (about self and others), and in order to understand human conduct and self-formation, we need to study what these interactions symbolize for and communicate to the individual (Mead, 1934). Social interaction, simply put, denotes that humans 'take one another into account . . . as they go along' (Charon, 2009, p. 140). From the beginning of their life, humans are embedded in social relations (e.g., parent-child-relations), and there is always mutual influence as humans act, and act-back towards one another (Mead, 1934). Imagine if people were to attempt to escape social relations by choosing to live on a deserted island. Even in that case, their reflections, their inner dialogues, their decisions, and actions could not be isolated from a broader social whole that forms the background against which such a decision has been made.

Mead conceptualizes humans as reflective beings, who—unlike animals—have the ability to engage in symbolic communication by using and understanding what Mead (1934) calls 'significant gestures'. His argument is that various organisms (including animals) have the ability to communicate through gestures that express certain needs and states of being such as aggression, fear, attachment or joy. These gestures, in turn, prompt instinctive responses by the counterpart (e.g., the barking of a dog during a dog fight may lead another dog to bark back, or the cry of an infant prompts parents to make calming sounds with their voice). The gesture, in its most basic form, is understood as an act that expresses needs, impulses, or emotions and that requires response (Joas, 1997).

Mead suggests that in addition to such instinctual response, humans have the distinct ability to interpret and use gestures in such a way that they not only evoke instinctual responses (as in the examples above), but that they express an *idea*: 'When, now, that

gesture means this idea behind it and it arouses that idea in the other individual, then we have a significant symbol' (Mead, 1934, p. 45). According to Mead (1934), it is a distinct human quality to be able to take 'the attitude of the other' in relation to certain gestures (p. 47). Humans have the ability to understand the symbolic meaning of a gesture by adopting the attitudes of their interaction partners, by producing thoughts, values, feelings of others within oneself. As Honneth (1995, p. 73) puts it in his reading of Mead: 'I can become aware of what my gesture signifies for the other only by producing the other's reply in myself.' Thus the significant gesture is assumed to arouse, more or less, the same response in oneself as it does in others. Significant gestures—especially spoken language—make a particularly elaborate type of human communication possible (Mead, 1934).

Non-essential and Reflexive Selves

Such communication involving taking on the other's attitudes does not only take place between, but also within embodied individuals who develop their self-understanding in social interaction. Mead (1934, p. 135) states:

> The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process.

As paraphrased by Jenkins (1996) the self in Mead's understanding denotes an 'individual's reflexive sense of her or his own particular identity, *constituted vis à vis* others in terms of similarity and difference, without which we would not know who we are' (p. 29/39).

A central aspect to understanding self-formation in Mead's sense, is that 'the self has the characteristic that it is an object to itself' (Mead, 1934, p. 136). Individuals, just as they interpretatively objectify the world around them (i.e., assign meaning towards objects, make sense of them), have the ability to objectify themselves. The idea of objectifying something or someone in an interactionist sense reflects a hermeneutic understanding. It does not imply, for instance, that by 'objectifying' someone, he or she is made 'thing-like' and robbed of its agency. It rather implies that through objectification, humans turn the world around them into objects of understanding—they give meaning to whatever they encounter (Blumer, 1969). In that sense anything—things, ideas, people—can become objects through the ways in which people 'attend to, distinguish, define, and act towards' these things, ideas, or people (Prus, 1996, p. 11).

Mead (1932) argues that humans have the reflexive ability to not only objectify the world around them, but to objectify themselves. Arguably, this is possible, because

people can turn meaningful communication, the communication through symbolic gestures, inwards. For instance, we hear ourselves speaking as we speak to others. Thus in interacting with others, individuals also address themselves, and through this addressing, create a subjective sense of self:

> For he [in Mead, the individual is male…] enters his own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behavior in which both he and they are involved. (Mead, 1943, p. 138).

Simply put, through inward communication, individuals develop a sense of selfhood. The process of inward communication involves when we see ourselves through established social categories (e.g., a project leader, a grandmother, etc.) and when we develop emotions towards the gaze of the world upon us (e.g., love, hate, rejection of self).

Social Selves: Mead's 'me'

As self-formation is essentially social, individuals do not develop a fixed sense of self. The important point in an interactionist tradition is that 'selves' are the outcome of ongoing re-definition, as individuals encounter others. Simply put: through internal communication, we take others' views about 'who we are' into our self-view, and reflexively accommodate our self-understanding respectively. In this process, Mead (1934) conceptualizes two different 'phases' or aspects of self-formation, which are represented in his widely known distinction between the 'me' and the 'I' (Mead, 1934, p. 192).

The 'me' is best explained as the socialized self, created through the internalization of social attitudes. Mead elaborates on such a human socialization process where one learns 'to conceive of oneself from the normative perspective of one's neighbor' (Honneth, 1995, p. 77). Mead argues that humans engage in 'taking the role of the other' (Mead, 1934, p.152), initially as children in a playful way, for example, in playing a patient, a mother, a teacher, or a policeman. When engaging in such a role, the child internalizes the attitudes of the respective role (the child sees him/herself as, let's say mother, in taking on assumed thoughts or emotions), and momentarily fulfills action-expectations connected to the role (e.g., feeling love for the doll that is put to bed). However, playful role-taking is only a sporadic, and non-binding, and partial activity.

It is only in the 'game', with a larger number of people involved, that role-taking becomes organized, and as such allows a 'full' social self to develop (Mead, 19934, p. 152). In a game, an individual 'must know what everyone else is going to do in order to carry out his own play' (Mead, 1934, p. 151). The game thus 'requires the maturing child to represent the action-expectations of all of his or her playmates, in order to be able to perceive his or her own role within the functionally organized action-context' (Honneth, 1995, p. 77). The community or social group that forms the context in which a particular range of normative action-orientations exists is called 'the generalized other' by Mead (1934, p. 154). It is this generalized other—the world as we know it—through which we understand ourselves and the 'me' as conscious about who s/he is and how to act develops.

The 'me' then is a socially shaped and controlled self. It is, as it were, a response to a normative interaction order, in which social rituals work as mechanisms for regulating the individual (Goffman, 1967). Mead's 'me' helps us to think about why individuals would be receptive towards MbR as a normative control effort. Normative control arguably draws upon highly symbolic and 'significant gestures' (e.g., verbal praise, job titles, recognition ceremonies) that communicate to the individual a 'general' view of desirable socials roles (e.g., the hardworking networker, the altruist). Because it is in the nature of humans to conceive of themselves as part of a larger action-context, and because humans are never *not* assigning social meaning to the world round them, the active construction of 'ideal selves' can present a powerful mode of control.

Dynamic Selves: Mead's 'I'

This view of the self, however, raises the question if we are just following social scripts that suggest to us how to think and feel in social situations about others or ourselves? What about individualized responses that bring elements of surprise and novelty into the interaction? Important here is how Mead (1934, p. 198) conceptualizes the other aspect of self-formation—the 'I' as complementary to the 'me':

> In a society there must be a set of common organized habits of response found in all, but the way in which individuals act under specific circumstances gives rise to all of the individual differences which characterize the different persons. The fact that they have to act in a certain common fashion does not deprive them of originality. The common language is there, but a different use of it is made in every new contact between persons; the element of novelty in the reconstruction takes place through the reaction of the individuals to the group to which they belong.

Thus, the attitudes that an individual takes on are gathered from a social group, but in the process of organizing those attitudes within him/herself, the individual can give them their own, and perhaps a novel, expression. The figure of the 'I' helps Mead to

conceptualize such an individualized response. The 'I', according to Mead, is the very response to the organized attitudes that the 'me' has taken on by others:

> The 'I' . . . never can exist as an object in consciousness, but the very conversational character of our inner experience, the very process of replying to one's own talk, implies an 'I' behind the scenes who answers to the gestures, the symbols, that arise in consciousness . . . The self-conscious, actual self in social intercourse is the objective 'me' or 'me's' with the process of response continually going on and implying a *fictitious* 'I' always out of sight of himself' (Mead: selected writings, p. 141, quoted in Honneth, 1995, p.75, emphasis added)

In that sense, the 'I' is meant to signify the aspect of human self that is responsible for the impulsive, creative, and novel response an individual can bring into an interaction. It is, as it were, the inner interaction partner of the 'me'.

Mead's splitting of the self into the phases of the 'I' and 'me' has been critiqued for giving rise to speculative essentialist claims about the human mind as something that is there as a distinct and concrete entity (Potter et al., 1984, p. 159, as cited in Kenny et al., 2011). But Mead (1934) is very explicit that cognitive abilities develop as individuals interact. Overall, the 'I', as described by Mead above, cannot be glimpsed as something discrete, because it precedes the consciousness that one has of oneself as something 'fictitious'. Empirically, I can therefore not say, a person's 'real' or 'inner' self is of this or that nature. This is far too simple, and the point made by Mead is exactly that the 'I' cannot be grasped since whatever is made 'graspable' is again socialized and thus a response that has already taken the 'others' into account, and that therefore reflects the 'me' side of the self.

Because of its empirical inapplicability, some critics (e.g., Charon, 2009) also dismiss the 'I' as too 'fluffy'. But it is nevertheless productive to regard the 'I' as a theoretical construct that helps Mead to denote the possibility of individual originality. Despite the forms in which we are pressed, the action-expectations that are outlined for us, and the social character of human nature, there is arguably something 'nonsocial' in everyone, something that is responsible for creating change, surprises, perhaps resistance. In that sense, the 'I' is a thought figure that helps to think of self-formation as a dynamic process, as a full embedding of the 'self' in others, without being deprived of its originality. In my view, it is a concept that can guide empirical analysis, even if it cannot be applied empirically. That sounds contradictory, but I don't think it is. For me it means staying humble to the idea that social life is inherently open, even when we study and describe mechanisms of control that suggest there are defining social forces.

Overall, Mead demonstrates how an active self can only be thought within social expectations, and in that sense how the tension between 'the internalized collective will' and people's 'claims to individuation' is inherent in an interactionist-perspective

(Honneth, 1995, p. 82). This tension that is argued to lie at the heart of self-formation (expressed in Mead's figure of the 'I' and 'me') translates to questions of control and resistance (as mutually constitutive), and is also reflected in the theme of recognition.

Paradoxes of Recognition

To recap, both Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959) argue that human conduct is guided by the striving for social worth through adhering to a normative interaction order. Paradoxically, individuals then may strive to be unique and individuated, in order to become a member of a given community—both being important sources of recognition. The purpose of this section is to discuss this paradox further, by drawing on some contemporary theorists of recognition, notably Axel Honneth and Jessica Benjamin.

Intersubjective Dynamics of Recognition

In drawing a parallel between Mead's creative and adaptive phases (the 'I' and 'me'), both of which are part of self-creation, Honneth (1995, p. 87) theorizes intersubjective sources and dynamics of recognition:

> For it is only within the horizon of these commonly shared values that one can conceive oneself as a person who is distinguished from all others in virtue of a contribution to society's life-process that is recognized as unique.

Thus Honneth explains recognition as being dependent on the individual's ability to take on the generalized attitudes of the others in interaction as a *basis* for distinguishing themselves as biographically individualized subjects.

To make this connection, Honneth (1995) builds on Mead's (1934) argument that humans can only develop a complete sense of self when they are able to perform in light of the group norms. This is what makes them socially accepted. The source of recognition, in that sense, is the individual's belonging to a community. Taking the attitudes of others, the process that also constructs the 'me' side of the self, gives the individual 'the dignity of being a member in the community and enjoying the? same rights as others' (Mead as cited in Honneth, 1995, p. 79). In this form of recognition, however, a human is only one out of many. They are recognized for *being part* of rather than for *sticking out*. According to Honneth, such belonging is an important step (a 'solid and general basis'), to develop a positive sense of self that is based on 'being a particular kind of person' (Honneth, 1995, p. 79).

The second aspect of recognition is 'dependent on the level of individualization of the traits or abilities in terms of which one is affirmed by one's partners in interaction' (Honneth, 1995, p. 79). Honneth (1995, p. 81) links this individual type of recognition to Mead's concept of the 'I', to its creative potential in identity formation:

> Whereas the ['me'] harbours the social norms in terms of which one controls one's conduct in accordance with society's expectations, the ['I'] is the collection site for all the inner impulse.

The urges of the I, in Honneth's (1995) reading of Mead, create 'opportunities for individual self-realization' (p. 86), because 'the existence of the 'me' forces one to fight, in the interest of one's 'I', for new forms of societal recognition' (p. 82). Simply put: in realizing they are performing and seeing their selves through the eyes of others, individuals may be 'shaken up', wanting to be valued outside of such norms. In my reading, Honneth (1995) argues with Mead (1934) that individuals strive for difference, even superiority, in relation to others. Mead (1934, p. 205, emphasis added) states that belonging to a community

> is not enough for us [human beings], since we want to recognize ourselves in our differences from other persons. We have, of course, a specific economic and social status that enables us to distinguish ourselves . . . We may come back to manners of speech, and dress, to a capacity for remembering, to this, that, and the other thing—but always to something in which we *stand out above people*.

Thus, humans, according to Mead, have an inner urge to establish difference, often in terms of superiority, which can only be established in comparison with others. Such superiorities may be 'very trivial in character', perhaps even childish (Mead 1934, p. 205). Humans, according to Mead (1934) 'take a great deal of pain to cover up' their satisfaction derived from superiority (p. 205), or 'save face' as Goffman (1967) would say. It is the realization of such superiorities, in addition to—and in relation to—a general sense of communal belonging that makes full 'self-realization' according to Mead (1934), and Honneth (1995) possible. Thus, in the same way that the 'I' and 'me' side of the self are complementary, so is recognition always two sided, rooted in both a person's social belonging, and the urge to stand out and be unique. People's striving for recognition can thus be both a key element of societal integration when individuals conform with existing recognition criteria, as well as an element for disrupting existing social orders when individuals claim individualized recognition that do not align with those criteria (Voswinkel, 2001).

It is not always possible to translate these ideas one-on-one into empirical situations. But they help us to think of these situations and to hopefully explain them better. Take Annika from my introductory chapter as an example. Against the background of *being part of* the recognition event that communicated to her (through significant

gestures such as the clapping of the audience) that she fulfilled normative expectations about how esteemed individuals should be (e.g., engaged, altruistic, but also somehow needy of grandiose praise), Annika apparently formed a view of herself as not needing this to feel affirmed. She claimed difference for herself by telling me later: 'For me, it doesn't have to be such a big and explicit recognition. Even though, I do believe that there are also many people for whom it is very important to be placed at the center of attention.' Apparently, Annika established her sense of uniqueness (and arguably superiority) based on *not being* one of those altruistic volunteers who were happy about public acknowledgment. Probably both knowing she belonged, as well as fighting for independence from such belonging, were sources of self-worth and self-affirmation in Annika's case. Interestingly, while Annika communicated that she was different in terms of not needing public praise, demonstrating modesty and rejection of superficial recognition was something that most of my interviewees (about one third) displayed. Ironically, what gave individuals the sense of being unique and differentiated could also be seen as their efforts to belong to an altruistic volunteering community where modesty seemed to be an important value and normative orientation.

The point is that belonging and difference, just as the 'I' or the 'me' aspect of self-formation, can be perhaps taken apart analytically, but empirically this is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Also it is impossible to judge what, in the end, 'really' affirmed individuals. Nevertheless, by discussing ideas such as difference and belonging in relation to my material, we get a better understanding of how management by recognition worked, and how respective interaction dynamics shaped the way in which targeted recognition expressions can become self-affirmative for individuals, and *simultaneously* control their conduct. After all, Annika went on stage and performed, in line with the protocol of the event.

Studying and Evaluating Paradoxes

From the above, we can see that paradoxes appear to be an inherent part of social dynamics in relation to the creation of selves, in relation to recognition experiences, in relation to power, and therefore also in relation to 'Management by Recognition'. This reflects much of the insight gained from normative control studies, that individuals appear to feel and behave in inherently 'ambivalent' ways towards contradictory discursive demands that are established by normative control efforts (Casey, 1999; Kunda, 2006). Willmott (1993) argues that true self-realization/freedom cannot coexist with cultural homogeneity/belonging. Thus, much of the moral critique issued towards normative control is rooted in a problematization of apparent tensions which are created by these 'soft' management practices.

According to Willmott, instrumental/managerial goals behind normative control makes it impossible to resolve or alleviate these tensions.

Where managerialist authors described in Chapter Two suggest that a 'win-win' scenario is possible in MbR, critics of normative control see instrumentalism, control, and cultural homogeneity win over authenticity/self-realization. Thus, prominent critical management authors (see Chapter Three) describe normative control as a zero-sum game. Workers tend to be the 'losers'. But when we follow Mead's propositions about intersubjective dynamics of self-creation or recognition, apparent tensions (e.g., between the 'I' and the 'me', between belonging and difference) appear inherent to social relations. So what to do with this insight: defend a 'win-win' or 'zero-sum' scenario?

I find Jessica Benjamin's thoughts in this regard inspiring. Benjamin (1995, p. 37) argues from an intersubjective psychoanalytic perspective that recognition processes are fundamentally paradoxical: 'at the very moment of realizing our own independent will, we are dependent upon another to recognize it'. Benjamin does not suggest that something like true self-assertion or a full resolution of this paradox is possible or desirable. Rather, she says that recognition needs to be thought of as an experience, a process that necessarily entails a '*constant tension* between recognizing the other and asserting the self' (p. 38, emphasis in original). Overall, she argues that humans need recognition, but she does not want to idealize this relationship. Therefore Benjamin (1995, p. 23) embraces paradoxes and makes them part of her conceptualization of recognition:

> Examining the early struggle for recognition—which includes failure, destruction, aggression, even when it is working—ought to show us something about our relation to ideals: mutual recognition is meaningful as an ideal only when it is understood as the basis for struggle and negotiation of conflict . . . when its impossibility and the striving to attain it are adequately included in the concept.

Benjamin suggests that struggles of individuals when striving for recognition are not contradictory to recognition. Struggles for recognition can create pleasure, and highlight connectedness to the other, thus creating painful and fulfilling experiences for individuals simultaneously. All those experiences are part of the striving for recognition, and the goal is not to determine an ultimate ideal state (i.e., real/full recognition) where this is achieved (Benjamin, 1995). When studying recognition MbR, I am thus not interested in absolute ideal states (e.g., when is MbR fully achieving or completely dismissing its humanist goals), but rather the paradoxical social processes towards self-affirmation. In that sense, studying paradoxes forms an important part of my study, to better understand the nature of my study phenomenon. Yet, it remains an open empirical rather than a theoretical question to assess when and how tensions in MbR create control effects in social performances

that are distressing for individuals. To engage in such empirical endeavor, I unpack now how particularly Goffman's dramaturgical angle to organizational life helps me to access social performances at Communa.

Goffman and Dramaturgical Performances

When linking control and an interactionist framing, I earlier discussed Kunda's (2006) study that locates normative control in the pre-defined nature of organizational life, showing how both 'management' as well as 'employees' engage in ongoing theatric practices. Exploring such pre-defined and ritualized aspects of social life creates understanding of normative control because those aspects provide insights into a larger interaction order (Goffman, 1959). Moreover, focusing on the expressive dimension of social action can help in seeing the logic of different interactions (e.g., the need to portray oneself as a person of a particular kind rather than conflicting interests in capitalism) (Voswinkel, 2001).

A number of scholars in management studies have worked with a dramaturgical angle to study organizational life (Boje, et al.; 2004; Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Mangham, 1995; Nissley, Taylor, & Houden, 2004; Schreyögg & Höpfl, 2004). They often apply such an angle to explore power relations in organizations, following the insight that interactions in organizations appear 'scripted' (Mangham, 1995; Nissley et al., 2004), and individuals largely act according to what is socially desired (Höpfl, 2002). This suggests an authority external to the actors that 'writes' the scripts, and thereby regulates action. As Höpfl (2002, p. 258) states, 'this anterior authority may be in the cultural norms, patriarchs or matriarchs of the organizations, traditions and the whole range of prevailing assumptions that might be brought to bear on the construction of a performance.'

On the other hand, we also encounter the idea that individuals have authority over how to enact roles and scripts (Boje et al., 2004; Nissley et al., 2004), that improvisation occurs within scripts (Benford and Hunt, 1992), or that actors themselves do the scripting (Mangham, 1995). Hence, an apparent coherence and communal definition of social situations may break down. The point is thus not only that dramaturgic performances of social life are regulated and to understand the principles that drive such performances, but also to understand the 'locus of regulation' (Höpfl, 2002, p. 261). Hence, a dramaturgical exploration of social life asks how individuals subordinate themselves to dramaturgic tasks or roles (or when and how they do not) and what implications this has.

Overall, the border between 'acting' and 'being' or that between 'pretense' and 'reality', often seen as an important distinguishing characteristic of those two spaces

(Schechner, 2013), cannot be drawn clearly. Theater is, on the one hand, a metaphor for analyzing social encounters (e.g., usually we do not have a material script for action in everyday life), yet the 'real techniques' by which actors on stage and in everyday life 'expressively sustain a definition of the situation' are arguably the same in both spaces (Goffman, 1959, p. 255, emphasis in original). In that sense, theater is 'both life and metaphor' (Boje, et al., 2002). With this thought in mind, I follow especially Goffman's account of performances, where he suggests that the language of the theater (e.g., staging, audiences, scripts) offers an accessible and familiar tool to analyze structures and mechanisms of social encounters.

Performances and their 'Realness'

At a very basic level, performance in a theatric sense can be described as 'any action that is framed, enacted, presented, highlighted, or displayed' (Schechner, 2013, p. 2). Performances are not just actions, but actions that are predictable because they have been there before (at least in their most basic form—think of 'waving goodbye'). Schechner (2013, p. 28/29) conceptualizes 'performances', therefore, as 'restored behaviors' or 'twice-behaved-behaviors', indicating that performances are 'physical, verbal, or virtual actions that are not-for-the-first time; that are prepared or rehearsed'. Such an understanding of performance draws heavily on Goffman's theory of performances.

Goffman understands a performance as a purposeful action. He distinguishes between *interactions* as 'the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions' and *performances* as 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (1959, p. 15). Hence, Goffman suggests performances do not just 'happen', but that they are explicitly directed towards others, towards one's social environment with the goal to impact that environment, and especially its responsive reaction towards oneself. One of Goffman's basic, influential and also most debated assertions is that individual action is directed towards maintaining 'face'. He defines 'face' as 'the positive social value' that a person achieves in the eyes of others by adhering to 'approved social attributes' (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). In that sense, our theme of recognition becomes apparent, as Goffman suggests an important, if not the *main* motivator for action, is people's striving for recognition seen as the acquired positive social value of oneself (Goffman, 1959).

If we apply the metaphor of the theater, people are arguably always on stage, they cannot *not* present or perform their selves, as their behavior is always oriented towards an abstracted sum of normative action expectations of a 'generalized other' (Mead, 1934). However, while all performances have the goal to impact others, individuals do not have to be explicitly aware of it. Rather, if we follow Goffman, performing lies

in the nature of being human, and is therefore to be seen more as something habitual rather than intentional (Mangam, 1990; Kärreman, 2001). Goffman (1959, pp. 18-21) notes that individuals may be completely taken by their own acts (hence, they are not aware they are performing) as well as be cynical about it (and actively delude the audience). Most often performances occur somewhere in between those extremes (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman (1959, p. 21) refers to the example of shamans or medicine men whose healing attempts often involve mystic performances. The insight of several ethnographers show that even when shamans know that part of their performance can be considered fraud, with regards to its healing power, they still believe in their own powers. Hence the boundaries between what is 'real' and 'fake' are extremely blurry, even for those who perform it, and certainly for the audience. Similarly, Goffman also suggests that the appearance of spontaneity may involve careful planning. For instance, 'To give a radio talk that will sound genuinely informal, spontaneous, and relaxed, the speaker may have to design his script with painstaking care, testing one phrase after another, in order to follow the content, language, rhythm, and pace of everyday talk' (Goffman, 1959, p. 32).

If we relate these insights to the idea of managing by recognition, this suggests that for recognition to be perceived as 'sincere', perhaps a careful rehearsal, or sufficient acting practice on the part of the recognition giver may make recognition come across as more sincere. However, those who perform may become too caught up in their own performances. Again, Goffman gives an insightful example of a student 'who wishes to be attentive, his eyes riveted on the teacher, his ears open wide' who 'exhausts himself in playing the attentive role that he ends up by no longer hearing anything' (Goffman, 1959, p. 33). Overall, in his notion of the performance, Goffman is not primarily interested in the question of the real and the fake; rather, he is interested in the mechanisms and potential disruptive qualities of performances (Goffman, 1959, p. 65-66).

Performing Selves and Performance Collaborations

According to Goffman (1959) social interactions are structured by the ongoing effort of all involved people to establish and maintain a coherent definition of the situation (Goffman, 1959). People need to have such a common definition to be able to act socially. Therefore, according to Goffman (1959) individuals work together on minimizing disruptions or open contradictions of such common definitions. In so doing, they engage in different expressive and often repetitive activities (e.g., verbal symbols, gestures, dressing up in a certain way). Those activities serve to impress others and Goffman (1959) labels them as the 'arts of impression management'. Here, individuals do in essence two things. First, they attempt to control the

impressions others have of them by projecting their definition of the situation. Second, they collaborate with others in the creation of a common definition of the situation (Goffman, 1959; 1967).

This is not a smooth process, as role-discrepancies and other disruptions (e.g., unmeant gestures, faux-pas, intrusions into privacy) occur when different individuals come together (Goffman, 1959). Such disruptive incidents have consequences for the interactions at hand (e.g., embarrassment, awkward silences, confusion). But interruptions can also have more far-reaching consequences for an individual's sense of self when it is deeply connected to a particular situational definition that becomes disrupted (Goffman, 1959, p. 243). In relation to such actual disruptions, as well as the mere possibility of their occurrence, impression management describes the practices individuals engage to run or 'save the show' (Goffman, 1959, p. 239). Such impression management includes 'defensive practices' that actors apply to save their show, as well as 'protective practices' that the audience and other outsiders engage in to help performers in their endeavor (Goffman, 1959). People are considered to be simultaneously in different positions, such as audience and actor, when working towards a coherent situation.

Individuals, according to Goffman, have expressive equipment at hand to perform their selves. They can actively work with performing their 'personal front', which includes 'insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex; age; and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like' (1959, p. 24). As individuals dramatically realize their selves, their 'performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society' (Goffman, 1959, p. 35). In addition, performances of self have an inherently moral character. They form the basis for moral claims towards a person's social environment. Performances are thus dependent on others and their vulnerability to disruption can mean emotional distress for the performing individual actor.

Overall, performances are not straightforward. They include 'staging problems, concern for the way things appear, warranted and unwarranted feelings of shame, ambivalence about oneself and one's audience' (Goffman, 1959, p. 237). However, the principles of impression management secure a high level of collaboration amongst different actors. Hence, despite staging problems, individuals can trust that social life will follow a certain standardized, often ritualized, order. This order is arguably conservative of social relations, and is maintained by people themselves when they engage in protective and defensive practices. I elaborate briefly upon these practices, as they overlap with many concrete activities observed at Communa, especially when interactions unfolded after explicit MbR efforts.

Protective and Defensive Practices

Goffman (1959, 1967) makes a general distinction between defensive and protective practices as part of a person's self-oriented and co-operative impression management. By protective practices, he refers to people exercising 'discretion' (for instance, we obviously do not eavesdrop or contribute to a conversation at the neighboring table in a restaurant), and 'tactful' behavior. Further, Goffman speaks of defensive practices. Here, he refers to how individuals make their own performances more credible through exercising dramaturgical loyalty, dramaturgical circumspection, and dramaturgical discipline. Let me unpack those practices a little more.

Protective practices involve the exercise of discretion and tactful behavior. Here individuals pretend, for instance, to be uninvolved in order to avoid embarrassment of another person. Also, when individuals 'slip' in social life (e.g., say or do something embarrassing), people help each other out, according to Goffman, by coming into 'tacit collusion' (p. 232) with the embarrassed person to maintain the expressive order. In his book *Interaction Ritual*, Goffman (1967) describes further how individuals express 'deference' to each other to protect the ritual framework. By deference, Goffman (1967, p. 56) refers specifically to the symbolic aspect of performances 'by which appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient'. Such ritualized activity is expressed, according to Goffman (1967), in 'little salutations, compliments and apologies which punctuate social intercourse' (p. 57), as well as 'invitations to outings' and 'minor services' (p. 72/73).

Rituals, as touched upon earlier, can be thought of as 'episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication' where interaction partners 'share a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communications' symbolic context' (Alexander, 2004). Deference interactions present an important area of social life where 'collective memories are encoded into actions', and where meanings beyond the mundane are made visible (Schechner, 2013, p. 52). Deference acts, according to Goffman, include, for instance, the way in which people notice changes in each other's appearance (noticing someone's haircut) or the verbal use of status signifiers (e.g., writing 'Dear Prof. xx'). Goffman says that such deference rituals structure a large part of social interactions. Overall, Goffman's notion of deference resembles the idea of recognition as articulated by those who promote management by recognition. Through deference rituals 'the recipient is told that he is not an island unto himself and that others are, or seek to be, involved with him and with his personal private concerns.' (Goffman, 1967, p. 73).

In addition to such, often ritualized, protective practices, Goffman argues that actors defend their own performances through other arts of impression management. One is *dramaturgical loyalty* (1959, p. 212), implying that in order to portray ourselves as a particular person, we act as if we have accepted moral obligations that surround us

(e.g., when I type in my PIN at the supermarket counter, people behind or next to me will usually deliberately look in a different direction). In addition, *dramaturgical circumspection* is an important element of impression management that denotes the way in which 'members of the team exercise foresight and design in determining in advance how to best stage a show' (p. 218). The classic example of 'good cop, bad cop' arrangements come to mind, when two people attempt to make a third person act/feel in a particular way, one taking over an understanding and supportive role, while the other appears tougher and strict. Goffman (1959, p. 227) also refers to the extensive preparation of certain social events, outlining 'a complete agenda before the event, designating who is to do what and who is to do what after that' .

Another art of impression management is *dramaturgical discipline* (Goffman, 1959, p. 216). Here, Goffman describes the contradictory demands individuals try to meet in daily-life-performances to be 'ostensibly immersed *and* given over to the activity' in an apparent emotional, spontaneous, and uncalculating manner, and to be simultaneously 'affectively dissociated' from the performed activity in order to deal with situational dramaturgical demands in a more technical and rational way. In Goffman's words: the actor 'must offer a show of intellectual and emotional involvement in the activity he is presenting, but must keep himself from actually being carried away by his own show lest this destroy his involvement in the task of putting on a successful performance' (p. 216). Hence, dramaturgical discipline is about 'self-control', about managing one's face, voice, and even emotions (see Schreyögg and Höpfl, 2004; Hochschild, 1983). As Schreyögg and Höpfl (2004) point out, contradictory demands that such dramaturgical discipline puts on people bears the danger of personal estrangement. They argue that dramaturgical mastery over embodied passions, as required especially in a range of increasingly emotionalized work contexts (e.g., service work), can imply that individuals who constantly perform as an identity other than who they 'really' are (given the discipline-requirement to stay distant in order to perform well) become empty characters.

Scripts as Acting Material

Goffman's notion of control is arguably an open one. It focuses on the dynamics of social life, rather than on hierarchical ideas (control is everywhere; it unfolds in interactions), and is illustrative in that it enhances close insights, rather than black and white narratives. What I want to suggest in this final section is that Goffman's approach can be complemented, 'maximizing' the space the actors have for shaping performances by drawing upon the notion of the 'script'.

When we follow Goffman's account of social life, the principle of impression management that governs whatever we do is quite totalizing. Interactions seem to a large extent predefined by cultural scripts that leave little space for individuals to behave outside of normative interaction orders. The theater metaphor in Goffman's sense foregrounds the subordination of the actor to the dramatic exercise at hand, and creates, as Kärreman (2001, p. 107) suggests, a 'minimal model of the actor'. In Goffman, the logic that drives performances appears quite irrevocable. And even though Goffman describes the 'arts' of performing impression management, he evokes more a picture of people mechanically enacting social etiquette and politeness games, rather than engaging in creative conduct.

This view aligns with authors who explore theatric spectacles as technologies to create definitional authority over people (see Boje et al., 2003). The idea behind this is that there are social authorities (e.g., corporations, individual actors, specific social groups) that have more power than others in authoring scripts, with scripts being understood as texts that define routinized and repetitive responses to certain situations and contexts (see Mangam, 1995). Scripted actions become 'mindless' behavior, in the sense that they are performed without much reflection, as they appear 'natural' (Mangam, 1995). A key idea is that the general pre-defined and scripted nature of human life can be instrumentalized by certain actors, often in such way that exciting or comforting 'spectacles' (e.g., a carefully authored organizational culture) de-politize actors and make them more likely to accept or even 'consume' everyday dramas (Boje et al., 2003). Such a reading evokes an analogy to traditional or modern theater where 'the intended or posited meaning is normally derived from the author or the text of the play, and interpretation via the director. The actor can be whatever he or she wants to be, as long as he or she works with the author's intentions' (Schreyögg and Höpfl, 2004, p. 694).

But Goffman's elaboration of social life as scripted and dramatically enacted, also allows for evaluating things differently. A poststructuralist notion of the theater suggests there is not only one stage, one linear storyline, or a predefined number of unified roles (Boje et al., 2003). Simply put, there are different possibilities for performing and interpreting scripts as pointed out by a number of authors (e.g., Mangam, 1990; Benford and Hunt, 1992; Mangam, 1995; Nissley et al., 2004; Voswinkel, 2001). Nissley et al. (2004) suggest that scripts have different locus of authority, they may be 'other-scripted', 'self-scripted', as well as 'co-scripted'. This aligns with Mangam's (1990) argument that successful managers do an important part of the scripting for their self-performance themselves. Scripts, according to Benford and Hunt (1992), connect broader normative orientations to their theatrical enactment; scripting in that sense 'casts roles, composes dialogue and directs action.' (p. 39). However, the authors point out that while scripts guide action, scripted interactions allow for improvisation: 'while the bulk of scripting activity occurs prior

to a performance, it can be improvised as actors interact with each other and the audience.' (Benford and Hunt, 1992, p. 38).

Voswinkel (2001, p. 154) suggests a similar reading of scripts, defining them as 'acting material'. Understood as material that actors work with, scripts do outline action expectations, yet the roles and rituals they offer can be and often are modified by actors. We can also think of movie-making, where some directors explicitly encourage the actors to follow the script only loosely. Often pre-defined phrases only appear naturally, if scripts are broken with in certain ways. Even Goffman (1959) writes that 'a less organized show' that does not build upon a strict script tends to be more successful, as unexpected social dynamics can be better responded to. Dramaturgic performances are thus interactive units, and exactly because of that, roles can be actively worked with (Voswinkel, 2001). Mangam (1995, p. 495) shows how script development, that is the 'process by which organization members construct knowledge about appropriate patterns of events for particular activities' is inherently open, and how in interaction (especially in talk), pre-defined event-structures change.

To sum up, drawing attention to a closed as well as open notion of scripted performances, I want to highlight that yes, cultural scripts are powerful in determining action, but overall performances imply neither total compliance, nor full freedom of action. Höpfl's (2002) point is important to consider in this regard. The author (Höpfl, 2002, p. 266) argues that the 'precarious point between resistance and compliance in performance' is in *how* masks are constructed and maintained in relation to the contests in which performances take place. Höpfl (2002) refers to the example of a cabin crew that sold duty-free articles, a demand imposed on them by the nature of their job. Yet, even though the cabin crew members adhered to acting as sellers, they completely over-performed their roles (e.g., 'one of the male cabin crew members pushed his trolley up the aisle in an ostentatiously camp manner, wearing a silk headscarf and Rayban sunglasses, with a small teddy bear mascot waving from his breast pocket', p. 258/259). Such grotesque or carnivalesque performances play with different dramaturgic possibilities. Thus, even 'acting as if' (no one could formally accuse the cabin crew of doing a performance outside of the script) does not mean merely performing 'in line with', and it is exactly that idea to which I want to stay open, when exploring recognition interactions, as an allegedly successful means for control. How exactly I create knowledge about interactions is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 5 – Methods

The aim of this chapter is to outline and discuss how the results from the research on Communa's control efforts and its members' responses were obtained. For this purpose, I first reiterate the assumptions about social reality and knowledge-creation upon which my interactionist research builds. When exploring human interactions, the goal is to enhance empathetic understanding of a 'socially defined reality' (Charon, 2009, p. 44), rather than depicting an objectifiable truth and cause-effect variables of human behavior. In order to better understand such a social reality, empirical richness and proximity are key. By highlighting how I conducted an ethnographic study that involved close empirical immersion and a number of different concrete research tools (i.e., interviews, participant observations, auto-observation), I account for how I captured interactions. Such reflections involve not only technical details (e.g., how I took fieldnotes), but importantly, address the role I played in co-constructing knowledge about control interactions that I present in this thesis. Lastly, I highlight my strategy for ordering and interpreting my empirical material by discussing how interactionist 'sensitizing concepts' (Blumer, 1954) shape my analytical view.

Interactions as Constitutive of Social Reality

As indicated in the previous chapter, interactionist scholars assign to the social world an emergent ontological status. Mead's (1934) reflections upon the 'dynamic whole' of society and its members conceptualize social reality as the product of inter-subjective experiences. Mead's argument is that social phenomena cannot be studied by having an objective reality external to social actors (Charon, 2009), but rather by paying due attention to the 'social dimension of human nature' (Prasad, 2005, p. 21). Also Goffman's (1959) work avoids structural explanations in favor of depicting how human 'encounters' are constitutive of a larger interaction order.

Interactionism can, in that sense, be regarded as one of the pillars of what is sometimes labeled an 'interpretivist' and/or 'social constructionist' perspective in social science research, widespread also in Management and Organization Studies (e.g., Carroll & Nicholson, 2014). In addition, Mead's (1934) non-essentialist

concepts of mind and self (e.g., we come to know ourselves through self-objectification) preface poststructuralist assumptions of scholars who write about power and subjectivities at work, often drawing upon theorists such as Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, or Slavoj Žižek. Interactionist research thus shares (or even prefaces) a number of established assumptions about the fluid nature of social life and related implications for research.

A core idea in social constructionist research is that social phenomena are not as inevitable as they often appear (Hacking, 1999). Rather, how we experience, sense, or trust in reality is inseparable from the social relations and material objects that surround us (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). What does that mean for doing research? Mead (1934) sees the close empirical study of social interactions as key to understand social reality construction. The reason is that in social interaction, individuals develop awareness (about who they are, and how to act) as they encounter situations in which their prevalent interpretation of the world is constantly reworked (e.g., interaction partners react differently than expected) (Honneth, 1995). Thus, in interaction, people develop an understanding of a situation or themselves, which makes it a 'particularly appropriate starting point' to study human experience and interpretation (Honneth, 1995, p. 73).

In line with these ideas, I regard my study phenomena (e.g., recognition) not as given entities, but look at how people fill them with meanings, and develop feelings in relation to them in social encounters. When speaking for instance of 'recognition', I attempt to capture how interactions shape what recognition is, by exploring how people spoke about recognition to me, how people acted towards each other to express recognition, or what material objects were involved when communicating recognition. Such empirical proximity made me realize that the term 'recognition' has at least two major senses in my study context (simply put: 'recognition is illegitimate bragging', 'recognition is true self-affirmation'. See Chapter Nine).

In addition, acknowledging that reality is social, also implies that the researcher and research subjects co-create meanings of a particular phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). For instance, only a few managers at Communa spoke explicitly about 'control' when describing their efforts to enhance a 'Culture of Recognition and Appreciation'. In that sense, the 'control' concept is one to which I made a particular connection as researcher, which resulted from interacting with members of the organization. While some members spoke explicitly about 'control', I also heard expressions such as 'creating oversight', 'enhancing predictability of volunteer behavior', 'motivating people to engage' during interviews, meals, hallway conversations and the like (see Chapter Seven). I also connected those terms to the concept of 'control' and more specifically to 'normative control' by drawing upon the symbolic meaning such expressions, and Communa's culture engineering efforts, hold

in my scientific community (e.g., critically inspired Management and Organization Studies).

In producing knowledge about recognition and control (or recognition as control), I attempt to capture the overall meaning and implications of these phenomena as intersubjective 'in the relation *between* an action and its reaction' (Svensson, 2004, p. 71, emphasis added). Methodologically, this means for me, not to favor one tool for producing empirical material (e.g., interviews, participant observations) over another, or to highlight one perspective (e.g., managerial) more extensively than another (e.g., that of the worker). Producing observational, participant, and interview accounts simultaneously can assist in getting a more complete picture of interactions and people's social practices (Boll, 2014; Prus, 1996). Thus, I attempt to capture 'action' and that tricky aspect of 'between' the actions (the 'inter') by bringing these perspectives and tools into a dialogue with each other. In so doing, interactionist ideas about how humans communicate symbolically (Mead, 1934) or Goffman's (1959) dramaturgic vocabulary—and here especially the notion of the 'script'—help me to bring descriptive detail and a greater focus on such a 'between'. To summarize, my choice for an interactionst perspective as justified in the previous chapter implies a research endeavor that is characterized by great empirical proximity.

Ethnographic Study of Interactions

A common approach to studying social interactions is through an ethnographic study (Charon, 2009). Ethnography is a term broadly applied to describe a mode of collecting and working with empirical materials that involves long-term empirical engagement, often using participant observations and conversations as its main technique (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Classical ethnography has its roots in the offset of European colonialism where an interest in knowing strange cultures prevailed. Ethnographers attempted to closely familiarize themselves with their research subjects, in order to better understand the shared interpretations of local cultural practices. Classical ethnography, in that sense, is essentially guided by the 'idea of cultural penetration' and strong principles such as thick descriptions or long-term immersion to accomplish this (Prasad 2005, p. 79).

Researcher Authority and Reflexivity

Classic ethnographic studies have often been challenged for their colonialist, patriarchic, and hierarchical understanding of the other, often romanticizing the lonely field-worker, as the 'figure who went into the field and returned from the field

with stories about strange people' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 14). Due to what is known as the 'crisis of representation' during the 1980s (Hatch, 1996), contemporary organizational ethnography is widely aware of potential pitfalls. Researchers are expected to demonstrate openness and awareness regarding their own authority–including one's personal relation to the studied people, choice of representation and analysis, and so on (Gilmore & Kenny, 2015). In seeing research increasingly as an ethical practice, the concept of 'reflexivity' has been prominently mobilized to outline a more self-aware engagement regarding one's own prejudices, choices of theories, writing practices, etc. (e.g., Alvesson, Hardy, & Harley, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Holland, 1999). However, the danger with any popular concept is that it can become an end in itself. Claiming to be 'reflexive' could become a way of demonstrating 'epistemological, moral or political virtue' or a 'source for superior insight' (Lynch, 2000, p. 26). 'Reflexivity' can become a significant 'box' that is ticked to ensure personal integrity and professional competency.

In light of the various problems that the questions of authority in research, as well as strategies to deal with such authority such as reflexivity, pose, I have no 'grand' solution. In essence, my approach is to describe my research practice and field-interactions closely and to my best ability. As indicated earlier, throughout my work, and not only in a methods section, I attempt to stay transparent about how my empirical material was gathered and how my arguments developed. In addition, I follow Gilmore and Kenny's (2015) argument that power and authority in research is significantly shaped by the researchers' emotions when engaging in organizational ethnography.

Gilmore and Kenny (2015) highlight how a broad mix of emotions are all part of the ethnographic experience. Examples include anxiety about being included into the organization, feeling warmth and close connections, as well as hurtful experiences of exclusion, misunderstandings, and guilt about fitting the observed 'everyday life' into academic schemes. Such emotions inevitably shape the way in which we represent our study subjects. In Gilmore and Kenny's (2015) view, being explicit about such emotional involvement can provide an important element of reflexivity by challenging overly rational concepts and 'tick box' exercises of how we should do good research. The authors (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015, p. 18) argue:

> When placed at the center of ethnographic accounts, a focus on our emotions not only provides lived insights as to the kinds of emotions associated with a workplace and occupation at a given time, it can also extend and challenge the often formulaic ways by which such accounts are written and accepted for publication.

Their insight resonates with my goal to capture this research endeavor as an interactive, and hence emotional experience, when encountering Communa's members.

Empirical Openness

The ethnographer's orientation to research is exploratory and open-ended (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). With regard to the collection of empirical materials, s/he has no fixed research design from the beginning. Rather, what is present at the offset is an interest in 'some particular area of social life' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3). It is often in the process of doing the fieldwork and parallel reading literature, that researchers decide what to observe, which individuals to talk to, which events to attend, etc. An initial interest is typically refined and turned into a more targeted research focus with increasingly strategic questions and purposes that relate to specific academic debates (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

My PhD research started out fairly open. I set out to develop my research topic in close relation to an empirical issue, without a clear idea of what such an 'issue' would be. My approach to research was colored by my educational background, especially my Master's degree in Management and Organization Studies. This education focused on the critical exploration of the human aspects in organizations, for instance through the empirical study of phenomena such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Leadership, Organizational Culture. Based on that background, I developed the broad idea that I wanted to empirically study a non-profit or voluntary organization. I could add intellectual reasons for this choice, such as my interest in the increased individualization of societal responsibility, or the aforementioned argument (see Chapter One and Two) that voluntary work is a suitable context to study normative control. While these reasons played a role, my original motivation was more importantly linked to the fact that I had previously gained work experience in non-profits and political foundations, and had less of a personal connection to and/or interest in the private sector.

When beginning my PhD in fall 2010, I began to look out for a suitable empirical context. Suitable meant for me the possibility to study the empirical context in-depth. It was important to me that I could conduct participant observations and interviews without language barriers (i.e., an organization in a German or English speaking country). Moreover, I wanted the empirical context to reflect current developments in relation to volunteering, such as the increased focus placed on individuals' responsibility for society as articulated in a number of political trends (e.g., UK's 'big society', Germany's 'National Engagement Strategy').

Through a personal contact, I was introduced to *community foundations*, a type of voluntary organization that had rapidly spread in Germany since the mid-1990s. Community foundations experienced noticeable growths since their establishment, despite competition for volunteers amongst many non-profits. Representatives of the community foundations often related this success to their emphasis on active citizenship. Given the apparent success and rapid spread of these organizations, I

decided to conduct a pilot study. My contact mobilized his broad network so I could gain easy access to five German community foundations from January to March 2011.

Regarding the way in which I could construct myself in these 'field interactions', I should add that my contact person was a family member who holds great prominence in this scene, which is partly due to having been a founder of one of the first community foundations. I had the feeling that especially for more senior people, such a connection was extremely helpful in presenting myself as eloquent, engaged, knowledgeable (intellectually, habitually)–in short: on more equal terms. Towards women of my age or a bit older, however, I downplayed this connection. I did not want to be perceived as someone who reaches goals due to prominent connections, or someone who thinks she is smarter because she is doing a PhD (it is, in fact, not how I see myself). This shows how power relations (e.g., a higher status due to personal contacts, or the fact that I am a doctoral researcher, which is still widely recognized in title-loving Germany) shifted constantly, and what made me secure in some interactions could make me embarrassed or insecure in others.

The pilot study already included the community foundation *Communa* that would become the research context for my ethnography. I conducted a total of 16 semi-structured interviews. The topic areas of my questions included aspects of organizational culture, identity, image and branding as well as more personal questions about individuals' life stories, e.g. how they have come to engage as volunteers. I also asked questions that inquired about the role of community foundations in society, about managerial challenges, as well as reasons for their rapid spread.

In line with the ethnographic principle of empirical openness, I broadly engaged with these organizations to find a more specific study focus. Within such a broad inquiry, one particular concern caught my attention as it was repeatedly mentioned in all the organizations I studied. The concern related to personnel management practices in the broader sense (i.e., how to attract, commit and retain volunteers), and the aspect of rewards and recognition more specifically. The following quote exemplifies this:

> And with the volunteers who have so totally different attitudes, you can't simply tell them their task like in a hierarchical organization. Rather, you have to find a totally different way of dealing with them. . . . And one of the main things that is present here is that they [the volunteers] often want to be recognized very intensively and early on, even without having done anything. It's simply because they are ready to engage. And this attitude is totally different from work-life. There, you being there is natural because you are getting paid for it. Here, being present is not natural and this sometimes creates problems. (Edward, member of Communa in a managerial position, emphasis added)

The relationship between the volunteers and the voluntary organization was described as highly fragile and lacking possibilities to determine voluntary conduct. All interviewees of my pilot study in managerial positions emphasized, therefore, the need for what they called 'recognition' and the importance of developing 'recognition strategies' (Thomas[1]). The theme of recognition was not only brought forward by the 'management', but also by volunteers. One interviewee said when asked about his motive to engage:

> I do it because I like it. But certainly there are some elements of self-presentation and the *desire for personal recognition* involved with people in community foundations. Also in my case, *I also wouldn't have a problem if my picture were in the newspaper*. (Jonathan, emphasis added)

Such a personal desire for recognition, as mentioned by Jonathan, was also discussed more critically by Leona:

> And I think this [voluntary engagement] has gained some kind of own dynamic. It's simply become a trend. And I am sure that's partly because there is *societal recognition*. I mean, by now there are certainly some people who do something like this [voluntary engagement] in order to write on their curriculum vitae afterwards. . . .And it always puts you into a good light if you can write this down. (Leona, emphasis added)

It intrigued me that 'recognition' continuously came up as a theme in relation to managerial dilemmas, an individual's motives to engage, as well as in relation to some need for self-marketization in contemporary society. Doing parallel literature studies of the voluntary sector literature added to my curiosity. I encountered both lines of reasoning from my pilot study: that volunteers are difficult to manage, as well as that one potential solution to this dilemma in the voluntary sector literature is recognition (as outlined in the Introduction).

Hence, I began to understand *recognition* as a managerial idea, promoted in the voluntary sector research (and as I found out later, also in general management literature), by politicians, media, and by practitioners of the voluntary sector alike. I understood that recognition implied, in the broadest sense, affirmation of individuals. I began to wonder, however, what happened when recognition–something apparently so closely tied to the individual and her/his self-worth–was used as a management strategy, what it meant to people, how it shaped their conduct, and what the ethical implications of this were. To gain more insight into those questions, I decided to study one organizational context in more depth.

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[1] Unless the interviewees of the pilot study are members of 'Communa', they are given anonymized names here without detailed explanation.

Lengthy Field Engagement

Research in an ethnographic tradition presupposes a lengthy engagement of the researcher in a natural setting, often called the 'field' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3). The idea is that the researcher studies people's actions and accounts in their everyday context (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Traditionally, *lengthy engagement* meant cultural immersion of periods of one, two or more years (Prasad, 2005). In contemporary academic life in management studies, a three-month immersion can, however, be considered lengthy given the dominance of short term participant observations (e.g., over a few weeks, at meetings, workshops) and other research methods which are often labeled 'ethnographic'.

Given my overall time, financial, and personal commitments (e.g., how long could I live in another city, paying two rents, being away from my partner and daily life), and making comparisons with other PhD projects in my research community, I had a time frame of two months in mind. However, when I negotiated access with Communa, I was told that they would like me to stay for three months as their previous experience with interns had demonstrated that this was a good length of time to gain a proper impression and understand the more fundamental aspects of the organization. Hence, it was the organization that in the end determined the length of my stay.

I approached Communa to become my research context because recognition was explicitly practiced there as a managerial principle. All four members I had interviewed in this organization during the pilot study had repeatedly emphasized the importance of recognition, related problems when expressing it, and the long-term plan to build up a 'culture of recognition and appreciation'. Knowing that, I emailed Edward, and inquired about the possibility of a follow-up study. After a few more email exchanges, I was invited to meet him and Julia who was the project coordinator and responsible for issues of volunteer management at that time (in a paid position).

Arguably, my ethnographic immersion started at this meeting, because it was the point when I was granted access, and when I started to take careful notes of my encounters in the 'field':

> It felt a bit like in a job-interview. I was nervous before meeting Edward and Julia, and well prepared to convince them of 'why it should be me' to get the chance of conducting research in their organization. (fieldnotes, 16.03.12)

I was granted access. Julia said that it would be interesting for Communa to acquire an 'outside perspective' on volunteer management practices through my study (fieldnotes, 16.03.12). Communa seemed to be curious about my topic of inquiry. While I emphasized that I wanted to stay independent in my theoretical focus and open to emerging empirical issues in the field, I also expressed readiness to engage

with issues that occupied Communa. I offered to contribute with my resources if that was of any 'use' for the organization (e.g. writing a report and presenting my results, engaging voluntarily for them during the time of my field engagement) (fieldnotes, 16.03.12). I suggested that I could participate in the daily organizational life, just like a full-time worker, for 40 hours a week.

The idea of doing something 'useful' during my ethnographic engagement resonated with Julia and Edward. Their main concern was how to integrate me into the organizational processes so that I would not 'just stand around and observe' (Julia). I suggested spending 50% of the time on my own thesis (e.g. conducting interviews, writing fieldnotes, reading) while being present at Communa, ideally having a desk. During the other 50% of the time, I suggested I work just like a voluntary intern for them. My reasoning was that being engaged in regular work processes was a natural way of gaining insights into Communa, and that it would thereby be easier to directly build up contacts with volunteers. Looking back at my access negotiations, I think that portraying my willingness to give something back and become a volunteer myself was key to entering Communa so easily. Moreover, as I noticed later, being a volunteer myself actually became an opportunity to become a target of recognition efforts. It added an important self-ethnographic element to my study.

Being a 'Split' Character

Studying a phenomenon ethnographically requires the researcher to be ready to create *interpersonal depths* – a type of 'total immersion', bodily, emotional, as well as intellectual (Ekman, 2010, p. 63). It is arguably such closeness that makes insights into human meaning-making possible. There is, however, a challenging tension between intimacy (for the purpose of gaining empirical insights) and a certain detachment of the researcher whose goal is also to capture different layers of meaning by not taking observed 'actions and speech as entirely at their face value' (Prasad, 2005, p. 81). Ethnographic research also looks for that which is behind cultural routines and to unpack the multiple, potentially contradictory ways of understanding observed gestures, spoken words, and so on. Ekman (2010, pp. 63/64) summarizes this split as follows:

> Tension, suspense and dilemmas are an inevitable and immediate concern. . . The very method is a testimony to grey zones, muddy categories and liminality. You participate, yet you observe at a distance. You are intimate, yet you dissect. You study a field, but you also change it. You are inside the power structures, yet you transcend them.

Just like most ethnographers, I experienced strong emotions and sometimes high stress levels when navigating through these contradictory demands. Arguably, my

official title made such a split even more obvious. During my access negotiations, one of us—I do not remember who—began to label my engagement 'Forschungspraktikum' ('research internship'). I was henceforth introduced to members of the organization as the 'research intern'.

Arguably, this construction reflected and probably also cemented 'colliding work-worlds' (Gilmore & Kenny, 2015). My title reflected the split between belonging and not belonging, between being a researcher working for my own sake and being an organizational member with commitments towards Communa, as well as between different normative frameworks that I tried to live up to. Of course, I do not know how my research would have unfolded without this title, but my impression is that being introduced to everyone as such a 'split character', made it even more difficult for me to reconcile these roles, for instance by strategically using one title and downplaying the other–I was always both to everyone.

In practical terms, my 'intern' role implied membership in a mentoring project and in Communa's volunteer management group (both projects are described in Chapter Six). In day-to-day life, I shared an office with the project leader of the mentoring project. This integrated me into daily organizational habits, rituals, and gossip. As an intern, I supported the projects in several ways, for instance by public relations work or administrative matters. I also participated in the organization's social activities like common lunches and coffee breaks. My direct supervisor, as well as other members of Communa, had prepared tasks for me, and also I actively offered help wherever needed. This meant that I often engaged more than the agreed 50% of my time in voluntary work for Communa. I assisted, for instance, in the re-conceptualization of the volunteer-hiring process, and in a larger campaign to attract new volunteers. In addition, I had a number of typical intern tasks such as the preparation of PowerPoint Slides, protocol writing, or internet research tasks that were tedious.

In my 'researcher' role I used an office space at Communa's head office and mainly followed my private agenda. I took notes, organized focus groups and individual interviews, and worked at my personal computer on my PhD project. I deliberately took time 'off work' to retreat and engage in my own agenda (like writing fieldnotes, scheduling interviews)–but I was never fully in this. Most offices, like mine, had glass doors, which made it possible to see each other while working. I noted in my fieldnotes that 'my Apple computer [which could be seen through the glass door] signals, that I am working for 'me' as opposed to working for 'them' when I am switching to the regular large screen.' (fieldnotes, 27.09.12). I reflected: 'I am constantly switching documents. Parallel to my fieldnotes I have an empty word document open when someone comes in. This makes me feel sneaky. It enforces the feeling of not belonging, by doing something different' (fieldnotes, 27.09.12). Thus, considerations about being 'in' or 'out' and related feelings of guilt, or exclusion were a constant part of my ethnographic engagement.

On the other hand, however, the physical arrangement in my research like the glass door also reflects very much the insider position I had acquired. Not only could I be seen, but I also had unrestricted view into the office of Communa's managing director, and that of my neighbouring colleagues. Thus, I was also made equal with the others by sharing this space, and could observe, for instance, when the managing director called in Communa's workers for appraisal talks.

Auto-Ethnographic Material

The intense immersion, and the constant emotional split that the ethnographic approach implied, enhanced my reflections about my own role in this research endeavor. I began to closely observe myself and how recognition affected me. I was quickly drawn into Communa's intense recognition culture. From the literature, I knew that the ethnographic researcher 'immerses' him or herself in the field. But only once I was at Communa and later began thinking about writing about this fieldwork, I realized what such immersion meant for my study.

Immediately, I experienced strong affirmation and intense expressions of recognition for what I was doing in my role as a volunteer (see Chapter Eight). Even though I remained skeptical throughout, being highly praised affected me; I enjoyed the recognition, I wanted to prove that I was not only a researcher, but also a good organizational member. Even though I had little direct pressure, as Communa's members were extremely friendly and rarely pushy, I had high expectations of myself as to what I should achieve for Communa during the internship. I thought very highly of the people I worked with, and admired especially my direct supervisor for her extremely warm, yet efficient, way of dealing with work processes and people.

At the same time, I dissected recognition interactions by myself, often finding organizational recognition efforts to be exaggerated, repetitive, instrumental, or too mechanic. I was torn here, between having great respect for how people interacted in friendly and attentive ways towards each other, and the impression that friendliness had a notable 'staged' character (see more in Chapter Eight). At times, I looked critically upon management representatives when their interest in other organizational members too obviously followed apparent recognition scripts. On another occasion, I had an intimate conversation where I learned about managers' perspectives, vulnerabilities or pressures (e.g., how they were controlled by expectations to express recognition). And then there were occasions where managers told me how well I had a performed a certain task, how they appreciated my presence, and the like. This did not leave me untouched–recognition rather increased my striving for self-affirmation. I realized how I was, in significant ways, controlled by implicit expectations, promises for self-affirmation, all the while being critical of such 'happy-peppy' organizational culture.

Such liminal status formed an important premise for how I conducted this research. It made me aware of the different ways of evaluating Communa's organizational culture. Experiencing such extreme and ambivalent emotions impacted my search for concepts (e.g., the 'script', the idea that performances are neither 'real' nor 'fake') that could help me to frame such 'between' experiences beyond absolute categories and interpretations. The emotional 'split' I experienced made me also more conscious about my own ambivalent feelings about recongition; that I liked it, and I did not. Realizing that this experience was not far away from what other organizational members described, I began to see my own experience as valuable empirical material that I could access through an autoethnographic approach.

Thus, I made my liminal status an integral part of my research, to provide the reader with auto-ethnographic accounts of what managerial recognition did to and with me. After all, I was one of Communa's voluntary workers targeted by explicit managerial recognition. Autoethnography is an established approach to qualitative research (e.g., Ellis, 2004; Reed-Danahay, 1997). Ellis (2004, p. xix) states that autoethnography is 'research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political'. Differently put, autoethnography is a research approach that highlights and systematically analyzes the personal and often highly emotional experience of the researcher retrospectively, when writing up the story from the field. The goal of doing this is not to engage in personal reflections for the sake of telling them, but to better understand broader cultural and political patterns. For instance, noting the staged character of recognition interactions, having mixed emotions about this, but also realizing for myself how I began to 'play along' in these staged interactions (see Chapter Eight), arguably tells me not only about my own experience. These reflections also helped me to make sense of broader patterns in which recognition could 'seduce' individuals (e.g., through the comfort of the routine, the emotional character of rites and ceremonies) to act in particular ways.

A key idea in autoethnography is thus that one's own experience within cultural contexts, the narrative one tells as a researcher, is reflected in the social processes and patterns that one is studying (Ellis, 2004). At the same time, authors have pointed out that autoethnographic accounts bear the danger of becoming overly therapeutic, self-indulged, or navel-gazing (Soyini Madison, 2006). Attempting to be aware of this danger, I always carefully compared my autoethnographic reflections to see, for instance, how my experiences resonated in the accounts of interviewees. I describe the more practical aspects of my autoethnographic approach further in the upcoming section on 'participant observations'.

Research Tools

In line with the outlook I chose for this study, interactions are the key area that I wanted to study and analyze. But how to do so? I did not only want to understand how each individual acts, but more importantly, how those actions impact each other and how such interrelation, made possible through symbolic communication (Mead, 1934), creates complex normative interaction orders. This required tools not only for describing what social practices are involved (e.g., what happens at a recognition ceremony, what symbols are used to express recognition), but also, importantly, what people 'do' when they are involved in this (e.g., do they go on stage, do they smile, do they say something, with whom do they interact closely), and how they reflect upon their actions (Charon, 2009). Very basically, to capture these facets of interaction, and more importantly, to be able to read their symbolic significance, I entered 'face-to-face' relations with the relevant individuals (Blumer, 1969).

Given the open and exploratory character of an ethnography, I deployed a number of research tools such as observing people, speaking to people, asking people to act as observers or reading documents to capture the various aspects of interaction just mentioned (see Appendix I for an overview). In addition, participating in the daily organizational life helped me to acquire cultural/symbolic knowledge and an emotional 'feel' for people's lived experience. From the beginning, I took fieldnotes of my observations. As time passed, my research tools became more targeted. I took increased opportunities to attend events where individual volunteers had been nominated for public honoring. I did not conduct interviews immediately, but began to schedule the first after a month, once I knew better with whom I wanted to speak (e.g., volunteers who had been given explicit praise). Below I describe the key tools for constructing my empirical context in detail.

Participant Observations

Participant observations constitute a large part of my empirical basis in this thesis as they gave me the opportunity to capture how people encountered each other in a natural setting. As I have argued earlier, it is in such encounters that social relations (e.g., relations of dominance) and particular social phenomena (e.g., recognition) are created. As opposed to interviews or other self-reporting techniques (e.g., asking research subjects to write a diary), observations have the great advantage that they offer insights into details, twists and unexpected occurrences in social dynamics that an interview cannot usually offer (Lundholm, 2011).

As Barley and Kunda (2001) argue, interviews are an important tool to explore people's points of view. But to better understand working life and its social processes

such as how control is exercised, this is not enough, as 'most work practices are so contextualized that people often cannot articulate how they do what they do' (Barley & Kunda, 2001, p. 81). Observations provide us with detailed information of how social spaces are arranged (e.g., praising people in their private offices, praising people on a large stage) and how individuals communicate in these spaces. For example, we can observe what people speak about in the audience of a recognition event or what non-verbal and/or material gestures people use to communicate, such as flowers, smiling at each other, perhaps even ignoring each other (see Nicholson, 2011).

In addition to the general advantages of observing, participant observations bring specific contributions and limitations to the research process. By becoming a 'participant' of the setting, the researcher arguably interferes less with the natural setting (Jorgensen, 1989). It is also often said that participant observations enhance the researcher's ability to generate insights into the 'meanings of human existence as seen from the standpoint of insiders' (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 14). Being a participant can enhance the researcher's 'ability to place oneself in the position of the individual or collective' (Blumer 1969, p. 51).

In that sense, participant observations also include an element of turning observation towards oneself. Adler and Adler (1998, p. 97) describe the advantage of such auto-ethnographic element:

> Observers who place themselves in the same situations as their subjects will thereby gain a deeper existential understanding of the world as the members see and feel it. This notion fosters a research role that is very close to the members, and augments a researcher's observations of these others with observations of their own thoughts and feelings.

Thus, the observations of one's own feelings, and responses to the phenomenon under study (in my case recognition) can, and in fact, do present an important additional layer to create intimate understandings in this thesis.

When participating in organizational life, I did not only mechanically observe what happened, but I felt how the flow of interactions impacted others and me emotionally. I remember a situation when praise was given to a volunteer in a clumsy way (i.e., the 'recognizer' forgot an important personal detail). I could hear that no one responded, see that no one supported the recognizer (for instance by rising to hug the praised person), and most importantly, sense common embarrassment. In some way, I was able to place myself in the position of the one who was praised or the overall group through such close participation and through having also received praise myself, several times. In Mead's terms, we could say that through socialization, I had become more aware of Communa's sum of normative action expectations; the organizational 'generalized other'. Such a generalized other suggested that the audience played an important role in practicing recognition (e.g., people should clap

enthusiastically, or hug someone who was praised). Knowing how recognition should unfold made me particularly sensitive to a common embarrassment when this did not work.

At the same time, Mead (1934) shows that how individuals take on a generalized attitude remains an original process. I cannot reproduce exactly the same response of others in me. When reflecting upon how I observed recognition interactions, I was probably more attuned than other organizational members to reflect upon and experience emotional dynamics, given my specific research focus. In that sense, participation certainly enhanced my ability to better understand symbolic communication processes at Communa–the patterns, schemes, themes that characterized interactions. But I was not fully able to place myself into the position of those whom I studied. It only helped me to offer, hopefully, more systematic and emphatic interpretations of such an external position.

Lastly, participant observations are also seen as more 'unobtrusive' (Jorgensen, 1989) than other methods, and less disruptive of the 'natural' flow of events. I remember situations where I felt I was 'just someone working voluntarily at Communa', given that people talked to me about 'tasks' and 'deadlines', and sometimes seemed to 'forget I was not only working for them' (fieldnotes, 16.12.11). At the same time, my presence as a researcher never ceased to impact social processes. I think that by making recognition a theme worthy of 'scientific' investigation, I made people more aware of how they acted towards each other, and they began labeling it and more consciously filling this label 'recognition' with meaning, trying to act in accordance to this meaning. I noticed that Nika very often, when she spoke to me about daily work, said then 'oh, and talking of recognition, this instance can be understood in such and such way' (fieldnotes, 28.09.12).

Writing Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes are descriptions of social contexts and processes as observed by the researcher. They are the traditional means to record empirical materials (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 175). The process of writing fieldnotes has often been described as an invisible endeavor, but it deserves some attention. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 176, emphasis in original) suggest paying attention to three key questions: '*what* to write down, *how* to write it down, and *when* to write it down'.

My note-taking broadly followed any social process I deemed to be interesting. Especially in the beginning, my fieldnotes were extensive, and covered anything from descriptions of the facilities, to the type of lunch that was served, to the smell of my office. Eventually, I focused on taking notes of the social dynamics of expressions of recognition (e.g. flowers, events, appreciative words, etc.). That is, how they were given to each other, how people responded to it (their expressions, whether they

smiled, whether they knew how to react, what they said). As the reader will notice, my fieldnotes became increasingly analytical, and without a specific theoretical framework in mind, I actually began to conceptualize recognition interactions increasingly as dramaturgic performances.

With regards to 'how' I wrote my 120 pages of fieldnotes (times new roman, size 12, single spaced), I followed Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 191), who recommend to 'distinguish analytical notes from accounts provided by participants and from observer descriptions'. From the beginning, I wrote 'Anna' in brackets when I had written down my own reflections or questions regarding certain social processes, as opposed to notes that had a more descriptive character. Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) also note that 'the conduct of note-taking must be broadly congruent with the social setting under scrutiny' (p. 177). Hence, there should be sensitivity to context, for instance, whether overt note-taking is appropriate, or whether it could be seen as threatening and disrupt social processes. Even though individuals in my study context knew that I was conducting participant observations, I rarely wrote fieldnotes in their presence. I mostly retreated into my office, wrote fieldnotes at night at home or in a café, or scribbled things down on a piece of paper, when I felt the setting permitted (e.g., when we were in a meeting where everyone had a pen and a piece of paper).

My fieldnotes were mostly written retrospectively, given the issue of sensitivity to context. Even though the ideal would be to 'make notes during the actual participant observation' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 176), I think it was good to demonstrate such sensitivity. To compensate, I attempted to make the passage of time in between the observation and the writing as small as possible. This meant, for instance, when I went to an evening event at Communa, I typed my fieldnotes into the computer that very same evening (on the way home, etc.), rather than waiting until the next morning. Sometimes my participant role, for instance when having the task to write the protocol, also permitted me to take fieldnotes of events while they were happening.

The Interview as Interaction

In addition to the insights gained through participant and auto-observation, I conducted 22 semi-structured open-ended one-on-one interviews (see Appendix II) exploring how 20 volunteers and 2 paid members reflected upon recognition interactions. Interviews are an extremely popular method for researchers to gain insights into social life and individual meaning-making. At the same time, it is critical not to idealize and hence underestimate the interview as a complex social event that does not mirror social life (as positivists suggest) (Silverman, 2001). As Alvesson (2010, p. 4) puts it, 'interview accounts may just as well be seen as the outcomes of

political considerations, script-following, impression management, the operation of discourses constituting subjects and governing their responses'.

Differently put: the interview in itself is a symbolic interaction in which the researcher, as well as the researched, encounter each other in a symbolically loaded constellation (Miller & Glassner, 1997). This implies that empirical material is always constructed against the backdrop of such an encounter, where involved parties act to meet the demands of the larger interaction order. For example, interviewers may construct themselves as proactive, confident, knowledgeable or empathic by preparing themselves well, and making sure to always have an extra question to ask, so as not to appear clueless.

Alvesson (2010, p. 86) points out in such symbolic encounters, interviewees are also essentially concerned with 'constructing a valued, coherent self-image'. He argues that in principle, any question or comment (in my study context for instance: What did people say to you when they praised you?) could prompt interviewees to construct and express an 'idealized self' and to engage in 'identity work' (Alvesson, 2010, p. 86). When answering the question, *what did people say to you when they praised you?*, interviewees could work on their identity, for instance, by saying 'I was told that I am highly motivated person who sacrifices herself for the common good, but I do not see this engagement as a sacrifice. Being altruistic is part of my nature and not a big deal'. This is just a made-up example to highlight Alvesson's (2010) point. I certainly noted such efforts to construct oneself in a positive light, for example as 'non-needy' of formalized/targeted recognition to protect an image of themselves as ideal volunteers who cared about substance rather than image (see Chapter Nine).

Against this background, we can conceptualize interviews as 'dramaturgic performances' (Goffman, 1956) where participants attempt to impact the others' evaluation of and behavioral response towards themselves. The 'other' could specifically be the interviewer, but possibly also a larger readership. In line with this, Alvesson (2010) speaks of 'impression management' to denote that in the attempt to impact social counterparts, people mobilize moral stories (i.e., drawing on a broad set of ideals and virtues such as rationality, social skills) to show themselves in a favorable light, and typically as loyal to larger social entities (e.g., a group, an organization). When so doing, often 'cultural scripts' are applied as 'available vocabularies, metaphors, genres and conventions for talking about issues' (Alvesson, 2010, p. 88).

But what do these insights imply for research practice? Skepticism is a common and important response because it raises awareness about potential pitfalls, such as romantically portraying people's responses as more authentic when one has established close connections (Silvermann, 2001). But such skepticism is partly limited in itself, because its main criticisms are that interviews are not able to access social 'truths', authentic or '"genuine" experiences and viewpoints' (e.g., Alvesson, 2001, p. 89). For instance, Alvesson (2001, p. 89) contrasts 'scripts' as simplified

complexity reducing conventions to 'experiences and observations of a messy, contradictory world'. This suggests there is something 'real' messy out there that cannot be grasped when people engage in impression management. The interactionist point, however, is that exactly such scripted responses, such self-presentation, is what constitutes our social world.

If we return to Mead's and Goffman's interactionist ideas about social life, the goal of research lies not in accessing objectivity or 'reality' as an absolute condition. The point is not to 'decide which is the more real' impression that individuals convey (Goffman, 1959, p. 65), but to see social life as being constituted through performances. I agree with Miller and Glassner (1997, p. 133) who state: 'while the interview is itself a symbolic interaction, this does not discount the possibility that knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can be obtained. In line with Mead's (1934) idea that humans turn the world around them into objects of understanding, we can say there is no total objectivity, but there are objectified social worlds, which we *can* grasp.

Thus in interviews, I could still explore social realities, not in an absolute sense, but as 'accomplished aspects of human lived experience' (Dawson & Prus, 1995, p. 113 as cited in Miller & Glassner, 1997). By looking, for instance, at people's impression management techniques or the existence of underlying cultural scripts that revealed highly patterned responses, even though all participants claimed individuality for themselves (e.g., 'I don't need public recognition, but perhaps others do'), interviews still gave me important insights into recognition and normative dynamics beyond the specific interview situation. By looking at mechanisms and recurring patterns of how people presented themselves in the interview interaction mostly through spoken language, I could access 'moral stories' (Whittle and Mueller, 2011) that impacted how individuals practiced their volunteer roles.

Importantly, a symbolic interactionist perspective does not bring me, as a researcher, into the position of judging people's impression management techniques as fake, or of placing myself above those researched by saying I 'really' know what they do, or how they feel. I do not fully know. Yet, through an interactionist approach to interviews, I could sketch people's objectified social worlds better and, eventually, dared to interpret their actions within such worlds in relation to the normative control concept in which I am scientifically interested (see Chapter Ten).

Conducting Interviews

After about one month at Communa, I began to schedule interviews. My choice was shaped by the goal to speak to volunteers/paid staff with a managerial responsibility (e.g., involved in culture engineering, general project and people management), as well as volunteers who did not hold such a responsibility. In addition, I approached a

few people because I knew they had been invited to recognition events. Others, I approached because they worked in different projects than the ones I was engaged in, had a different age than the average (50+), or were male (unlike the female majority). Thus, my choice was mainly guided by creating diversity in responses and perspectives.

Generally, individuals were open to be interviewed, and asked few critical questions about what would happen with the interview material (even though I discussed issues of anonymity and confidentiality before each interview). Most interviewees knew me as the 'active intern' (as one interview partner told me), engaging for Communa. Someone who could be trusted, and who, in return, should be supported in her thesis (as another interview partner told me). This view others held of me made it easy for me to arrange interviews, and quickly made the interviews personal. For example, I was invited to people's homes in seven interviews.

The interviews were open-ended and conversational. They all had their own dynamics, but I tried to cover several themes: 'personal background', 'task and type of engagement', 'personal relationship to Communa', 'culture of recognition at Communa', 'recognition and identity', and a theme I called 'people-specific questions' where I referred to concrete events or incidents that the given interviewee had been part of. Here are some of my key questions:

- If we talk about the term recognition–what does it mean to you?
- How is recognition expressed to you in the context of your engagement?
- Can you tell me more? What happened exactly?
- What does recognition 'do' to you physically and emotionally? Or differently put: How does recognition make you feel and react?
- As what type of person are you recognized? What does expressed recognition tell the outside world about who you are?
- Follow up: How does the picture that is created fit with your self-view? Can you 'take on' recognition? Do you feel it's justified? Honest? Fair?
- When has something or someone, in your opinion, deserved recognition? Differently put: who or what is recognition-worthy?

Moreover, I asked individuals who had been invited to recognition events, or who had been part of a recognition interaction (e.g. being given flowers) that I observed:

- How did it make you feel that you were selected? What does this express for you?
- On stage/in the situation: How did you feel and physically react (see above)?
- Did you tell others that you received this award? Whom? How did they react?

All interviews were transcribed, and consequently translated. I transcribed and translated 14 interviews myself, and sent 12 interviews to a transcription agency, after I noticed that I was behind my self-set schedule. I carefully read the transcripts of the interviews that I did not transcribe myself, while listening to the interview at the same time.

I anonymized all interviewees with a pseudonym. When I felt anonymity was not granted through this practice, and the chosen text passage was too sensitive, I sometimes changed other features such as occupation or age in ways that would not challenge the overall meaning of an interview excerpt (another made-up example: if someone were a veterinarian, I introduced that person as being the owner of a horse farm, and by providing such a distinct association, could distract a reader who knew my interviews from making further links). Tying into the aspect of representation, I discuss now in the last section how I read and interpreted my interviews and the material that emerged from the participant observations.

Analytical Process

The ethnographic analysis is in principle an iterative, theme-oriented analysis, and shares similarities to a constant comparison method as promoted in Grounded Theory (Marvasti, 2014). I did not adhere to the strict coding principles laid out in a Grounded Theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), but followed the idea that theoretical sophistication can be achieved by an open, careful and probing examination of local contexts. Hence, the ordering of empirical material formed the point of departure for my analysis. Such ordering was, however, not completely 'theory free'. I made ongoing links to literature and concepts with which I was familiar such as identity work, management control or culture engineering. I also read up on othe concepts like gift giving, political theories of recognition, voluntary sector research that could be relevant for my study. My analytical process was generally emergent; the final analytical strategy that I deployed (and describe) in this thesis for reading, presenting, and interpreting stories from the field was the result of a long iterative process. I highlight below the main 'marking points' of this process.

Crafting a Basic Story

In the initial phase of analysis, I approached my empirical materials with little specific theoretical guidance. For instance, seeing Management by Recognition as a form of normative control was not my initial outlook, even though I was aware of discussions about subjectivities and power at work. When I listened to interviews and transcribed

them, I classified what was 'going on' very broadly by capturing *how recognition was given and received* in the context of Communa. After I had finished the transcriptions, I printed out everything (interviews, fieldnotes, e-mails, organizational documents, and practitioner documents) and coded passages/quotes according to more specific themes and subthemes with the qualitative coding program 'Nvivo'. Those themes encompassed: Recognition Forms (formal, informal), People (managers, general volunteers), Emotions (comforting, threatening), Management Logic (functionalist, humanist), Recognition and Self-Identity (identifications, disidentifications), 'Real' and 'Fake' Recognition', and Politics of Recognition (exclusion, hierarchies). This thematic ordering helped me to craft what I thought of as a *basic story* of recognition. For this story, I connected episodes that organizational members had explicitly described as recognition (e.g., praise, expressions of care and interest, gift-giving) and compared statements I had repeatedly come across (e.g., why recognition was needed, how it should best be given, what recognition meant for oneself personally, how it impacted one's engagement).

Overall, my basic story captured different perspectives (e.g., the volunteers, the managers) and thematic emphases (e.g., organizational context, culture engineering, identity work, management dilemmas, power and politics), without yet bringing them together in a coherent form. Rather, organizing my vast empirical material in this way by careful reading, re-reading, and repositioning quotes/observations helped me to confirm or reject initial hunches. For instance, while being in the 'field' I often had a strong sense of participating in a carefully constructed drama. Not only my fieldnotes, but also interviewees' statements reflected the frequent use of the theater metaphor. On the other hand, I realized that an original idea of focusing on 'subjectivities at work' was not so easy to accomplish. Most of my material highlighted broader organizational dynamics and practices (I had vast descriptions of organizational culture engineering efforts and their enactment), rather than deep insights into individuals' 'self-identities'.

I let this story rest for a while, and returned to it after I had read up more on the managerial argument for recognition (in voluntary and general management thought), about corporate culturalism (given that the enhancement of a 'Culture of Recognition and Appreciation' was the explicit goal of Communa's managerial members), about power and subjectivity in organizations, as well as political and moral theory of recognition (Honneth, 1995), which drew my attention to Mead (1934) as an interactionist scholar. Hence, I had a broad interpretative repertoire at hand to make sense of and filter my empirical material further. Given the extensive data I had on culture engineering efforts, I decided to make the 'normative control' concept central to my work. After all, Communa's culture engineering efforts were rooted in the goal to enhance managerial impact over volunteers' conduct through an 'experiential transaction' (Kunda, 2006). That is, by making people *feel* recognized. In addition, I sought to find a way of capturing normative control beyond a

widespread 'managerial prerogative' and chose an interactionist approach for reasons outlined in Chapter Four.

Using Sensitizing Concepts

As argued elsewhere, interactions form my key unit for analyzing how study subjects objectified the world around them, and to understand control as an intersubjectively accomplished phenomenon. Accordingly, I selected episodes and interview statements that reflected different interactions, which I could relate to explicit managerial control intents at Communa. That does not necessarily mean that I only considered interactions between a 'manager' who deliberately recognizes a 'worker' (see more on how I understand who the 'managers' are in my study in Chapters Six and Seven). Rather, I analyzed interactions that reflect key elements of Communa's managerial recognition strategy. That could include, for example, also an instance where an external political authority gives a prize for exceptional engagement to one of Communa's volunteers who is in a managerial position. The important point for me is not to determine control efforts as fixed managerial units with a clear origin, but to show how 'scripts', that capture the managerial idea that volunteers can be controlled through recognition, are worked with as 'acting material' by the various parties involved.

Vocabulary such as the 'script' highlights another important decision I made for the representation and interpretation of the empirical material. I decided to frame and discuss my observations and members' accounts through interactionist vocabulary. More concretely, I used interactionist ideas as 'sensitizing concepts' to reflect upon the specific dynamics of the selected control interactions. Blumer (1969) conceptualizes 'sensitizing concepts' as giving guidance about the empirical world without, however, imposing fixed frameworks. In his view (Blumer, 1969, p. 7), sensitizing concepts give

> the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions in which to look.

In line with this idea, there are a number of key concepts in Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959) that I found very valuable in providing such 'general guidance'. Those are:

Table 2.
Overview of Sensitizing Concepts

Sensitizing Concept	Highlights that…	Simple Example
Symbolic Communication **(Mead, 1934)**	Humans objectify the social world they are in through 'significant gestures' and are able to produce the others reply in themselves by 'taking the attitude of the other'.	When recognition is expressed through flowers, a person is usually happy/self-affirmed because s/he can read the meaning behind this symbol as expressed by the flower-giver (i.e., you are special, important).
The 'me' and 'I' as different phases of self-creation **(Mead, 1934)**	The way in which humans construct themselves in interactions is a dynamic process characterized simultaneously by adherence to larger normative orders (the conforming 'me' that internalizes the attitudes of a 'generalized other') and by individual originality (the 'I') that cannot be grasped (i.e., objectified) as such.	Not readily translatable.
Social life unfolds as dramaturgic performance **(Goffman, 1959)**	The ways in which interactions unfold follow predictable, twice-performed, patterns, which can overall simplify and regulate human communication.	In a recognition ceremony, but also in daily interactions (like stopping at someone's office to see how s/he is doing) there are identifiable patterns that make interactions likely to evolve in similar ways.
Impression Management **(Goffman, 1959)**	In order to secure a common definition of a situation, people engage in ongoing impression management, that is, in co-operative defensive and protective practices to save each other's 'face' (e.g., practicing dramaturgical loyalty, dramaturgic circumspection, discretion, tact, etc.).	Communa carefully casted volunteers to be sent to recognition events (practicing dramaturgical circumspection) to secure the avoidance of embarrassing disruptions.
Scripts as 'Acting Material' **(Voswinkel, 2001)**	Normative action expectations are captured in cultural texts that humans are aware of through being socialized into a particular context. But such 'scripts' have multiple authors and sources, they are not fixed units but interactionally emergent guides for collective consciousness and action.	Communa's members who held a managerial function outlined how other managers should express recognition to volunteers. They crafted normative action expectation, scripts, that both management as well as eventually the addressed volunteers would work with.

Practically speaking, using these ideas as 'sensitizing concepts' meant that I was alerted to certain ways of looking at interactions and speaking about them. Let me take the example of Mead's idea that we communicate symbolically by means of significant gestures, and connect it to an empirical instance from the first day of my arrival at Communa:

> On my desk lies a sweet welcome note from Antonia. I also got a flower put on my desk as a welcome, but I got a small one, whereas all others [the other newcomers who started working for Communa that same day] got a big bouquet–but they will be paid staff… (fieldnotes, 3.9.12)

The other newcomers–in total four people who started their paid employment as project coordinators and public relations officials that same day–were welcomed with flower bouquets on their desks. There were no flowers on my desk at first, and I assume that the bigger 'welcome arrangements' had been made more consciously for the members who would become permanent staff. However, as soon as Astrid noticed that I was a newcomer too, she came and put a little vase with a few blossoms on my desk. The message, I think was to not exclude me from feeling welcomed. At the same time, it felt like correcting an error.

By having Mead's notion of symbolic communication through significant gestures in mind, I can become more specific about describing what was at stake in this interaction. Arguably as 'significant gestures' (Mead, 1934), the flowers on my desk revealed different symbolic meanings. First that of care and appreciation, a more general cultural idea behind giving flowers. But in relation to the specific interaction at hand, the flowers on my desk also communicated hierarchy and showed me my place in the organization–a temporary intern, who will be gone after three months. Similarly, looking at social life more generally as dramaturgical performances (Goffman, 1959) provides a particular take on empirical material, explicitly drawing out instances to describe 'twice-behaved' nature.

Being attentive to such aspects of symbolic communication, or the performed nature of social life, made my descriptions and ways of interpreting my empirical material richer and deeper, without 'fixing' potential interpretations about recognition as a means to achieve normative control. This is what makes the idea of the 'sensitizing concept' distinct in my view. If I had chosen, for instance, 'normative control' as the key concept to represent my empirical material in the following, I would have likely ended up with well known, more suggestive, often dichotomous, categories connected to this body of literature (e.g., subordination, freedom, resistance, compliance, identification, disidentification, etc.). Seeing control as an intersubjectively accomplished phenomenon and using interactionist sensitizing concepts to discover exactly such intersubjecitivty, is how I chose to *capture interactional dynamics before speaking of their outcomes/implications* in the discussion and conclusion.

Before moving to three empirical chapters that are the result of the methods described here in detail, I want to add that the concept of the 'script' takes a particular connecting role. The idea that 'scripts' underlie and shape our actions, feelings, and attitudes, is mobilized in all three chapters in relation to different acting parties. In Chapter Seven, I begin by outlining how managerial control efforts unfolded as a form of 'scripting work'. Such managerial scripts, as I will argue, are never fully in the

hands of 'management'. They are worked with by all involved parties, and Chapter Eight explores this aspect in detail, taking a particular interest in the question of what is at stake when people act in line with dominant scripts, or 'as if' they accept normative action expectations. Lastly, I explore how scripts are worked with, and made sense of, in relation to oneself in retrospective reflection. This 'zooming in' adds another (more individual) angle to the discussion of how performances can be assessed that appear to be in line with managerial demands, even when resistance is expressed.

Chapter 6 – The Voluntary Work Context

In order to provide the reader with contextual knowledge about the studied setting, this chapter moves from a general description of broader trends in volunteering to describe my concrete empirical site. I first show more generally how community foundations, as a particular form for organizing voluntary engagement, seek to provide an answer to increasing demands for more individualized, local, participative, and flexible volunteer experiences. Such a description gives the reader important contextual understanding for how people interact and deal with one another at 'Communa'. Moreover, this contextual information points to the specific control dilemmas that Communa's representatives apparently face. As the reader will see in this and the following empirical chapters, Communa's organizational approach reflects not only a trend towards so-called 'new' forms of volunteering. It also provides a site where management problems related to the voluntary aspect at work appear very present, and proposed solutions (i.e., to Manage by Recognition) are extensively practiced. In that sense, the empirical context of Communa provides a highly suitable site to study Management by Recognition as a form of normative control.

From Associations to Individualized Engagement

Even though we often hear that our contemporary individualized societies lack solidarity, volunteering for the common good is a growing phenomenon (GHKConsult, 2010). Why people volunteer, how much they volunteer, in what forms, and for what purposes they do so, varies. Some countries have more longstanding traditions of volunteering (e.g., the Netherlands, the United Kingdom) than others (e.g., the former Eastern Bloc countries) (GHKConsult, 2010). Despite these differences, we can observe some general trends in contemporary capitalist societies concerning the nature of voluntary engagement and the numbers of people engaging.

Over the past 20 years, the number of people engaging voluntarily in Europe has steadily grown[2] (European Comission, 2011). It appears that the mid/late 1980s present an important turning point to understand the recent upsurge in volunteering. Since then, most European countries have experienced a reduction of state sponsored social welfare services related to neo-liberal changes in the political and economic system. In order to address gaps that emerged from diminishing state support for social services (e.g., in youth work, work with immigrants, or with children), responsibility for the community was increasingly placed on the shoulders of individuals, essentially through voluntary activities. This development is on-going. In the United Kingdom, current politics of the 'Third Way' or a 'Big Society', for instance, build upon the 'the idea and practice of volunteering—of people doing something for each other rather than having the state doing it for them' (British Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw, 1998 as cited in Rose, 2000, p. 1404). Understood in that sense, voluntary activity becomes the 'essential act of citizenship' (Rose, 2000, p. 1404).

We can connect the growth and impact of many community-based volunteer organizations to these neoliberal changes where voluntary organizations emerged increasingly as legitimate partners of the State (GHKConsult, 2010). What is interesting is that while many new voluntary organizations grew during those years, engagement in traditional membership-based associations or large charities declined considerably (Peglow, 2002). It appears that just as political authorities have increasingly individualized volunteering, so people today seek freer and more individual relationships to voluntary organizations (McNamee & Peterson, 2014). As outlined earlier (see Chapter Two), volunteering is seen as an important activity to express, actualize, and educate oneself (Hustinx, 2010; Shin & Kleiner, 2003). This trend is reflected in Sweden, for instance, where a National Volunteering Agency (Volontärbyrån), something like an unemployment agency for volunteers, provides an infrastructure to 'match' and develop volunteers' skill sets (EYV 2011: The Situation of Volunteering in Sweden, 2011).

In the German context where my study is located, similar developments have also been observed and documented. Volunteering became broadly established for the first time in the German Empire during the second half of the 19th century. Voluntary associations with diverse purposes (e.g., workers' unions, voluntary fire-services, or medical associations such as the Red Cross) emerged. Volunteering, especially in the arts and cultural sector, had its heyday during the Weimar Republic, but declined

[2] For the purpose of describing general trends in volunteering, I align here with the definition of volunteers being individuals who act 'under their own free will, according to their own choices and motivations and do not seek financial gain' (European Comission, 2011, p. 2), despite showing how this distinction is not always clear-cut (see Chapter Two).

during World War II and in post-war Germany. During the 1970/80s a new wave of voluntary engagement in the spirit of the peace, environmental, and women's movements emerged. Voluntary engagement during these years often had a critical character in relation to state policies (Landesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement, 2007).

Towards the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s, voluntary engagement went through a structural change to emerge as more or less its current form, often referred to as the *new voluntary engagement* (Neues Ehrenamt) (Hustinx, 2010; Olk, 1987; Peglow, 2002). Increasingly, volunteering takes place in smaller projects and initiatives rather than in large charities or bureaucratic organizations (Sutter, 2004). Sutter (2004, p. 161) shows how the term 'Ehrenamt' (the traditional term for voluntary engagement which translates as 'honorary post') is increasingly 'replaced by the concept of civic activity'. The new wording, the author highlights, implies a central difference: '[t]he normative implications are no longer goodliness, honour, moral conduct or salvation, but rather public welfare, the common good, and democracy' (Sutter, 2004, p. 161). Voluntarism does not represent a counter-concept to governmental action anymore, but is seen as an integrative part of it and the political economy (see Rose, 2000). Peglow (2002, p. 29) summarizes the features of the new Ehrenamt as follows:

- The volunteers want more autonomous time-structuring, time limitation, spontaneity;
- The new motives are individual concernment, contribution-opportunities, possibility for self-realization, self-awareness, personal development;
- The organization takes place in local contexts, in self-determined, autonomous organization forms;
- There are expectations towards recognition of different kinds.

In sum, volunteering today has apparently become a fairly individualized activity. It needs to suit one's individual time-planning, preferences, plans for self-development, peer group, and desire to see one's impact on the spot. Interestingly, while volunteering has become quite individualized, engaging for a broader societal good is as prominent and popular as ever before. Community foundations have flourished in this individualist and localized spirit of volunteering.

The Rise of Community Foundations

Community foundations are a specific form of voluntary or not-for-profit organization. They can broadly be described as politically independent, philanthropic, grant-making institutions ("What is a Community Foundation?", 2013). A central idea is that community foundations are created by and for the people of a particular community (e.g. a municipality, a city-district, a particular region). Anyone should be able to contribute—whether with money or time—to the community in a sustainable way. Thus the local character of social aid and giving is emphasized, as well as the individual's responsibility to shape the quality of life within a certain geographic area (Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen, 2000). Community foundations were often founded in order to balance out the negative effects of social inequalities that were perceived to be the result of insufficient social welfare service of the state. In so doing, these foundations tend to experience an ongoing tension between wanting to provide assistance where needed, while distancing themselves from doing state service (e.g., a grey zone at Communa is the financial support of external social workers in full-time schools, as schools are under the authority/responsibility of the respective German Federal State).

What sets community foundations apart from other organizations which offer grants is that they do not draw upon the financial resources of one or a few rich founders. Instead, community foundations are supported by many local donors who place money into long-term funds. They thereby generate grant money from the interest to be invested in a wide range of social services, while the endowment fund is left untouched to grow over time. The goal is to make funding sustainable, so as to address the future changing needs of the local community. This financial model is often complemented by specific donation-based income for projects, as well as other constructions that are not further elaborated upon here. The central point, however, is that community foundations are designed to pool financial resources, as well as the time that individuals 'donate' through volunteering, under one organizational roof with the goal of improving the quality of life of the community members in perpetuity (Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen, 2000).

The first community foundation was founded in 1914 in Cleveland, Ohio. This type of organization then spread over the United States as well as globally–especially during the late 20th century (UK Community Foundations, 2015). Even though it is difficult to find reliable numbers, it can be assumed that there are more than 1,140 community foundations worldwide, operating in more than 51 countries (UK Community Foundations, 2015). This illustrates that this type of communal organizing and the mobilization of local finances and people has successfully spread to Germany.

In 1996, the first community foundations were created in Germany. The idea of actively engaging for the social good on a local level, both financially, as well as in terms of 'giving one's time', spread quickly. It attracted a large number of engaged citizens in Germany. In 2014, only 18 years later, one of the two large German umbrella organizations for community foundations announced that there were 275 certified Community Foundations in Germany. A total of about 25, 500 individuals have financially contributed to the approximately €265 million capital of all German community foundations. Their work is supported by over 600, 000 hours of time donated yearly to the foundations by individuals who engage voluntarily (Initiative Bürgerstiftungen, 2014). It can thus be said that community foundations have become an important player in the German volunteering landscape.

Most German community foundations run their projects on the basis of voluntary engagement. They also draw upon a small number of paid personnel, mainly for administrative or project management purposes. The number of organizational members varies considerably. There are organizations that work with five or more paid staff, and are supported by hundreds of volunteers, but there are also foundations that do not employ any paid staff and work with thirty or less volunteers.

Community foundations attract people engaging for a good cause (materially, but also through time and ideas) in their local communities. As outlined above, the numbers of donors and volunteers has been constantly growing, despite fierce competition for volunteers amongst many non-profits. Representatives of the community foundations argue that few bureaucratic hurdles, a clear geographic focus, and maintaining relative openness in terms of their mission are crucial factors of success. Most community foundations focus on children and youth work, but also integrate other themes relevant to the particular local context, such as environmental concerns. Overall, it appears that community foundations have managed to incorporate volunteers' contemporary expectations for more individualized, non-bureaucratic, and autonomous engagement (Peglow, 2002). The idea that citizens need to be active and take on responsibility for the community themselves (Rose, 2000) resonated also with many engaged individuals to whom I spoke during my study.

Introducing Communa

Communa operates according to the principles outlined above in one German municipality. At the time of my research-internship, Communa had just moved from its initial office—a fairly clichéd representation of a non-profit base camp, with many desks muddled into a few rooms—to a beautiful old villa located directly in the heart of the city center. The entrance hall is superfluously large, light, and elegant. The

dominating colour of the interior decoration is white, with some mellow red here and there. Red is the foundation's logo colour. Two windows facing the street allow passing pedestrians an unrestricted view into Communa's reception area. Offices are connected to each other through windows. During my internship, I sat at a desk with a large glass wall at my back, and a view on a little interior terrace into the managing director's office, from where another glass panel allowed me to peek one room further into the finance office.

The villa, as I learned during my ethnography, was purchased and extensively renovated by Communa for a variety of reasons. One major goal was to enhance the foundation's visibility in its local community. Moreover, the purchase was motivated by the desire to provide a physical space for Communa to continuously grow as a center of voluntary civic engagement, as well as to provide a solid, stable investment to secure its financial sustainability. My first impression was that any business organization would be glad to have such a reception. The physical office space evoked associations of professionalism and wealth. Everything about it made me feel that this was not a typical voluntary organization of a bunch of 'do-gooders'.

Volunteers whom I encountered at Communa often confirmed these impressions. Many observers of Communa's history said that the organization had managed to successfully 'professionalize' volunteering. Communa was founded in 1999, not long after the first community foundations were established. It has grown considerably since then, in terms of the financial resources it administers, as well as in terms of the people who engage there. In that sense, it was often said that Communa is a flagship of Germany's community foundations. Communa currently employs fourteen paid employees, and over 400 volunteers engage in their projects.

By the word 'professional', several things were implied. It relates to Communa's way of dealing with large sums of donated money that relies on strict bookkeeping procedures (the position of 'financial officer' that began with initially four paid hours per week was one of the first paid positions at Communa), and a high degree of financial expertise provided by several volunteers who are professional accountants, and who advise Communa voluntarily. Moreover, Communa's broad network that encompasses regular and close contact with local politicians, cultural representatives, and representatives of several large local businesses was referred to as being the result of professional networking activities (e.g., by inviting this local elite to events, etc.). Thirdly, Communa is regarded as exceptionally 'professional' because it does not rely solely on volunteers. Central project management tasks, as well as the posts of the financial officer, the marketing officer, the reception and office administration all involve paid staff (sometimes in cooperation with volunteers). In sum, Communa does not fit the stereotype, often connected to the third sector, of an idealistic but slightly chaotic and inefficient charity organization.

Self-Understanding: 'Not a Charity'

Representatives of Communa in key positions (e.g., board members, paid staff) expressed a fairly coherent understanding of 'who Communa is'. It aligns with Communa's official mission and vision statements, according to which Communa is first and foremost a facilitator of active civic engagement:

> Communa . . . wants to get citizens as well as companies from [city's name] actively involved in social tasks, to assist in self-help, specifically also to encourage youth towards self-confidence. (Communa's Vision Statement)

Communa thus promotes the self-activation of citizens to tackle social tasks in the immediate neighborhood. This facilitator image is often contrasted to being a 'charity'.

Charity, in the way representatives of Communa use the word, is connected to voluntary organizing in terms of meaning well, but being somewhat disorganized, inefficient, patriarchal, and old-fashioned. Communa representatives actively distance themselves from the term 'charity', often by using a common slogan according to which Communa adheres: 'Change instead of charity!'. Social change, in turn, could only be achieved if citizens themselves actively participate in creating such change, for which Communa only provides the framing conditions. The director of Communa's board states:

> Change can only happen if one actively embarks on it, if one tackles it, thinks for oneself about where changes are needed and where we ourselves can contribute to changing living conditions that present themselves in a way that they are not supposed to be. (Internal Document)

Thus, the prominent contemporary idea in volunteering—that individuals cannot solely rely on the state, but are co-responsible for creating a good society—is reproduced in this quote, and Communa's general communication of its task and role.

Tying into this idea of being a facilitator, Communa describes itself often as also being an organization that creates chances for individuals considered less privileged in society. The organization's primary attention is on projects that support the children and youth of the local community. The focus on children and youth is related to the fact that they are seen as important future, active, and responsible members of society. But also the fact that children are seen as having far fewer possibilities to actively shape their individual destinies is important. Communa sees its central task in changing this, and to create chances for children who grow up under 'disadvantageous conditions', and for their respective families. Luise, who is a project manager, for example, saw it as her key responsibility to enable the youth in her

project to realize their 'self-worth' and thereby 'create chances for them to determine their own way in German society' (Luise).

Structure and Processes

The work conducted at Communa involves three broad areas. One field is to raise funds, either in the form of donations or in the form of contributions to the endowment fund. Through these funds, external social projects are financed that aim at improving the living conditions for the youth in Communa's municipality. Communa, however, does not only channel the money to social projects, but is also active in 'operative tasks'. In line with this, Communa's second work area concerns the planning, administrating, and execution of various own projects. The third work field is about internal organization processes, involving office management tasks, managing the organizational finances, managing the organization's personnel, as well as public relations and marketing tasks.

In all these three areas, work processes at Communa are characterized by close collaboration between paid staff and volunteers:

> Communa is an institution shaped and maintained by both volunteers and paid active personnel. For us, civic commitment is both our mission and the way we work. (Communa's Vision Statement)

The quote illustrates that Communa does not only aim to enhance civic engagement more generally (e.g., in its projects), but that the basic organization of Communa depends on such civic engagement. There are different groups who then cooperate with different tasks and levels of responsibility in these work areas.

A common distinction made at Communa is that there are three groups of workers: 1) the paid personnel, 2) voluntary function owners, and 3) general volunteers. 'Paid personnel' refers to the individuals who hold key positions in coordinating and administering projects, as well as general office management, marketing, and finance tasks. The 'voluntary function owners' are those who voluntarily fulfill tasks that involve a heightened responsibility, often consuming a considerable amount of time. For instance, the entire board of Communa (including Communa's director of the board, and Communa's managing director) is composed of volunteers. These are usually, but not exclusively, individuals who have retired after a successful career. The board members are often chosen because they are well connected to the local community's policy makers or economic elite. But also people who engage on a regular basis in other key tasks (e.g., leading a project group, working at the reception) would be considered as function owners. Finally the 'general volunteers', the largest group of Communa, often engage in one of the various projects (e.g., as intercultural mentors, reading books to children), or provide a supportive function for

other departments (e.g., helping with a marketing campaign, decorating the house when there is a party). Their work is considered crucial for accomplishing Communa's overall goals, but more as 'executors' rather than 'managers'.

'Buddy': A Project Example

To get a better impression of how volunteers and paid staff work together, and how the idea of activating citizens was implemented in practice, we can look at one specific project of Communa called 'Buddy'. Buddy is an intercultural (Turkish-German) mentoring scheme and one of Communa's flagship projects. Mentoring projects are widely established in voluntary work to support young people who are deemed socially or economically marginalized (Piper & Piper, 1999; R. Rose & Jones, 2007). In Buddy, approximately 60 German volunteers engage actively as mentors for children with a Turkish migration background. In total, over 100 mentoring partnerships have been formed since the project was founded.

'Buddy' matches a German adult (aged between 18 and 70) with a child (between 6 and 12 years) of Turkish decent in so-called 'mentoring partnerships'. The explicit project philosophy is to create partnership on 'equal terms' between German adults and their respective mentee-children. The activities of the mentoring-tandems are intended to reflect a partnership philosophy. The mentors are, for example, advised by the organization not to give private lessons to their mentees when they experience school problems. Instead, common activities where both parties explore the city, exchange their cultural practices (e.g., cooking), 'play' and engage with each other in informal and trusting ways are promoted. Thus, mutuality is endorsed, and the mentor is also supposed to grow and develop through this engagement. The larger project goal is to create chances for 'socially disadvantaged' children. This term indicates that children selected for 'Buddy' come from poor, often traditionally oriented and religious families, who are educationally disadvantaged, and who have limited access to resources in German society (e.g., language skills, social networks).

The German adults who volunteer to be mentors are carefully selected. Advertisements and information evenings, organized by the project leader and one or two volunteers, target potentially interested parties. If someone decides to engage in such a time-consuming and binding voluntary activity, s/he is asked to send an application form, including a CV, to the project. A volunteer, assigned specifically to the job of handling applications, reviews the application details. If the applicant fulfills the basic criteria, his or her application is forwarded to members of a so-called 'mentoring group'. This group consists of volunteers who usually meet once per month (sometimes also more often) to discuss mentor candidates, and decide upon which mentors should be matched with which child. Next, the members of this mentoring group conduct personal interviews with the candidates to assess their

suitability to be a mentor. If a candidate is judged suitable, s/he has to tackle a last hurdle, by sending in a police certificate.

Buddy exemplifies neatly how volunteers and paid staff cooperate in Communa's project work. The paid project leader has an overall coordinating function. But volunteers in the mentoring group (as function owners) also have tasks that involve a high degree of responsibility and coordination (e.g., matching mentors and children). Finally, there are the mentors, the largest group of volunteers at Buddy. They do not engage in any managerial responsibility for the project, but are key in realizing it (e.g., to create partnerships with young children of Turkish descent and their families). Sometimes these roles and tasks overlap; for instance, many individuals from the mentoring group also engaged as voluntary mentors.

People, Relations, Atmosphere

The people who work for Communa come from various backgrounds. I often heard that 'all political parties' are represented at Communa. Generally, volunteers at Communa appeared fairly privileged in terms of social milieu and economic background. Antonia summarizes this as follows:

> There used to be times—I think this is now a bit different—well, I had the impression that all volunteers are either called "von und zu" [nobility title] or have doctor titles [laughs]. So nothing below that. I have the impression that this has improved a bit... although, within the projects, the percentage of ex-school directors is extremely high . . . Well, these are the people who are here. Those that we don't reach–of course–are people with a migration background, or people who have a lower status or a lower educational level or something like that, who are in any case harder to get involved for a [voluntary] commitment. (Antonia, paid volunteer and project manager)

The quote expresses careful criticism towards the danger of Communa being elitist. The organization mostly provides a context for highly educated, financially well-off individuals to engage voluntarily. The desire to attract individuals from the less privileged backgrounds (e.g. migrants, individuals with lower incomes) to volunteer was often communicated at Communa. Yet this proved difficult to attain, given economic realities and the time constraints of those groups that Communa hopes to attract.

My impression was that most volunteers were, in fact, all fairly eloquent and well-dressed. The idea of an 'upper-class' meeting point was not completely unreasonable. In particular, the elegant new building, and its interior design described earlier, enhanced this impression. Despite the strong rhetoric that Communa should not be seen as a charity, a certain cliché-like atmosphere, where the rich provide charity to

the poor, existed. On the other hand, however, it is not fair to reduce the social composition of Communa's workers to this elitist label. There were many individuals who resisted exclusive tendencies (e.g., leftist political activists), others indeed came from very different backgrounds. Also many of those who belonged to the community's 'elite' did not see it as based on their own merit and demonstrated an extremely self-reflexive stance towards their position in society.

Regarding the way that people deal with each other at Communa, individuals often said that hierarchies were 'very flat' (Gertrud), that people had 'relations of partnership' (Edward). I noticed that most individuals at Communa addressed each other via the German informal address, using 'Du' instead of 'Sie'. As soon as it was agreed that I would conduct an internship at Communa, I was invited to address everyone in this informal way. Also, organizational members often evoked the expression that people meet on 'equal terms'. This expression was anchored in various official policies and documents. A document with Communa's guidelines states:

> Volunteers and paid personnel are equivalent, and work together in the same on equal terms. (Communa's Guidelines, 2008/2009)

Paid staff and volunteers who held positions of responsibility strived for creating an 'overall participatory atmosphere' in line with the idea of meeting on equal terms (Edward). This involved, for instance, the integration of volunteers into decisions about what the interior decoration of the new offices should look like. Gertrud, a general volunteer, also described that she experienced 'great freedom of action' at Communa, with a high degree of responsibility and independence to conduct her tasks. This seemed to resonate with most volunteers, even though a small number of people (4 out of 26) expressed that they suffered the opposite (i.e., being controlled very tightly by the board and not given much responsibility). Overall, most volunteers described the work atmosphere and organizational structures as flat, democratic, and participatory. Yet distinctions between different hierarchical levels (e.g., being an ordinary volunteer, paid staff, a board member) obviously impacted the way in which people saw and referred to each other.

In addition, the work atmosphere at Communa was often characterized as 'family-like', using terms such as friendly, collegial, warm, social, familiar, or trusting to describe how people related to one another. Gertrud, for example, stated that people at Communa are 'all open, warm, and very helpful'. Antonia said there was 'simply a friendly, open togetherness' at Communa. Luise and Edward mentioned it was very social at Communa, people often had chats and went out for lunch together. In support of this overall collegial atmosphere, Lisa said that there were 'no internal fights for power or mobbing situations' and that this 'humane way of being with each other at Communa' was very relaxing. Edward suggested that also the high number of women engaging at Communa created a culture in which 'fewer power games' were played, as the 'need for self-presentation' was low.

Even though most organizational members seemed to appreciate the informal and family-like atmosphere, downsides and challenges associated with such a culture were also described. If individuals exposed too much of their 'private side' the 'professional respect towards colleagues' could 'suffer from this familiarity' (Lena). Several interviewees also regretted that criticism and conflicts could not be directly addressed at Communa, since no one wanted to offend other family members. Lisa said that she would wish sometimes for 'less diplomacy and clearer commands'. Edward also admitted that the participatory atmosphere made 'efficiency suffer at times', and Lisa confirmed that 'you lose time through dialogues or votes where everyone has a voice'. Thus, on the one hand, the family and participatory character was seen as a great strength of Communa that enabled the organization to tackle their goals in line with its principles and values. On the other hand, however, this character arguably led to efficiency problems, and diminished 'professionalism' (Lisa, Lena, others).

The above statements indicate how some members wished sometimes for more traditional, direct, and simple forms of control (e.g., clear commands). Yet, it was overall clear this was more an abstract wish than a realistic option, given the largely voluntary nature of work conducted at Communa. Most members in management positions expressed that volunteer behavior could only be shaped by making people experience admiration, care, guidance, communal belonging, and respect in return for their efforts. Thus, interestingly, the answer to managerial challenges related to 'familiarity' or 'friendliness' was not to embark on more direct/strict control rhetoric and practices, but rather to enhance existing ways of dealing with each other in gentle, friendly, and overall 'recognizing' ways. People often said Communa's organization culture was characterized by a very 'recognizing attitude' (Luise). This meant individuals confirmed each other positively through many different gestures and words. Gertrud, for instance, described how she received intense positive verbal feedback for the organization of an event. People came up all the time that evening and later to give her positive feedback such as 'this was so great, you organized this so well' (Gertrud). Communa's key strategy to exert and enhance management control over volunteers was to intensify and institutionalize exactly such recognition-intensive dealing with each other. How this played out is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 7 – Control Efforts as Scripting Work

This is the first of three chapters that explores how social interactions, which relate to managerial intents and efforts to control workers by recognition, unfold in organizational practice. The purpose of this particular chapter is to give the reader a better understanding of the rationale and efforts present at Communa to manage volunteers by recognition, since this forms the background for investigating social interactions in this work. Given the centrality of culture-oriented practices in Management by Recognition, it can be said that overall, this chapter explores Communa's efforts to enhance normative control over workers. Rather than seeing normative control efforts as fixed managerial units that stimulate a certain response, however, I suggest that Communa's members who attempted to enhance a 'culture of recognition and appreciation' engaged in scripting work. As outlined earlier, *scripts* can be thought of as cultural texts that outline routinized action expectations in certain situations/contexts. But rather than providing strict action guidelines, scripts function *as acting material* that offers modifiable roles and rituals to the actors. In line with this idea, I describe here the efforts to enhance a Culture of Recognition as the crafting of certain texts (in a literal and metaphoric sense) that would provide direct acting material for the 'managers', and arguably more indirect acting material for those who were 'managed' by recognition. In so doing, I show how, similarly to the literature which enthusiastically promotes management by recognition, Communa's recognition scripts were also characterized by tensions. These tensions significantly impacted the way in which recognition-interactions play out in organizational life, and are thus key in the further discussion of how control is realized in those interactions.

The Need for Managerial Recognition

In order to better understand the rationale at Communa for engaging in efforts to institutionalize a 'culture of recognition and appreciation', this section outlines the organizational recognition rationale, as well as central control dilemmas that

Communa's members expressed. Overall, Communa broadly communicated the goal to create a recognizing and appreciative work environment for its volunteers. The organization's internal guideline for the year 2008/2009 states:

> Volunteer activity at Communa is supposed to *be fun, promote well-being and get recognized*. This includes the opportunity for volunteers to take over clearly defined tasks with responsibilities, and that they participate actively in the continued development of Communa. . . . Volunteers and paid personnel are equivalent, and work together on equal terms. (emphasis added)

Also in personal conservations I had with managers, participation, equality, and being involved in clear responsibilities were established as important aspects of a recognizing work context. The idea to shape volunteer activities in such a way that people felt recognized was repeated in other documents. Communa stated in an internal strategy document that a 'carrying element' of Communa's work is the 'involvement and recognition' of volunteers (Internal Strategy Document, 2008/2009).

The responsibility for establishing or supporting such recognition in work relations lay apparently with those volunteers at Communa who had some type of managerial understanding. As described the previous chapter, people who work at Communa were commonly divided into three groups, the *paid personnel*, the *function owners*, and the *general volunteers*. In relation to who belongs to a 'managerial' camp at Communa, this distinction is useful. The idea of managing by recognition was brought forward predominantly by the function owners (e.g., voluntary board members) and paid personnel. Even if the general volunteers had many thoughts on how they experienced recognition, they did not have elaborate ideas about how this could or should be done, and for what purpose. When I describe Communa's rationale for managing by recognition, I thus refer to how paid staff, board members, and volunteers in other key positions (e.g., members of Communa's 'volunteer management group' that is introduced later in this chapter) thought about recognition. Simply put, the 'managers' are those individuals who expressed to see it as their responsibility to systematically plan, promote, and practice recognition.

The majority of Communa's members with a managerial responsibility strongly supported Communa's official goal to create a recognizing work context. Gertrud argued that since people engage voluntarily, it is important to give non-monetary rewards by telling them, for example, how great they have done something, and saying 'wonderful, awesome!' (Gertrud). It also seemed that an overall 'recognizing culture' already prevailed at Communa. Many interviewees described Communa's work atmosphere as exceptionally self-confirmative. A volunteer at Communa, provided an example of this. She told me that people at Communa constantly 'recognize' each other, and elaborated on what she considered to be 'Communa-typical behaviour':

> My colleague Astrid was ill for a longer time. And I have been here twice as much as usual in this time. *People have thanked me more or less every time I was in for this.* Simply because the business could continue as usual. . . .And I have, for example, received recognition also in form of a little present. It is also the case that if something somehow doesn't work out, and if we manage to straighten it out by investing a few more hours of work, that there's *always someone coming and thanking us for it with a flower, or chocolates and these things*. (Lena, emphasis added)

The situation that Lena described here resonates with my own experience of working as a part-time volunteer for Communa. I noticed throughout my stay that there was a frequent exchange of presents and affirmative words and gestures.

Management Challenges

While the existing culture was seen as key for Communa's overall success in mobilizing a large voluntary workforce, recognition was still said to be lacking in important moments. Apparently, this, in combination with the overall voluntary nature of the work, led to unreliability and unpredictability in volunteer conduct–a major problem in the view of Communa's members. During my research internship, I participated in a meeting where internal work processes were discussed. One issue on the agenda concerned volunteer management questions. The fieldnotes I took during these discussions reflect managerial dilemmas that I also came across in other situations/interviews:

> Anke asks people in our working group to think about a few questions that concern how paid staff, and those in more managerial positions should deal with volunteers (e.g., Where do I work together with volunteers? What works well? What bothers me?). And she indicates possible tensions in these relations, and mentions the often-stated problem that volunteers look for entertainment and self-determination in the first place, and that they are difficult to cooperate with, therefore, in tasks that need to be done at the voluntary organization. . . .
>
> People in our work group respond to those questions with different comments:
>
> *What works well?. . .*
>
> - The relationship works well if the volunteers are open, curious, and if they demonstrate modesty towards the way things are done here at Communa.
>
> . . .
>
> *What does not work so well?*
>
> . . .

> - A direct comparison of people who have different profiles can create frustrations (for instance, to thank the volunteers a thousand times for something small, that the paid staff, project leaders, or board members are doing all the time).
>
> - It is tiresome as a manager to constantly have to justify towards volunteers why tasks are distributed in this and not that way.
>
> - The thinking in terms of a bigger picture can be tricky, since volunteers are often focused on their work.
>
> . . .
>
> - A problem is also time-management . . . prediction and cooperation are more difficult when volunteers join meetings irregularly.
>
> - The quality of the work may not meet the managers' expectations, but how can you exercise critique without destroying people's motivation?
>
> . . .
>
> Then some suggestions are made for what would need to happen to reduce problems:
>
> - Responsibilities need to be clearly marked (i.e., who does what when, and also that volunteers have a direct supervisor when they sign the volunteering contract).
>
> - There needs to be clear arrangements (e.g., a volunteering contract), reflection talks, clear job description, a thorough first interview.
>
> . . . after I present the results of our working group in the plenum, a debate develops around these points. . . . Phine says that you have to take a lot of time in interactions with volunteers . . . you really have to be ready to respond to the volunteers' search for company. And Julie says that 'next to flowers, etc., giving your time is actually one of the most important ways to show your recognition', and Julie adds that often this is quite tricky to do and makes her feel like a therapist for volunteers. (fieldnotes, 20.09.12)

The excerpt from my fieldnotes shows how people in managerial positions identified a range of dilemmas that connected particularly to the voluntary element that characterized people's attitude towards and behavior at work. The discussion above suggests *volunteers had high expectations towards being acknowledged for their contribution and being able to express and realize themselves through work*. We can recall Julie's statement that an important form of providing such recognition (next to flowers) was giving time to people, to be ready to listen to them, sometimes so much that it took on a 'therapeutic' element. Another manager also told me in a one-on-one

conversation, the 'vanity factor can become problematic' when volunteers need to be extensively 'pampered' (Lisa), or 'praised' (Edward).

Arguably, such a description of the worker is not limited to volunteering. Expectations of receiving confirmation and realizing oneself at work, just as the specific control dilemmas that come through in the empirical abstract, represent a general tendency in later modern work contexts (see Chapters Two and Three). My impression is, however, that the voluntary nature of work at Communa (e.g., the complete absence of salary) allowed workers to express such wishes for self-confirmation and self-realization more strongly. In that sense, we can say that the volunteering context worked as a catalyst for certain control dilemmas related to people's desire for self-realization at work and the attempts to shape their intrinsic motivation. At Communa, a variety of concrete struggles over task-distribution (e.g., you cannot give volunteers any task, they need to like/want it), reliability and presence at work (e.g., volunteers show up as they please), oversight (e.g., volunteers often do not see the 'larger picture' and focus on their own work), or possibilities for giving feedback (e.g., you cannot directly critique volunteers) that may also occur in business organizations appeared particularly pronounced.

One of Communa's answers to these struggles was to make recognition an explicit managerial concern. As the fieldnotes above highlight, problems inherent to the idea of management by recognition were mentioned. For instance, Julie argued how it is tricky for people in managerial positions to always meet these—at times highly time-consuming—requests for affirmation and attention. Also, issues of 'comparing' people, excessively praising some, and perhaps forgetting others, appeared to be a challenge. Helene mentioned also that 'vulnerabilities of volunteers needed to receive more attention' (fieldnotes, 20.09.12). With that she referred to volunteers who apparently had been hurt that they were not invited to a particular event organized by Communa. Questions of who should be invited where (to express recognition) were also discussed. Thus there was an awareness about challenges inherent in the idea of constructing a recognizing work environment.

Regardless of these challenges, if recognition was not practiced on a regular basis, many people considered the quality of Communa's work to be even more jeopardized. Communa's answer to the above-outlined problems was therefore to explicitly engage in enhancing a 'culture of recognition and appreciation' (Edward), importantly by further *institutionalizing recognition processes*. Recognition should not only be an implicit part of how people deal with each other, and not only part of an organically grown culture. Importantly, recognition should be actively shaped and partly standardized; it should become a management tool. For this purpose, amongst others, *Communa appointed a volunteer management group* that consisted of one paid and six voluntary members. The idea was to make recognition an integral part of the

organization's increasingly centralized and formalized personnel management practices.

Intent to Control

Communa's efforts to enhance recognition were driven by a functional rationale that seemed to coexists with a less purposeful organizationally grown appreciative work environment as described in the past chapter. But when looking at how Communa purposefully enhanced recognition, it can be said that this was importantly about securing long-term commitment: predictability and control over volunteers' behavior, given the presented managerial challenges. An overall appreciative and constructive atmosphere that created individual experiences of distinction and belonging was seen as the general 'benefit' for engaging voluntarily (Edward). Edward told me once in a hallway conversation: 'We need to give volunteers the feeling that they are special and that they can develop here to ensure they remain committed and reliable' (fieldnotes, 18.09.12). We thus encounter the idea of an 'experiential transaction' that Kunda (2006) mentions when describing how normative control works. MbR was promoted and practiced at Communa in order to enhance volunteers' 'moral orientation to the organization' (Kunda, 2006, p. 11). Hence, the hope was that in creating experiences of self-worth and enhancement for volunteers, they would expose enhanced commitment to act in line with organizational goals (e.g., to appear regularly, to engage long-term, to accept hierarchies).

Recognition, as the following excerpt from Communa's organizational guidelines suggests, thus came along with clear expectations of what volunteers were to deliver:

> Communa promotes commitment by the citizens. An essential element for this is the use of volunteers, who carry out volunteer tasks in the Foundation. The *volunteer work is not an end in itself; rather, just like paid work, it serves the goals and purposes defined in the statutes of Communa*. . . . In Communa, people are involved who work on their own initiative, and reliably. Ideally, they commit themselves for the long term. To assume jobs with decision-making powers, what is expected is the reliability of promises, endurance, as well as willingness to continue learning and training. Communa expects, from all its personnel, openness as well as loyalty, both inwardly and outwardly. (Communa's Guidelines 2008/09, emphasis added)

The above quote communicates a clear message of utility: volunteering is supposed to be fun, enhance well-being, make individuals feel recognized as long as it serves certain goals as defined by Communa. This is not to say that management's expectations of long-term engagement, reliability, and a sense of duty from workers is *per se* problematic or threatening workers' right to self-realization. Instead, the

evaluation of such demands and experiential exchanges is subject to an open discussion in which I engage, in Chapter Ten.

The reason, however, why I explicitly point out Communa's intent to control is to demonstrate its similarity to managerialist jargon and to point out possible tensions emerging from this intent in this and the other empirical chapters. Communa's functional rationale is broadly in line with the 'Recognition Management' literature that suggests an overall 'win-win' (increased management control and happier, self-fulfilled workers) when organizations establish recognition-intensive work environments. Also at Communa, recognition was seen as an important tool to enhance managerial control, *and* was connected to humanist motives. Recognition was not only sought for control reasons, but also because making people feel secure about themselves was an integral part of Communa's self-understanding as a 'citizens' activator'. Many argued that people should be recognized as 'full human beings' (Antonia), simply for the sake of affirming them.

Thus, Communa's management rhetoric/practices and the literature in volunteer and general management thought that promotes management by recognition resemble each other. Communa also articulated other ideas reflected in the mangerialist literature, such as the belief that corporate cultures could be engineered towards being more recognizing, and the idea that 'managers' held a key role in such a process (e.g., Ventrice, 2003; Chapman and White, 2012). This it not to say that Communa's members were fully aware of the academic and popular management literature outlined in Chapter Two. But they were certainly not disconnected from a broader managerial discourse that stressed the importance of recognition. Communa's members who took on responsibility for creating a culture of recognition expressed a strong awareness of the key arguments of the MbR proponents.

The Scripts of the Script-Writers

To recapture, at Communa, paid workers and voluntary function-owners in particular were seen as responsible for managing by recognition. In addition, a volunteer management group was appointed to drive the overall enhancement of a culture of recognition. In the remainder of the chapter, I capture the *specific efforts that these individuals engaged in as scripting work*, that is, as work to craft texts that would outline action expectations for organizational members. It is important to note in this regard that these individuals did not develop ideas about recognition out of the blue. They talked to other representatives of voluntary organizations, read documents on 'how to recognize volunteers', and they communicated with policy makers, who invited them to suggest volunteers for public recognition. Thus there were influential recognition discourses that 'managers' at Communa drew upon and appropriated in

their work. In other words, those who drafted scripts also drew on broader cultural, political, and scientific scripts.

Numerous political institutions and actors on both a national as well as supranational level, produce the idea that volunteers should be recognized and made visible. During the 'European Year of Volunteering', for instance, voluntarism was promoted through various events, live demonstrations and online reports. All of these aimed at bringing individual volunteers into the public spotlight, and to recognize their skills and competencies (European Union, 2011). Many German municipalities, including Communa's, also invite volunteers to receptions at the local town hall, to thank them for their engagement. Even Germany's President regularly invites volunteers to a 'New Year's Reception' and a 'Summer Party' to his palace. Communa's municipality has an official 'Certificate for Citizens' Commitment' in place since 2005. Qualified voluntary organizations and the municipality itself issue this certificate to those individuals who have been 'active' in improving the community's 'life quality and vitality' (homepage of Communa's municipality). The aim is to 'thank' and 'appreciate' the individual, and moreover, to make visible the 'abilities acquired in voluntary commitment' (homepage of Communa's municipality).

It is difficult to always make 'direct' connections between these larger events and Communa's recognition work. But overall, it is impossible to see their work in isolation from this larger context, as all organizational members to whom I spoke were aware of such events. Often, they had to actively respond to external demands to recognize volunteers:

> I had a talk with Nika in the morning after she got an email from the Administration for Schooling and Education. They asked her to tell them two names of volunteers engaged at 'Buddies' who had performed at an 'above average' level, so that they could be honored at the major's reception. (fieldnotes, 07.09.12)

In addition, I could make direct connections between various documents that were published over the past years on the topic of volunteer recognition and Communa's recognition efforts. German ministries, and other voluntary organizations or networks have produced a number of detailed guidelines on 'How to Recognize Volunteers' (e.g., Die Beauftragte für Migration, 2009). Those guidelines not only include information on why, how, and when recognition should be best given, but also provide samples for certificates, presents, preformed phrases, etc. Communa's volunteer management group explicitly drew on such documents and forwarded me a number of those, as I was about to enter their work. The 'Idea Book for Recognition', a handbook issued by Germany's Federal Commissioner for Migration and Refugees advises for instance:

> Appoint someone as responsible for the theme of recognition in your projects. This person can be a paid or voluntary member who makes sure that all people are sensitized and informed about the topic of recognition. (Die Beauftragte für Migration, 2009)

Arguably, Communa took such action-suggestions seriously, by setting out to establish a recognition culture advanced by the volunteer management group. Madita's notes further highlight the connection to such guidelines:

> The document 'Fostering a Culture of Engagement . . . 'depicts essentially the discussion of our volunteer-management working group. . . . the 'Certificate for Citizens' Commitment' is another tool to create a standardized framework for building up a culture of recognition within our local municipality. (internal communication document)

This excerpt thus illustrates how the volunteer management group explicitly referred to external guidelines and ideas about what recognition was, and how a culture of recognition could be established. Therefore, when elaborating upon how managers engaged in scripting work, I sometimes refer to those guidelines (it is marked, when I do so) to point to the broader texts that inspired such scripting. Overall, key ideas about how recognition works at Communa resembles these different 'meta-scripts'. In addition, Communa's efforts to enhance a culture of recognition reflected tensions that characterize the Management by Recognition literature. I use these tensions as a structuring device when outlining now in depth how Communa's managers implemented activities and procedures to communicate recognition.

Standardized / Individualized

Several practitioner guidelines recommend that recognition should be a 'continuous' and 'integrated' part of an organization's culture and work procedures (Die Beauftragte für Migration, 2009, p. 12; Ventrice, 2003). In line with this idea, it was also Communa's goal to establish ongoing appreciation of volunteers' activities through standardized processes. Let us recall the initial excerpt where suggestions to tackle managerial problems were, amongst others, to 'clearly mark responsibilities' and to establish arrangements that would better define and embed voluntary activity including 'reflection talks' or a 'volunteering contract'. Somewhat in tension with this idea of establishing more general and broad recognition mechanisms were attempts at Communa to make recognition all the more individualized. That is, the attempt was to really create a 'fit' between the form of recognition given to an individual and his or her preferences. This section seeks to capture work conducted by Communa's managers *to standardize individualized recognition.*

Standardizing Personnel Management

As outlined earlier in this chapter, Communa strived to anchor recognition even further in its daily work processes, mostly, but not exclusively, through personnel management practices. A key idea was that recognition should become an integral part of and be expressed through fairly homogeneous recruitment and welcome procedures of new volunteers, feedback talks and guidance activities, regular events that increase the volunteers' visibility, and farewell procedures.

The volunteer management group that had been set up shortly before I began my research internship in the fall of 2012 was the main group responsible for translating this idea into Communa's organizational practice. This group met at least once per month, where they discussed ongoing activities and action points for the future. It was led by two people, one paid member who was located directly at Communa and another voluntary member who came in regularly to prepare and moderate the group meetings. The group systematically organized Communa's personnel activities around giving volunteers the feeling that they mattered and that they were being seen. For this purpose, the group developed a broad range of procedures, manuals, and reflection documents that stated how volunteers should be recognized.

A key theme was to refine and centralize Communa's personnel management practices to contribute to an enhanced and regular recognition of volunteers. One objective of the volunteer management group was to better manage the welcome and integration of new volunteers. For volunteers to feel recognized, it was deemed crucial to provide 'good guidance' (Internal document: Fundamentals (or Foundations) of Volunteer Management) so that they have a clear orientation about what their future task and environment would look like. The volunteer management group developed a 'Plan of Procedures for New Volunteers within Communa' that regulated in a detailed manner how interested volunteers were to be received. It regulated, for instance, the responsibilities for registering requests of interested volunteers, to whom and how those requests should be forwarded, as well as responsibilities for scheduling a first 'job interview' (this was the volunteer management group's responsibility).

In close relation to the 'Plan of Procedures', several other arrangements were made for anchoring recognition through standardized practices. A 'Guideline for the First Interview with Interested Volunteers' was written. This guideline provided members of the volunteer management group with standardized questions about the volunteers' motivation to engage, their previous volunteering experience, their working style, and competencies. The goal here was to create the best possible 'fit' between volunteers and their task at Communa. This was referred to as recognition because it was seen to enhance a valuation of people's time spent working voluntarily. Also, a volunteering working contract was crafted (called 'Agreement for the Cooperation between the Volunteer and Communa'). It was supposed to create greater accountability on both

sides, regarding mutual duties. In addition, regular future feedback talks were planned and supported by a 'Guideline for Reflection Talks'. This document provides concrete instructions on how to find out how volunteers were doing. The argument was that reflection talks and providing company to the volunteers in case of conflict was an important way to communicate that they were cared for. Finally, the offer of education and qualifications for individual volunteers were seen as a key mechanism for recognition. The volunteer management group looked intensively into opportunities they could offer their volunteers to gain new skills or advance existing ones (e.g., moderation workshop, computer courses, etc.). This was supposed to communicate that Communa cared about volunteers' individual development. In sum, a number of policies were developed that standardized the treatment of volunteers at Communa, arguably in such a way that expressed a more appreciative/recognizing stance.

Apart from reworking Communa's personnel policies and procedures, the volunteer management group created a 'Recognition Overview'. This overview described several additional mechanisms for recognition that Communa had in place and/or that Communa should develop. Let me give a few examples. The Recognition Overview suggested 'thank you' events as a form of recognition. Communa's existing 'thank you' events were a summer brunch and a tea-gathering during the Advent season. These events were seen as recognizing volunteers' contribution by providing them an environment to socialize with other like-minded people, and to enjoy a little festivity, involving some culinary highlights. Communa also continuously organized panel discussions, matinées and other celebrations to which volunteers were invited. Often little presents, so called 'give-aways', were distributed at these events. In addition, Communa was well connected, and often asked to select a few individuals who stood out in their volunteering activities to be sent to volunteer recognition events hosted by the local mayor, by volunteer umbrella associations, or even the German president. Finally, the overview also recalled that certain occasions like Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, and farewells were important moments to recognize volunteers, for instance by giving them a card, holding a speech, giving flowers, remembering their contribution in a little article, and so on.

Next to events, 'public relations work' was described as an important area for recognizing volunteers. The volunteer management group suggested, for instance, creating a large wall in Communa's entrance hall where pictures of all volunteers engaging at Communa should hang to make their faces visible to everyone. Moreover, Communa's homepage, Communa's internal publications (e.g., its yearly report, information letters), and local media reports were seen as something that had to be worked with in order to increase recognition. Magdalena, one member of the volunteer management group, had analyzed these outlets and concluded that 'individual volunteers were not visible enough in Communa's publications, the previous focus had been too much on reporting about Communa's work, rather than

its people' (fieldnotes, November, 2012). Based on a document called 'Suggestions for PR work at Communa for the Recognition of Volunteers', the volunteer management group had decided to tackle the theme of 'volunteer visibility'. Suggested actions were to change the homepage and to ensure that volunteers' personal stories were better represented in it, as well as in internal and external publications.

The 'recognition overview' listed several other 'forms of recognition', including 'written documents' (e.g., volunteering certificates), 'personal guidance' (referring mostly to the newly developed personnel processes), and a point called 'attitude towards volunteers'. The latter aspect implied that people involved in volunteer-management should act towards volunteers in a way that expressed equality, respect, and personal interest. Suggested actions that would express such a 'right attitude' (Magdalena) were, for instance, to 'delegate responsibility', to 'ask volunteers for help', to 'treat volunteers' skills and experiences as equal to those of paid staff', or to 'ask volunteers for their opinion' (Recognition Overview). These various activities presented here were in line with recognition guidelines that recommended to 'define specific processes and events for appreciation: for example a thank-you letter or an end-of-year event . . . Set up a calendar!' (Book of Ideas for Recognition, 2009, p. 23).

The key aspect that I wanted to show here is that of planning, defining, and centralizing recognition. In creating these various manuals, new procedures, and overviews, the volunteer management group crafted texts that outlined how managers should express recognition towards volunteers. Responsibilities about 'who was recognizing whom, when, and by which means' were extensively discussed and clearly demarcated. Thus, standardized procedures for recognition were developed as part of an overall initiative to make Communa's culture more appreciative and recognizing. Next to this more formal process of institutionalizing recognition stood, however, the idea that for recognition to work, it was really important that it was expressed in very individual ways.

Creating 'The Right Fit'

Similar to the managerialist literature, various guidelines on 'how to issue recognition' in voluntary work that I came across during my internship suggested to 'take into account personal preferences' (Book of Ideas for Recognition, 2009, p. 23). It was stressed that volunteers

> should experience the appreciation as something positive, therefore it is important it be compatible with their individual preferences and competencies: one person appreciates it if he or she receives a public recognition, for someone else this is a rather unpleasant idea. He or she might prefer to remain in the

> background and would be happier with a book with a personal dedication (Ibid.).

Other guidelines stated that it was important to 'take people's sensitivities into account' (101 Möglichkeiten der Anerkennung), and that 'recognition is related to "knowing"' and therefore it is important 'to "know" somebody . . . in order to be able to give recognition' (Engagementförderung Drei F+, 2012). Thus a link between recognition and an individual's very personal preferences and ways of being was made.

This idea of individualizing recognition was also widespread at Communa, and especially members of the volunteer management group reflected upon this, in relation to the danger of making recognition actually too standardized or routinized:

> I think you have to be really careful here. So if recognition gets to be a routine, let's say that once a year there is a–I don't know–for example, a Christmas concert, and the colleague gets a bouquet presented every time at the end of the event, *eventually that gets tiring*. That is [umm] that is no longer a real recognition . . . The question is *whether there is a kind of inflation, when you constantly say, you really did that well*; you certainly have to be careful, that it is really about special things . . . Another problem is, is it a public recognition, or is it something that also happens privately . . . I believe that people have [pause] different levels of dependency. So, if I give positive feedback towards colleagues about their work, that is often really enough, that is quite OK that they are simply noticed in their work. And there are others who value it if this happens in front of others. And I think that there are simply personal differences. Personally, I rather tend to give personal feedback, because in that case it can be customized, and more reasoned. Otherwise, it is so … I wouldn't say just fulfilling your duty, but it easily gets a sense of sure, now they all get a bouquet and I find that this is not so useful. (Verena)

Two key issues come through in Verena's statement. First is the abovementioned idea of finding a right fit, of *'customizing' recognition*, given that people are different. Arguably, standardization and routinized actions could pose a problem to such individualization when the recognizer does not actively think about what s/he is doing, and who that person actually is whom s/he addresses (e.g., as Verena says when you just give that bouquet at the Christmas concert because that is how things are done here). The second aspect is the importance of individualization for *preventing excessive, and possibly random or meaningless recognition*. Verena speaks of 'inflation' when indicating that standardization of recognition runs the danger of praising everyone for everything and hence losing its original purpose (i.e., recognition should express what makes someone unique/special). Standardization in Verena's view can pose a threat to the important individual element in recognition.

Most people involved in volunteer management issues shared similar concerns, and argued that it was not that easy to find the right 'fit'. Such a 'fit' apparently not only related to people's individual preferences (e.g., whether they feel comfortable on stage or not), but also to their task accomplishments:

> It isn't at all simple to find the appropriate form of appreciation. So, for some, it might be that now and then a bouquet of flowers or something . . . would be an appropriate sign of appreciation, but I believe that [sigh] you have to think much farther than that. And a job such as yours [referring to my 3-month internship], after all, also goes in the direction that–let's say–simply with a bouquet or a cup of tea would not be enough. (Anke)

In direct relation to this statement, I found an interesting passage in my fieldnotes. It relates to Communa's considerations for organizing my farewell:

> Nika (as we cooperated so closely) told me that she felt responsible for organizing it, so that my goodbye happened in a good way. She first asked at reception, *how Communa usually deals with the situation* when an intern is leaving. . . . Then she wrote an email to all, who answered immediately with different ideas. The idea of making a movie came up . . . someone else suggested that I should get chocolate, because they had always seen me with chocolate on my table. (fieldnotes, 29.11.12, emphasis added)

My fieldnotes show how considerations were made at Communa to see me off in a personal way. Arguably, in inquiring 'how Communa usually deals' with farewell situations, Nika searched for existing organizational scripts that she could draw upon as acting material. Simply put, she looked for scripts as guidance for doing things right, and those scripts (transmitted orally in this case) told her that individualization was key.

It was true that I ate a lot of chocolate during my internship. The good-bye present that I consequently received was a very large gift bag from a chocolatier, with many exquisite chocolate truffles, and a 'Body Shop' gift box with a body-care product line made from natural cocoa extracts. I also noticed such a personal touch in many other situations when individuals where thanked, seen off, or praised in one way or the other. Thus, the idea that recognition should be expressed in individualized ways was very present at Communa, and people strived to fulfill it.

As Verena's statement has shown initially, Communa's managers were generally aware that the ambition to standardize recognition—the very thing they were concerned with—was in tension with the individual nature of recognition. Antonia noted, for example, that while it was a 'good inspiration' to look at external recognition guidelines and create a more standardized process, one should make sure 'to not get stuck in these categories'. She said that 'for some people, it may be nice to be sent to the town-hall'. Yet:

> It is more important that there is some variety and individuality, not always the same thing because then it becomes a pain. . . . So certainly it is good to do that [standardize expression of recognition], but *I don't feel very close to this*. (Antonia, emphasis added)

Thus Antonia, while driving formalized recognition efforts, did not fully embrace these efforts. Similar to other managers, she described those efforts as the best possible way for establishing an overall culture of recognition. My impression was that management representatives at Communa made sense of this obvious tension by seeing the increased standardization of recognition mechanisms as a way to allow for more individualization, even though this may appear paradox. By having clearly defined responsibilities and processes, it should be easier to know when and how to give individual affirmation to someone. It could also be a means of not forgetting anyone.

In my view, however, the tension could not be completely resolved. Take the example of my farewell present. It made me happy and proud to receive such a gift, because it communicated to me that Communa valued my presence and contribution. Sensing and knowing, at the same time, that the individualized expression of recognition was part of a larger standardized procedure of 'how things are done around here', made the chocolate treat feel less 'individualized', even though I was the only one in Communa's history who received exactly this kind of present. The same goes, for instance for the following recommendation that I found in a recognition guideline:

> Don't formulate thanks with generalities (… we thank you for your valuable help, blah blah blah); rather say: "you have carried out the task (description) with great commitment, creativity, assertiveness, professional knowledge (describe knowledge), and you have contributed towards our common goal (description of goal)". (100 Good Ideas for a Very Special Thank You)

Ironically, by specifying how recognition should not be expressed through 'generalities' and giving instructions on how to standardize individualized recognition, these personal words may turn again into a 'blah blah'. Overall, the ideas of standardization and individualization of recognition coexisted at Communa, and they were sought to be made compatible, but this was tricky.

Strategic and Planned / Authentic and Spontaneous

I have highlighted a clear strategic intent at Communa to enhance a culture of recognition at the beginning of this chapter. It was related to control problems and the idea that managing by recognition could help tackle these. This strategic intent, arguably, implied that recognition at Communa had to be planned and actively

implemented (as the attempts to standardize related processes show). Somewhat contradictory to this stood the idea often communicated by managers that recognition should be authentic, sincere, and spontaneous. It was considered to be particularly meaningful, if recognition was given for its own sake. Arguably, this becomes tricky within a broader managerialist orientation, as I highlight in this section.

Planning Recognition Events

An important part of Communa's recognition policies was to send volunteers to recognition events. I want to take a closer look here at the organizational efforts to plan and organize such events:

> I overheard a conversation in the kitchen. Matthias [board member] asked Sascha [project coordinator] to be prepared to nominate volunteers for the mayor's recognition ceremony at the town hall. Sascha answered they are all already aware of this and on it. (fieldnotes 13.09.12)

A few days later, I shared an office with Sascha and could overhear how she called up several volunteers to invite them to the mayor's reception:

> Sascha calls up different volunteers . . .: It is quite a formal call... Sascha says something along the lines: 'since you have been so engaged–which is great–we are so happy that the municipality wants to honor this engagement. We would like to suggest you as a fitting candidate to go to the event. We cannot, however, guarantee that you will be invited because the final decision about the invitation is made by the major's administration. We would merely like to know today if we are allowed to suggest you and for this purpose, forward your data'. Most people whom Sascha called (I overheard ca. 5 calls) say 'yes' immediately. But there is also a woman who rejects this decisively, which is immediately accepted by Sascha without inquiring why. (fieldnotes, 17.09.12).

The fieldnotes highlight the intense and time-consuming labour that went into implementing recognition. To act in line with broader recognition scripts (e.g., sending people to special events) required, as discussed by Goffman (1959), extensive 'dramaturgical circumspection'. Managers at Communa put great effort and foresight into designing a successful performance. For instance, willing actors were cast ('Are we allowed to suggest you') and prepared for the show to minimize unforeseen and undesired negative emotions ('We cannot guarantee that you will be invited, this is out of our control'). Sometimes such casting involved considerations about trade-offs:

> This morning Rachel told me that she had finally managed to convince one of the volunteers to be nominated for the recognition ceremony. She said it really took her quite some effort to convince Jacky to do this because Jacky is rather shy and does not

> want to stand up in public. Rachel said last time she nominated someone who could also represent Communa. Jacky, she is a bit afraid can perhaps not perform so well on stage because she is not such a public person. But she would really fit otherwise (and that's why she also chose her in the end). She has been very committed for a long time and also donates. So in that sense she is a perfect volunteer, according to Rachel. (fieldnotes 11.9.12)

These considerations show that it was not always easy to find suitable volunteers. Rachel mentioned several times that people had declined to be sent to events, but requests from politicians came so often, and jokingly she said once: 'Oh man, soon I'll have no volunteers left whom I can send' (Rachel). Also, apparently not just anyone could be selected. Practicing foresight also demanded thinking about why volunteers were the 'right' ones to be recognized. Interestingly, in addition to quite obvious evaluation criteria (e.g., frequency of engagement, reliability, passion, etc.), also the ability to perform correctly in their response to recognition was considered.

Overall, it can be said that in adhering to organizational recognition scripts (i.e., 'send volunteers to recognition events'), managers at Communa created, and shaped anew, action expectations about how such events should unfold. In calling on people, and preparing them for a certain scenario, they engaged in extensive symbolic communication and the outlining of action expectations. For instance, to call up a volunteer to invite him or her to an event is a gesture that signals exclusivity ('we have chosen you!'). At the same time, such a call also implies: 'Since we have chosen you as someone who is special and representable to be sent, do not let us down. Perform in line with the perhaps rather formal conventions of such events.' These efforts to practice recognition demonstrate a great amount of planning, and a strategic intent is implicit. Such events are, importantly, about publicly setting examples for other people to volunteer, as well as creating long-term commitment amongst those who are already engaged. These efforts stand thus in contrast to claims for more spontaneous, and arguably 'pure' forms of recognition.

Recognition for its Own Sake

I often heard managers say that recognition should be authentic, sincere and spontaneous. This was sometimes summarized by the saying that recognition should have the 'nature of a gift, not a commitment' (101 Möglichkeiten der Anerkennung). According to this idea, recognition should not be expressed with the goal of getting something in return (e.g., the volunteers' engagement and commitment). Instead, recognition should be expressed simply because one wants another person to 'flourish' (Lena) and to see and appreciate them 'as they are as human beings' (Anke).

Thus, next to the planned and strategic character of recognition at Communa, I encountered the idea and a strong desire, to give something more pure and spontaneous, something that escaped exchange and planning logistics. Antonia, one head of the volunteer management group, exemplified stood for these two contradictory ambitions. While on a formal level she drove and supported initiatives to institutionalize a culture of recognition, she also expressed doubts towards 'overly formalized forms of recognition' (Antonia). According to Antonia, 'spontaneous' and 'unconscious' recognition was important:

> If something is good, I simply say it, I don't think about it. I believe in any case that I say 'thank you' a lot, but well. I do it more because it is part of my nature, and I like saying it. . . . But the thought that this somehow is 'recognition' and that I do it for a purpose is actually really far away–even though now it is getting more conscious [referring to the formalization of recognition]. Because actually I am. . . this formal recognition, I am rather . . . well, precisely things such as having to write birthday cards, you have already noticed this, I have a total aversion, and I always forget birthdays. (Antonia)

Having worked closely with Antonia, I feel the need to affirm her statement, and to let it stand alone as an expression of how she interacted with people. While Antonia belonged without doubt to a managerial camp, and was responsible for institutionalizing recognition, she did also express recognition for its own sake. Thus, these two orientations appeared to coexist at Communa, and it would be too easy to subsume one under the other. But, I increasingly noticed how a strategic/planned approach to recognition interrelated with an authentic/spontaneous take on recognition, and that it was not always easy to separate those.

Also another member of the volunteer management group contrasted formalized recognition efforts such as giving flowers, etc. as something 'external' and 'highly symbolic' to 'the thing itself'. By the latter, she implied that 'recognition itself' was reached if you simply 'accept what people have done as something that matters' (Verena). She hinted at a more fundamental form of respect that should characterize interactions, rather than efforts to mold other people's behavior in line with one's own ideas.

Interestingly, members of the volunteer management group became more aware of the need to give 'sincere and personal recognition' (internal documentation). Hence the idea of authentic recognition was also discussed from a managerial perspective. I encountered similar ideas in the recognition brochures, that recognition should be authentic; something that comes from within, and is given from person to person. Moreover, this is assumed to be rather a spontaneous act than a long-term strategy. This thought is reflected in one of the recognition guidelines:

> Recognition can be planned. However, it is especially well-received if it happens spontaneously: as a surprise gift, an unexpected attention (Institut für Engagementförderung Drei F+, 2012)

And also Rachel, a member of the volunteer management group, confirmed that idea:

> And well, it should not be announced that we'll do this recognition regularly, then it is no longer a recognition, if you expect it. After all, *this makes a big difference, what is expected and what isn't.* (Rachel, emphasis added)

Paradoxically, by speaking about the importance of authenticity, sincerity, and a more spontaneous acting with regards to recognition, this could turn into rather purposeful and, arguably, scripted action.

To sum up, I observed desire to escape exchange and planning logistics when thinking of recognition, and instead give authentic and sincere personal affirmation. While these two orientations stood next to each other, and were arguably also practiced in their own right, they also impacted each other in somewhat contradictory ways. My impression is that managers at Communa were honest when they expressed recognition. But I found it difficult to fully disconnect these expressions from a broader managerial rationale that was emphasized at Communa: that is, the rationale outlined earlier, that recognition needed to be given in order to better address performance challenges, and to make individual volunteers more manageable.

Top-Down / Bottom-Up

Communa's recognition efforts reflected overall a fairly hierarchical, managerial, and top-down orientation. This arguably stood in some tension to democratic ideas in the organization, that people should encounter each other on equal terms.

Hierarchical Recognition

When I inquired about possible sources of recognition and how recognition should be given to individuals, I encountered a fairly hierarchical view. By that, I mean that it was often assumed that individuals were more affirmed/recognized in their personality, if this affirmation came from 'above'. In several guidelines I found sentences that resembled the following one: 'volunteers are happy if now and then they hear a thank-you from higher levels.' (Die Beauftragte für Migration, 2009). Antonia seemed to agree with this idea:

> I consider it important that the board of directors goes into the working groups–say, once or twice a year–to participate there… that I consider it a form of recognition. (Antonia)

Several people in management mentioned it was very important that board members visited certain projects to thank the volunteers personally. Also, it was often said that the board members had a special responsibility for making sure they greet and treat everyone in an appreciative way. Thus, arguably, individuals who were hierarchically in a somewhat 'higher' position, were also seen as more suitable to be 'recognition givers', whereas those ranked supposedly lower (e.g., volunteers engaged in the projects, and who did not have a specifically important internal function) were the 'takers of recognition'. One voluntary member of the board supported this by saying:

> I have nobody above me who somehow gives me a bouquet of flowers and says you did that well. That is my role in front of others. (Helene)

The idea that effective recognition should come from above was often articulated, especially in work meetings. During my ethnography, I noted that members of Communa's board took such scripts seriously, and paid very careful attention to always greet everyone in a personal and warm way. In opposition to the idea of a more 'spontaneous' and 'authentic' recognition, this consciousness about one's responsibility as a 'superior' made recognition gestures often appear to come out of a sense of duty, as I noted during my internship:

> Yesterday Edward came in and said again: 'Hello Anna' (putting his head through the door, but looking like he was in a hurry to leave immediately). 'I just wanted to quickly say hello' he added and closed the door again. I assume it's his way of showing presence, and being collegial. But it did not seem to be very convenient for him to put his head through all office doors that day if he was busy. Does he think he needs to do it anyway so that we feel appreciated? (fieldnotes 12.10.12)

While it is difficult to judge Edward's intention, the fieldnotes illustrate a sense of obligation I increasingly noticed amongst Communa's board members, to show an interest in how people were doing, by exchanging a few words through the door. This is not to say that a genuine interest in other people did not exist. But I also felt that it was accompanied by a fear that if they did not pay enough attention to these matters, something would go wrong at Communa.

In close relation to the idea that recognition was given by superiors, recognition was seen as given and planned by experts. In Communa's case, the responsibility for creating a recognizing work culture was seen to lie mainly with the 'function owners' and the 'paid personnel'. As core representatives of Communa, they have a central responsibility for creating a 'climate of mutual appreciation/esteem [Wertschätzung] and trust' (Communa's Guidelines 2008/09). The creation of a volunteer

management group exemplifies further how Communa sought to translate this idea of having 'recognition specialists' into practice.

Relations of Equality

Again somewhat in tension with the hierarchical view of recognition, I often encountered the logic that true equality was key to communicate recognition. As mentioned earlier, the volunteer management group promoted the 'right attitude' as one important element to communicate recognition. By that, members of that group implied that recognition should not be given out of a feeling of superiority, but that one should 'really' be ready to ask volunteers for help, to ask them for their opinion, and to see their activities as a real contribution. One (voluntary) member of the volunteer management group noted, for example, that the way in which paid members and function owners talked about general volunteers (as wanting to be 'pampered') was sometimes belittling, despite an official rhetoric at Communa that equality was key to how people interacted. As stated earlier, in its official guidelines, Communa promoted such equality, arguably, also as an important element of a recognizing stance:

> Volunteer activity at Communa is supposed to be fun, promote well-being and get recognized. This includes that volunteers have the opportunity to take over clearly defined tasks with responsibilities, and that they participate actively in the continued development of Communa. . . . Volunteers and paid personnel are equivalent, and work together on equal terms [auf gleicher Augenhöhe]. (Communa's Guidelines 2008/2009, emphasis added).

Arguably, such an ideal of equality was in tension with the way in which some individuals who were supposedly in a 'higher' position were seen as particularly qualified to give recognition.

In line with the idea of recognition as emerging in relations of equality, I often heard that real recognition does not come from above (e.g., in form of a praise by a superior), but through the work that people were doing and the human relationships that developed in the projects. That is, if volunteers engaged with their target group (for example with the Turkish mentees) on equal terms, the most important affirmative feedback was to see how social change could be reached and how, for instance, the children of the projects showed increased affection towards the volunteers. Individuals in any type of position at Communa recounted experiences of such

Also, official guidelines reproduced this idea of recognition as emerging through such relations:

> If the benefiting children experience academic success and enjoy the relationship, this is the most important form of recognition, and reward, for the volunteers.' (Die Beauftragte für Migration, 2009)

In line with this statement, one volunteer in a managerial position at Communa reported to me that she felt truly recognized when she was once, for PR purposes, participating in a rehearsal of a children's dance project. One girl, who could not join in because of an injury, sat next to her, and asked her what she was doing. The volunteer answered that she was going to report about this project in the newspaper, so that a lot of people would support this project. The girl told her 'I think this is great. Please continue doing this, so I can continue to dance'. According to the volunteer, these situations provided her with the most important affirmation about herself and her work. Stories like that also circulated amongst Communa's managers, and seemed to strengthen the idea that recognition was about creating 'conditions favorable to such interpersonal, recognizing relationships' (Antonia).

Control Efforts as Scripting Work

I have conceptualized managers' various efforts and reflections to engineer a culture of recognition at Communa as scripting work. This does not mean that managers necessarily literally wrote down scripts (even though this also happened). My understanding of scripting work is inspired by Goffman's (1959) metaphoric and dramaturgic approach to social life (acknowledging though that what is seen as theater, implies often actual acting). Accordingly, scripting work encompasses more broadly the crafting of culturally embedded and often ritualized guidelines for individual acting (including the expression of thoughts and feelings).

In creating various manuals, new procedures and overviews, the volunteer management group, for instance, crafted texts that directly outlined how managers should express recognition towards volunteers. The suggested actions had a routine character and they were meant to be repeated (e.g., interviews, yearly events, publication of newsletters). Literally speaking, managers had, for instance, new 'Reflection Talk Guidelines', 'First Interview Guidelines', 'Plans of Procedures' or 'Recognition Overviews' at hand that would tell them in quite detailed forms what to say or do, when, and under what circumstances. In addition, the volunteer management group crafted more loose and open scripts that contained action guidelines for a 'right attitude' towards volunteers, or that reinforced and confirmed existing routines at Communa, such as sending volunteers to large recognition events. These action expectations were more open in the sense that not every step was documented.

Several scripts (if not most) did not exist materially but were communicated orally or even habitually (e.g., by performing desirable actions) amongst paid staff and voluntary function owners, for instance, during meetings, lunches, festivities, etc. (see Chapter Eight, 'frequent verbal praise and thank you' where 'everyone thanks the cook'). We can recall how Nika asked around in the organization to find out how the organization 'usually deals with the situation when a volunteer is leaving'. Such information is not written down, it does not have one clear author, and often draws on a variety of broader cultural scripts, for instance, about how one should react more generally when someone leaves (such as saying 'we will miss you', waving goodbye, holding a speech). The 'script' that Nika had at her disposal after inquiry was thus not a coherent, unitary piece of text (not even metaphorically). It provided, as I suggested earlier, material to work with. And arguably, not only Nika worked with it, but everyone else was involved in related interactions.

Thus, in addition to defining fairly direct action expectations for Communa's managers, these scripts had the important goal to also influence volunteers' conduct, more indirectly and subtly. As I have shown, recognition should not be something that was given 'here and there' through an event, some nice words, etc. Instead, recognition should become an integral part of the organization's work procedures, with the overall goal to enhance managerial predictability over volunteers' conduct. One important idea of the abovementioned scripting work was thus to shape volunteers' behavior with the expectation that the actions outlined for managers would prompt certain responses on the side of the volunteers. Scripts defined important 'significant gestures' of recognition at Communa (such as particular verbal statements, certificates, presents, etc.) and it was counted upon that due to people's ability to 'take the attitude of the other' (Mead, 1934), these gestures would be understood, and arguably create a moral obligation towards the organization (Kunda, 2006).

Overall, my reading of control efforts as scripting work captures both: intention to control and effects that can be explained by the high impact that routinized actions and normative expectations ('this is how things are done around here', 'we know you're this kind of a person') have on individuals as well as the fundamentally open nature of social life. After all, scripts are acting material; they provide powerful guidelines, yet they do not determine human interactions as such. Thus, rather than saying that there are certain unitary control practices by the organization (e.g., a recognition event) and now we look at how this is interpreted, affirmed, rejected by the addressee (i.e., the voluntary worker), my interest is primarily in exploring *how such control efforts/scripts are worked with as acting material, by all parties involved*. The following chapter addresses such an unpacking of scripted interactions in relation to their possible control effects.

Chapter 8 – Managerial Scripts in Interaction

I present and discuss in this chapter different interactions that are related to explicit attempts to manage volunteers by recognition. Based on having established what kind of control attempts—what scripts—were developed at Communa, the aim of this chapter is now to explore *how such scripts are worked with* as acting material by the different parties involved (e.g., different protagonists, the audience). In line with Goffman's argument (1959) that language of the theater offers an accessible and vivid tool to analyze structures and mechanisms of social encounters, I thus discuss a number of dominant recognition interactions in Communa's organizational context as dramaturgic performances. In so doing, I first establish, by means of one empirical example, how different actors collectively articulate and define recognition via different dramatic techniques: recognition interactions follow, to a great extent, pre-defined patterns; they involve significant gestures with high symbolic power (such as flowers, certificates, etc.), individuals engage in the various arts of 'impression management', and the often intensively ritualized character of recognition interactions arguably heightens simplicity and emotions in cultural communication. It could be argued that because of such simple, routine, and emotional character, recognition performances facilitate control, as people are more likely to accept the culturally prescribed flow of such interactions (Alexander, 2004). The remainder of this chapter engages with exploring this question of control. I highlight how some dominant scripts were indeed loyally enacted, suggesting that 'management' has crafted powerful action guidelines. However, by a further in depth discussion of how rituals and routine behavior unfold, I show that this is a superficial reading: scripts are not only enacted, they develop their own life, and their impact on individuals is largely dependent upon the success and credibility of the performances that emerge from those scripts.

A Typical Recognition Event

Matthias, a voluntary 'function owner' at Communa, participated in a nation-wide recognition event where one of Communa's volunteers was honored. Matthias was invited to be a part of the audience of this event, and planned to 'look at people in a recognizing way' as he said. In a consequent interview, I asked him to describe this event. The following dialogue developed:

> So it was a typical honoring event, so to speak, in a grand context, for people who have been engaged in community foundations over a longer period of time . . . There were short speeches with a certificate, and they had also designed *a badge, which they pinned, symbolically, so to speak, on people.* There were in total about 15 people who were honored . . . People were appreciated in their role that relates to the community foundation. (Matthias, emphasis added)
>
> . . .
>
> And then you saw how people were asked on stage, right? (Anna)
>
> Yes. . . . So there was a table, placed slightly higher than the audience, the audience was sitting on the 'ground floor' so to speak. And prominent representatives of the community foundation scene sat around this table. In front of the audience was a moderator. The actual honoring took place directly in front of the audience. The ones who were going to be honored sat in the first row, so on the same level. I found this was a nice symbolism. *So: flowers, certificate, badge, and then people were appreciated!* Also partners and relatives were present, as well as many people from the community foundation scene . . . And afterward there was a little reception at the German Parliament. I found this was wonderfully modest, with sausages, bread, and soup. I found this appropriate for community foundations – so no… what is it called, wraps and these things… It was very simply done. There was a clear message: A foundation has more important things to do than fancy receptions. (Matthias, emphasis added)
>
> You have mentioned a lot of symbols, the space, the pin, the flowers, the food—what do these things stand for? Why do you think is it important for people to meet in this context? (Anna)
>
> Many relations in life should be about communication and recognition. Um, if I share the same work with another person, in daily life, often the uniqueness of what a person does is not seen. Because it seems so normal, it is taken for granted that the person is there, that he has ideas, that he does not forget appointments. This is how it is supposed to be, and people who don't perform, well they are seen as useless . . . And at some point then with this honoring, it is a bit like having a birthday. This is a very special day for people, hopefully.

You can wish for your favorite food. It's the day when you can blow out the candles, and you have almost all wishes for free. And it's the same in these events. Once, or perhaps also two or three times, a person in this life is singled out and presented to others. *As a role model*, but also to say thank you. And this is simply extremely important . . . It is important to have, once in a while, *activities that don't only represent the everyday life. Something extraordinary*. (Matthias, emphasis added)

. . .

What was your impression, how did these honored people feel during the event? (Anna)

Well, if you can interpret body language a bit, then you can clearly see the *different typical ways in which people react to such situations.* That is similar in these honoring events. I sat in the third row. This is a bit my standard row—not far away from the first row, but not in it either. Third and fourth row is always good. In the first row, there were the people sitting who were about to be honored. And the moment their name was said, you could see *that a movement was going through their body*. They didn't even have to get up—this they did later to say 'thank you'—but there was a movement instantly running through their body. This movement is *a movement of the soul*. (Matthias, emphasis added)

Like a straightening-up? (Anna)

Straightening-up, concentrating, and collecting themselves. They know they are going to be addressed now. So they go: I will listen very carefully, to what other people say about me. Perhaps it's right, perhaps it isn't, but I will now remember very carefully what they say because it's my turn. And when they say 'thank you' then, then these attitudes of modesty are of course always evoked… in terms of, 'oh this is not necessary, there are also others…' But at the same time you sense that they feel honored or that they are proud of this, and this is a meaningful day for them. Then they smile a bit, make a little bow with their body in front of the audience, or the moderator and all this… (Matthias, emphasis added)

. . .

You have said when you were about to go to this event that you'd look at people in a 'recognizing way' or something along these lines. What did you mean by that? (Anna)

Well, I did not want to express that I am going there to mock it, don't get me wrong. (Matthias)

That's not how I understood you. (Anna)

> Rather, I wanted to, *in my role as audience*… because, well usually those who are honored are standing there with an obscure glance and don't see the audience, like the actor on the stage knowing somehow abstractly that there are people sitting there, but they are so much in their role that they don't really see them. They only assume them. Nevertheless, they sense if there is *a group of people that supports them* and somehow signals: great! So the presence of the audience plays a part in the honoring. That's what I wanted to express. It's the attention. It's a recognizing attention and presence from the audience that matters. (Matthias, emphasis added)

Matthias was one of my first interview partners. His vivid description of the recognition event raised my awareness for the scripted, often strongly ritualized nature of recognition interactions.

What struck me first was the predefined nature of the event he described here. I would encounter it so often throughout my research internship. Arguably, Matthias describes *recognition interactions as performances*: people's conduct was largely predictable because it was 'twice-behaved-behavior' (Schechner, 2013) – it has been performed and seen before. Take the situation where Matthias describes how people smile a bit, they make a bow, and 'all this'. Their behavior is nothing new to him. Therefore, he describes the occurrences as a 'typical honoring event'. Apparently, the event evolves according to a 'sequence of stylized stages' (Kunda, 2006, p. 107). The actual ceremony described by Matthias follows a different interaction order than a more informal reception in the aftermath. Overall, these performances appear to follow broader cultural scripts that can have multiple sources and authors (see Höpfl, 2002). Even though connections to Communa's control efforts, their scripting work, are present (e.g., 'send people to recognition events'), Matthias' descriptions also give us an idea of how diffused scripts are.

The predefined pattern of social life described in the dialogue can be better explained by another aspect that Matthias outlines: namely, that performances are essentially social; they are outwards-oriented. Performances take place in relation to an 'audience' that in Matthias' description 'plays a big part in the honoring'. According to Matthias, all the different actors involved in the performance he describes have a thorough understanding of and great attention to how others see them (e.g., 'I will listen carefully to what other people say about me'). Such constant orientation towards direct interaction partners, as well as a 'generalized other' (i.e., the range of normative action expectations, see Mead, 1934), arguably prompts people to engage in impression management (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman's concepts help us to capture and discuss the 'different typical ways in which people react to such situations' (Matthias). For instance, we can discuss how people work with their personal appearance such as dress or the embodiment of certain attitudes (e.g., bowing). We can discuss how individuals express 'dramaturgical

loyalty' (e.g., when Matthias assures me that despite expressing some knowledge of these recognition events, he is a serious actor and does not 'mock' them, but has accepted their moral obligations and enacts dutifully his 'role'), or how 'dramaturgical discipline' is required, when those who are honored balance a more rational involvement (e.g., actively listening to know how to react, expressing 'attitudes of modesty') with the expected display of emotional involvement (e.g., crying, smiling). Matthias' descriptions highlight vividly how different members closely co-operate in the art of impression management to make the performance succeed, that is, to avoid any embarrassment and reach the goal of making individuals feel honored/recognized.

Overall, the event described above highlights also the strong *ritual character* of recognition interactions. Often these draw upon different forms of 'simplified and repeated communication' (Alexander, 2004, p. 527) by mobilizing 'significant gestures' (Mead, 1934) with a high symbolic value (e.g., flowers, pins, stage arrangements that place people above others, speeches). Matthias describes how such orchestrated symbolic arrangements bring people into an out-of-the-ordinary, almost sacred, state of being (like a 'birthday') (see Schechner, 2013). Rituals arguably heighten emotional involvement of all participants; they energize people and establish a sense of common purpose (Kunda, 2006; Alexander, 2004). In so doing, rituals are also said to facilitate the acceptance of norms and dominant ideas. For instance, it could be said that all involved parties are more likely to embrace and strive for the 'ideal' character of that recognized person when s/he is presented as 'role model' (Matthias) in the context of this orchestrated series of symbolic actions. In that sense, ritualized recognition practices have integrative effects and the potential to regulate people's behavior in decisive ways. My interest when further outlining and discussing such recognition interactions is to explore exactly such control potential.

Enactment of Dominant Scripts

When investigating Communa's 'scripting work', I outlined several guidelines for action that managers had crafted or co-crafted (drawing upon already existing action expectations) to engineer a culture of recognition and appreciation. An obvious action guideline with regards to recognition was the recommendation to regularly *praise and thank* volunteers. A second Communa-typical recognition practice was to briefly *check up on people* to see how they were doing, as an expression of individual care. I highlight in the following how especially those two organizational scripts were broadly enacted by organizational members at Communa.

Frequent Verbal Praise and 'Thank You'

Even before I started my internship, I had my first experience of being praised for a research task that I delivered to Antonia, my future colleague. To show my goodwill and commitment to not just study the organization, but also to contribute as a volunteer, I had made an effort to deliver a good result. However, the extensive positive feedback for my task took me by surprise. First I received an email from Antonia:

> Wonderful, dear Anna!
>
> I am impressed by the extensiveness of it [my research task]!
>
> The way in which you depict the results works very well in my view: they are very good and clearly arranged. . . . Your list presents an important building block for us since we want to improve our volunteer management. But you know this already, don't you?
>
> *Thousand thanks to you for your wonderful work!!!*
>
> I was also thinking about when you could best begin your internship with us. On the 3rd of September, four new employees are coming—more or less for the first time. It would be wonderful if you could participate in the 'introduction to the rooms', etc.
>
> Do you already have an apartment in [city where Communa is located] or do you need a place to stay?
>
> All best,
>
> Antonia (email 02.08.12, emphasis added)

I remember that receiving her email and the immediate positive feedback of her satisfaction with my work and her concern about my arrival made me feel secure, cared-for, somehow proud, and confident that I could make a contribution during my internship. But I was also surprised about what I perceived to be an overstatement of my extensive, yet not so complicated, research task.

This sense of surprise grew during my first days at Communa, where apparently many people had heard about 'the list' I had made. Entering a meeting room, a member of Communa's board immediately said when I introduced myself: 'Ah, you are the one who did this amazing research list for the volunteer management group!' She added that she planned to read it carefully soon, and I noticed that everyone—including the other newcomers and the chairwoman of Communa's board—could hear this (fieldnotes 03.09.12). This list seemed to follow me in a positive, but also somewhat

uncomfortable sense. It came up in several emails, for instance when Antonia introduced me to the volunteer management group:

> Dear Volunteer Management Group,
>
> Attached I am sending you a list of voluntary-agencies . . . Anna Pfeiffer has compiled it. *She is the one who* has also already composed this wonderful overview . . . Anna started as a 'research intern' at Communa yesterday. 50% of her time will be dedicated to her thesis writing, and the other time she will work for the foundation. . . .
>
> Warm greetings from Antonia (email 04.09.12, emphasis added)

In this email, Antonia constructs me towards others, whom I will meet soon, in a favourable light; an academic, someone who is dedicated, someone who contributes to Communa's work in a qualified way. The framing of my person seemed to resonate in the group; I felt a very positive atmosphere in the first meeting, and was not so surprised anymore that 'the list' was, again, mentioned.

> The women from the AG FM were very nice. Janice [a member of this group] mentioned twice how much she appreciated the extensive work I have put into this list. (fieldnotes, 10.09.12)

As the field notes, emails and interview excerpts show, it was not only Antonia who thanked and praised me extensively for my contribution, but other members of Communa did the same.

Even though I suspect I was slightly more targeted by praise than other volunteers, given the general awareness about my study focus on 'recognition', I increasingly noticed that thanking and praising were an important part of 'how things were done' at Communa.

> When sharing the office with the other [unpaid] intern today, I observed how Janice came in and said to her (literally!!) 'Thank you, thank you, thank you for your great work!' And that she really liked what she had written. (fieldnotes 8.10.12)

Also emails directed to a larger number of recipients often pointed out how someone had done something helpful or special for Communa:

> Dear Ronald, Thank you so much for the very helpful protocol (email from Janina, date anonymized)

The above instances are just two out of many similar examples that I could find in my fieldnotes.

And just as I increasingly noticed that thanking was very common at Communa, I began to express more and more conscious 'thank-yous' towards others. I remember one situation in particular when I became aware of this. It was during one of the first lunches I attended, that Communa organized regularly (at least once a month) for its closest staff members, both voluntary and paid. During these lunches, a volunteer cooked a large meal for everyone. A long table was set nicely with flowers and candles on it. During this lunch, I became particularly aware of how extensive people thanked and praised each other for this and that, by saying for instance 'thanks so much for decorating the table so nicely', 'thanks for calling us to come down for lunch', and by thanking the cook for the 'wonderful meal' (fieldnotes, 4.9.12). I noted:

> Everyone and especially the director of Communa's board thanked the cook many many times. *I felt immediately, I cannot go out of the room without having thanked the cook*. She also got flowers for it. (fieldnotes, 4.9.12, emphasis added)

As suggested in my field notes, I did not leave the room without thanking the cook for the meal. Probably I would have done this in either case, but I realized that I began to do it more often. Arguably, I began to 'perform' as my awareness about existing scripts grew and as I observed how others were performing.

To summarize, thanking and praising were an important content of Communa's organizational scripts and extensively (even excessively) enacted by most members. The underlying script that one learned through being socialized into organizational processes provided wording ('thank you for this and that', etc.), but most importantly, clues about when it was appropriate/expected to praise (i.e., whenever someone had done something for Communa's overall good), and how praise should be given. For instance, people who said 'thank you' seemed to look for an audience to involve whenever possible/adequate (e.g., thanking the cook in front of everyone, not later in private) and to make the praise as individualized/detailed as possible (e.g., thank you for the 'extensiveness of the list', 'the protocol is really helpful'). Hence, people also followed other scripts that Communa's 'managers' had developed (e.g., make praise specific and individual). Often, they explicitly reached out for others to co-operate, to make recognition even more intensive.

With regards to its regulatory effects, my impression is that these dominant organizational scripts worked quite powerfully on people. I did, indeed, feel motivated to invest much of my time and energy for Communa's good that went beyond the mere obligation to 'return' something for being let in to conduct research. I suspect that the extensive praise also enhanced the cook's engagement (she cooked regularly), even though I did not speak to her. In addition, it felt as if I, as well as most involved actors, were not only acting as if we had accepted common moral obligations (e.g., being friendly with each other, working hard to accommodate others, etc.), but that our behavior had become extremely routinized, and sometimes

‘thoughtless’—thanking, praising, returning praise, taking on praise were activities that often felt detached from reflection about why certain things were done in particular ways. It was a habit to thank/praise and it was broadly assumed this was something good that would enhance workers’ motivation. It could be argued that such habitual conduct is more prone to being instrumentalized by managerial goals, because ‘the way things are done’ has become the norm that people tend align with less skeptically.

Checking Up on People

Even though several action expectations were explicitly outlined in organizational documentations that captured the results of the volunteer management group, most scripts did not exist materially. They were communicated orally or habitually amongst Communa’s members, and I realized during my internship that ‘checking up on people’, often by putting one’s head through the door and exchanging a few words, was of high importance. My awareness of this rather implicit organizational script rose during my internship, and I realized increasingly how ‘checking up on people’ reflected explicit managerial efforts to express interest and appreciation towards someone else. It fit into the idea of exposing a ‘right attitude’ towards workers that the volunteer management group had established. It was on the second day that I started to notice this script:

> Later that day Helene came into my office to ask how I am doing, and to make an appointment for lunch with me (fieldnotes 4.9.12)

In the late afternoon, Edward came in again ‘auf ‘nen Sprung’ (for a little while) as he says. As always he is very nice, but also brief and efficient in his way of communicating. This was actually the second time that day, after coming in during the morning already, and welcoming me warmly. So now he asked how I felt and how I had settled so far; we had a brief chat. (fieldnotes 4.9.12)

These two instances on the second day are examples of ‘checking up’ that happened, if not daily, at least 3-4 times a week. On the first occasion, the chats were a bit more extensive, for example involving the invitation for lunch where Helene expressed an interest in getting to know me, and telling me more about Communa. Generally, however, people inquired briefly how one was doing or simply said hello:

> A board member puts his head into our office and says ‘So, now I also wanted to have said hello here’. Then he closes the door again and goes to the next office. (fieldnotes 25.09.12)

> Also, I noted that yesterday a board member put her head into our office when passing by in order to say 'Hello Nika'–not more. But making sure that everyone is addressed and greeted by their name? (fieldnotes 13.09.12)

I learned later that expressing individual care was an explicit concern of Communa's recognition efforts. Members of the board described how they tried consciously to greet individuals and to have a little chat. They said it was expected from them by co-workers (volunteers and paid staff had apparently raised this in working groups and feedback talks). Helene, a function owner, said that she tried in the first place

> to create an atmosphere, that is such that people feel well comfortable. [hmm...Pause] And I believe that recognition is less about the verbal expression–'you did this well'–but especially non-verbal, give people or co-workers the impression, in any way, what you do is important, and it is good, and it is not at all self-evident that you do that. (Helene)

Thus, Helene explains that she tries to make people feel well or special through attending to them. She elaborates that this happens

> in ordinary dealings, look people in the eyes, and *take a moment of your time to actually listen*, where they are at that moment. This is more difficult here in the office—over and over again I intend to do this, and I don't do so consistently—when I get into the office, go up and say 'hello' first thing in the morning, and that sort of thing. That somehow . . . gets forgotten when I have the desk full of things, and don't have five minutes time. (Helene, emphasis added)

The two statements by Helene suggest she was putting considerable personal labour into enacting existing recognition scripts. Her example highlights, moreover, the diffuse nature of the script, and the complex control effects connected to it.

To recap, Helene was in a higher-level management position. She explicitly supported the strategy that an overall culture of recognition and appreciation was important, for both humanistic as well as efficiency motives. In that sense, she actively took part in scripting work (e.g., participating in discussions about how recognition should be expressed, and essentially enacting these ideas on an almost daily level). Impacted by such recognition work, Helene arguably knew that 'looking people in the eyes' and 'taking time to listen' were important script content, in line with the idea that recognition should be authentic, sincere, and often expressed through small 'right attitude' gestures. My impression was that she strived hard to enact these ideas, and even before I learned more about her perspective in the interview, her behavior (and also that of other managers for that matter) often felt highly dutiful.

This is interesting, because it suggests that in order to 'manage' according to organizational recognition scripts, Helene—herself a volunteer with heightened responsibility (she volunteers up to 20 or even more hours a week)—appeared to be 'managed' by the very scripts she had co-crafted. In her description of sometimes

failing to perform (when the desk is full of things, and she did not manage to 'check up on people'), and at other points in our interview, I learned that noticeable stress and anxiety on the side of the 'managers' accompanied Communa's recognition efforts. Given such broad expectations to perform, managers arguably found themselves in a 'dilemma of expression versus action' (Goffman, 1959, p. 33) when they extensively *expressed* care, attention, recognition for their interaction partners, yet had little time/energy (perhaps even because of such demanding action expectations) to *enact* these expressions (e.g., talking to people for an hour at the door to really find out how they are doing).

In addition, Helene's description of receiving external feedback that she should, for instance, greet everyone personally shows how scripts that 'management' had crafted also slipped from their hands, to be taken up somewhere else, and be returned again, potentially with greater expectations towards her. We can think of 'checking up on people' as a 'deference ritual' in Goffman's (1967) sense, to express standardized appreciation to interaction partners. As a deference ritual, 'checking up on people' represents a desirable action not only recorded in Communa's organization-wide scripts but *broader collective memories*. In that sense, scripts appear to lead quite autonomous lives: management may actively inscribe them into a particular social realm (e.g., the organizational day to day life of Communa), but people do not interpret and enact those scripts in isolation from broader cultural or other context-specific scripts. Arguably, individuals who expected Helene to greet them personally made this demand not only in relation to what Communa's scripts promised and prescribed, but also in relation to knowing how local or national politicians practice volunteer recognition and/or media coverage emphasizing the importance of volunteer recognition.

Such dynamics are often forgotten when scholars portray organizational control efforts as rather fixed units that 'managers' place upon 'workers', who are left then with the option to 'respond' (e.g., we often hear 'management creates desirable subject positions' for workers to identify or disidentify with). My empirical material suggests authority in organizations is extremely diffused, and that scripted interactions are a promising unit of analysis to capture this. I have so far demonstrated how scripts appear to be often quite loyally enacted, and that they can have considerable impact on those who work in an organization, quite independently of a person's hierarchical position. Yet, exactly because of their diffuse character, it is important to take an even closer look at how scripts are worked with as 'acting material' by different parties, and what 'acting in line with' such scripts further implies (e.g., in terms of impression management techniques mobilized, in terms of involved emotions, and importantly, in terms of control effects).

Exploring the Acting Space

In line with others (e.g. Höpfl, 2002), I have indicated that performances neither imply total compliance, nor full freedom of action. In order to better understand the politics of performances, and to evaluate the regulatory power that the generally scripted nature of social life presumably has, we need to explore *how and also why people construct and maintain roles in relation to particular scripts.* Based on another highly ritualized and 'Communa-typical' event, a farewell gathering, I emphasize two themes (dramaturgic co-operation, and learning the arts of impression management) that appear particularly relevant to understand how people work with scripts, and especially to understanding the emotions that play might in their performances (Höpfl, 2002).

A Farewell Performance

Sascha, before leaving Communa, had announced her farewell gathering via email. Soon plans were made as to what kind of goodbye present should be organized for her. During a common lunch someone said in a joking way that 'now we have to think again about something creative and immaterial' to see Sascha off in a proper way (fieldnotes 10.09.12). Finally, it was decided that Sascha should receive a short movie where different co-workers would say a few words to her. I got the task of filming and cutting the clips:

> During lunch we discussed what to give Sascha for her good-bye and—because I have a Mac—I ended up making the little clips for her on my computer (nice intern-task…) (fieldnotes 13.09.12)

Already during making the video I received a lot of acknowledgment for this effort. It was nothing, though, compared to what followed the day when the video was shown during the farewell gathering:

> Farewell of Sascha just took place. I wondered if I would go through another round of acknowledgments for having made the video for her, and indeed I did. First, Phine approached me in the hallway and said 'again a big thank you—because without you this would not have been possible.' It felt very genuine, but it also made me feel awkward and I responded 'yes, for sure, but it would have been possible in one or the other way'. Phine insisted 'please accept this compliment now' and I said 'ok thank you'—weird conversation, no?
>
> For the farewell everything was decorated very neatly downstairs. With flowers, a long table, candles, etc. Very beautiful. When the video was shown, many people laughed and seemed to enjoyed it. Sascha, afterwards was—really—

> speechless. Because she was about to start crying, Phine intervened and said, 'well in the meantime while Sascha is crying we want to give Anna a *big thanks* for having cut the video.'
>
> People applauded very long and loud and I felt—again—uncomfortable. Not really bad, but really really honestly: I would prefer not to be thanked in this way. Because again: what does this have to do with me? While it is nice to know that others now think highly of me (the question then is still, do they?? And why is this the point that comes straight to my mind??) . . . it also feels weird because *I really don't know how to react.* Physically, I start smiling in a stupid way (and could not really stop it even though I felt while I was doing this that it's stupid), and then I also started reflecting: do others really think that I am so needy of recognition? *What is expected from me in terms of reaction?* It makes you, in a weird way by touching you emotionally, also quite vulnerable and somehow losing control (over what others think of you, over your physical reactions, over a social situation)?
>
> . . .
>
> Sascha's emotional response was in a way returning recognition to her colleagues for their effort in the movie, and their good company. She expressed in a speech which she had to stop several times because she was crying, that this work here was decisive in making her able to go her own way now . . . And that she is very grateful for the way she could experience herself in this context.
>
> While Sascha was talking, about half of the women had tears in their eyes. The men were making a few nice jokes. The atmosphere, really, what can I say, was extremely genuine. I almost felt like crying myself, even though I do not have any deeper personal relation to Sascha.
>
> . . .
>
> Other presents were given to Sascha: a scarf [which I noticed she was wearing two days later, fieldnotes 20.09.12], a book—all personal presents where people had thought about what to give her, what would fit with her future life. (fieldnotes 18.09.12)

The fieldnotes highlight how this particular farewell event unfolded in line with several dominant scripts at Communa (e.g., the importance of personalizing recognition as reflected in the video and the various presents, the importance of thanking people). Overall there appear to be strong obligations for all involved parties to portray a particular kind of behavior, and perhaps even more interesting, to display certain emotions related to their acting. On the other hand, emotions also emerged, apparently without self-control, and created their own dynamics (e.g., Sascha's crying, my sense of embarrassment). Taken together, this event was highly emotionalized: the interactions felt 'extremely genuine', and yet there was a strong sense of an arranged

display of emotions. I want to explore this tension more closely, and discuss the role that comforting as well as distressing emotions played in people's performances to arrive at a more nuanced position for evaluating control effects.

The Enjoyment of Dramaturgic Cooperation

My first observation of the above event, largely in line with Goffman (1959), is that organizational members take positive *energy and enjoyment* from successfully cooperating in the generation of an overall smooth and convincing performance. A successful performance, arguably, unfolds with the least amount of disruption and embarrassment, and possibilities for all involved actors to communicate a positive social value of themselves towards others. As my fieldnotes highlight, all members present in this interaction engaged in impression management techniques to enact Communa-specific as well as broader cultural recognition scripts. Such close dramaturgic-cooperation arguably set free comforting and securing emotions (e.g., happiness about coming together with other like-minded people, pride about the success of the present, bittersweet and situation-appropriate feelings of sadness and loss).

As the fieldnotes highlight, all participants seemed to be well aware of the appropriate behavior and emotions their roles implied (e.g., members of the board would hold speeches). An important moral obligation at Communa was to care for each other. Such care was expressed by the fact that a large majority of those invited to the farewell gathering appeared at Sascha's goodbye event, and everyone had agreed to speak in the video. In that sense, all members present expressed strong 'dramaturgical loyalty' (Goffman, 1959). In addition 'dramaturgical circumspection' (Goffman, 1959) was exercised in the extensive preparations for producing the video (essentially, a personal, 'immaterial' present), decorating the room downstairs neatly, making sure coffee and cake were served, etc. Communa's recognition-management scripts thus carried the potential to control those who were supposedly recognized (e.g., even though I felt estranged, it was certainly motivating for me to receive so much positive feedback and constructive advice when making this video). Importantly, the scripts also regulated those who had crafted them, in that they put intense labour into realizing such a recognition culture.

What moral and behavioral expectations arose for those who were recognized? Arguably, the situation where one was given presents, verbal praise, and applause, demanded response. Neither Sascha nor I could stay indifferent. Such a response, as I realized, often involved an element of spontaneity and 'uncontrolledness', such as smiling or crying. Both responses, however, could simultaneously be scripted, given that we knew smiling and crying are typical responses to express gratefulness and being touched. Just as Matthias noted earlier in his description of a large recognition

event, we were more or less aware of what was expected from us, that we should 'look happy', 'honored', and 'touched' (both crying and smiling are therefore accepted responses). Moreover, the script demanded expressing gratefulness and pride (Sascha: 'this work was decisive for making me go on my way now'; she wears the scarf that she has been given as a present, in front of those people who gave it to her, a few days later). Also demonstrating 'modesty' through saying something like 'thank you, BUT…' (Anna: 'I am sure the video would have been possible without me') meets broader cultural behavioral expectations (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959).

Imagine (hypothetically), if I would have raised my hesitations about the applause loudly, and said with a stern face: 'I really think you're exaggerating now, I really feel uncomfortable!'. In that case, the event's predefined 'flow', the generation of overall comforting emotions would have been disrupted. It would have been an embarrassing situation for me (who would have probably been even more uncomfortable in the limelight) and everyone else involved. This reflects Goffman's (1959) argument that actors generally depend upon each other to maintain face and an overall coherent definition of the situation, to generate comforting and securing emotions (even though there may, of course, be situations where such disruptions are purposefully created as part of a distinct strategy to save face). Overall, the event suggests close dramaturgic cooperation is upheld because it energizes people and creates enjoyment. As Sascha's farewell has shown, her display of feelings (e.g., crying, verbally describing how she felt) intensified the emotions in the audience. I believe that many people genuinely experienced her leaving as a loss and hence had feelings of sadness. Yet, this farewell event presented a spectacular occasion to 'celebrate' these feelings, to lovingly laugh about them, and to embrace them, to live through them together, and thereby to increase their intensity.

Not many recognition interactions that I observed reached this degree of emotional intensity. But even when they did not, I observed similar cooperation patterns and an overall enjoyment of successful performances. Another situation highlights this. The background is that Sabrina, one of Communa's paid project coordinators, was going on parental leave. People had prepared a little booklet for her, with a personal voucher from each of her co-workers (e.g., to babysit, to drive her to IKEA to buy baby-equipment, etc.).

> When Sabrina was handed the little booklet with these vouchers, someone made a comment asking jokingly for 'tears' from her (as a sign of gratitude?) in reference to Sascha's tear-laden goodbye event. But Sabrina is not the type of person who would cry. Yet, upon receiving the present (at least this is my interpretation of it), she felt the need to respond to it and showing gratitude by going through the various vouchers, and reading out loud what people were offering here, and their names so that it could be connected, who was giving her a certain present. Thus, she made it very public what she had gotten from whom, and people could enjoy listening to it, and responding to it (e.g. by

> laughter, making comments, congratulating each other for coming up with creative, loving ideas). (fieldnotes, 27.09.12)

The excerpt highlights again how the common fulfillment of certain action expectations (e.g., to display particular emotions, to give each other presents) made people experience joy in performing. Such social ease and enjoyment, arguably, can strongly impact people to participate in line with existing scripts, and in that sense, also to accept managerial demands encoded in cultural texts more readily (e.g., to be friendly, productive, appear to events, etc.).

However, as the description of my feelings and thoughts during Sascha's recognition event also highlight, feelings of enjoyment were accompanied by other, more threatening emotions. Feeling the expectation to perform, but being taken by surprise and not knowing exactly how to do so made me feel anxious, uncomfortable, embarrassed, and insecure. Arguably, I was struggling with what Goffman (1959, p. 216) calls 'dramaturgical discipline'. That is, the contradictory demand to be 'ostensibly immersed and given over to the activity' and to be simultaneously 'affectively dissociated' enough to perform in such a way to not threaten one's own or other people's face. Arguably, in 'not knowing what was expected', while being deeply touched (my body just 'overtook', I smiled stupidly), and somehow sensing I should portray modesty (hence again, a more rational outward oriented influence on me), I did not find the right balance between those demands. I found myself torn. Hence, many things come together to impact the ways in which people emotionally experience and occupy their acting space. The aspect of socialization, and the question how people learn the 'arts of impression management' (Goffman, 1959), is an important issue here.

Learning the Arts of Impression Management

As Goffman (1954) suggested, we learn to perform the 'arts of impression management' through socialization. This is not a groundbreaking observation, yet it deserves attention, especially with regards to the recognition and control effects that such a learning process can have. Matthias has been subjected to public praise and honoring many times in his life, mostly through his former occupation, and more recently through his voluntary engagement at Communa. I asked him if he remembered how he reacted emotionally or physically when being publicly praised or acknowledged. Matthias said that he had 'very often been in front of people, on stage' and that he had developed a routine and 'enjoyment about being in the limelight, and being addressed, and getting a public thank you' (Matthias). He suggested, however, that comfort in such situations emerged for him the more he had experienced them. By referring to others, he mentioned when people are not used to it 'some cannot speak anymore then' (Matthias) and that such situations could lead to

‘embarrassment’ about one’s own performance. Taken together, Matthias suggested that recognition interactions elicited more comforting emotions when individuals were ‘trained’ in acting.

This is an interesting thought, because it implies successful performances (that are quickly under suspicion of being ‘fake’) can enhance apparently ‘true’ feelings of elevation, specialness, happiness etc. Picking up on the argument of the previous section, such enjoyment in well-rehearsed acting could mean individuals are not only controlled by the scripts in a restraining or negative sense, but they experience actual self-enhancement, also within and perhaps even all the more when adhering to dominant scripts. It is very difficult here, to sort out what is ‘prescribed’ happiness, and what is ‘real’, just as it is difficult to judge exactly whether people may be unhappy or stressed (simply put) because they follow the scripts, or because they do not or cannot perform in line with them, for instance, due to lacking experience or practice. My point is to remain open to different interpretations of people's script enactment (of ‘acting as if’ as critical scholars would say), rather than seeing it per se as an expression of being ‘dominated’ by management. I therefore want to look at some more situations of ‘learning to perform’.

During one interview, I asked the voluntary mentor Simone how she reacted to recognition and she answered:

> I am happy about it, and that is something that I can express. (Simone)
>
> However, Simone added that expressing gratefulness or happiness towards being personally acknowledged is something that she learned over the course of her life. She elaborated:
>
> Yes. I can accept that [recognition expressed by others] well in the meantime. (Simone)
>
> In the meantime? (Anna)
>
> Yes [slowly] I [pause] think that before it was not always this way, but now I am good at this, and I don’t think anymore, ‘hey, this is exaggerated or not justified.’ I can be happy about it instead. [both laugh], yes. (Simone)
>
> What does it mean that you can accept it well; how do you react to it? (Anna)
>
> I don’t say something like, ‘this really isn’t necessary’. [both laugh] Crazy, rather, I say: Oh, I really find it great, what you wrote down here, that makes me really happy, and I love doing this for you, when I get such nice things back in return. Like that. (Simone)

Simone describes that ‘before’ she reacted to recognition more shyly and rejected it, partly as exaggerated or not justified, seemingly out of insecurity and perhaps a

socially desired modesty. During our interview she described, however, how through her pedagogical occupation, she 'experienced great recognition' and 'a strong moment of I have achieved something' (Simone). These moments, according to Simone, helped her to learn to 'accept' recognition. Thus, according to Simone, she had to learn to admit and express that she was happy about praise. Apparently, for this acceptance to feel OK, to perform it openly without embarrassing herself or showing too much neediness, considerable practice as well as self-reflection (also through therapeutic guidance, as Simone told me) was needed.

It is interesting that Simone recounts how now she explicitly rejects a scripted response such as saying 'this really isn't necessary'. We could argue she has stopped 'performing' in line with dominant scripts (at Communa and more generally), as those are perhaps not sincere in Simone's view. I agree with Goffman, however, that performances are an inevitable characteristic of being social. Therefore, I would suggest instead that Simone. by acquiring confidence based on many former situations of script enactment, has become, to a greater extent, an author of her own scripted responses. One interpretation is that actually by extensive socialization and learning of scripts, we become such self-confident actors, and audiences for that matter, that we see through them. Based on this, confidence could increase to 'rewrite' scripts in one's own performances. That does not necessarily imply straightforward resistance to social norms, as such 'rewriting' is likely to be again in line with some other established orientation. The point is that there is 'acting space' (Höpfl, 2002) and that sometimes, in order to increase such space and reach certain independence from scripts, we ironically have to first become routinized performers.

Another example from my own experiences supports this point. As I have shown previously in this chapter, the expressions of recognition (through emails, public words of praise, etc.) conveyed to me, made me often feel ambivalent. Recall the farewell event, where I felt

> weird because I really don't know how to react. Physically, I start smiling in a stupid way (and could not really stop it even though I felt while I was doing this that it's stupid), and then I also started reflecting: do others really think that I am so needy of recognition? What is expected from me in terms of reaction?

At the beginning of my internship (when Sascha's farewell-event took place), I was not ready to react to recognition in a way that I perceived was following Communa's specific scripts. I did not have enough knowledge, but more a general idea, of how one reacts to recognition and that such scripts existed at Communa ('What is expected from me…'). I was often taken by surprise by the extreme forms of praise I received and essentially, I did not feel that I had my bodily response under control (smiling stupidly). I could not 'perform' and felt that my body was giving away too much emotion (pride, being touched/moved), and that this reaction was making me

lose face in front of others. Thus, not being able to perform made me feel vulnerable. Overall, this inability (lack of knowledge about the scripts/practice in performing) arguably made me even more prone to subject myself to action expectations, to live up to existing scripts and hopefully become a better actor.

Just as described by Simone and Matthias, I became eventually familiar with existing scripts, and I had extensive practice during my internship. When my own farewell approached, I knew 'how things were done here'. I knew in advance that my farewell would be yet another occasion where 'particular attention' (fieldnotes, 15.11.12) was going to be given to me. Originally, I did not look forward to this day, as I felt an obligation to say a few words, and to actively 'celebrate my leaving' (fieldnotes, 15.11.12), just as I had observed others doing it. I had decided to give a little present to everyone in the morning at our weekly staff meeting (fieldnotes, 15.11.12). I remember that I had many thoughts about the 'right' present. It should not be too big (and not demand to get something in 'return'), not exclude anyone, and yet not be too 'cheap' or uncreative/impersonal either. In the end I decided to go for some Swedish Christmas decoration that had chocolate (a typical Communa gift) attached to it. Moreover, I paid special attention to wrapping it nicely, as I had observed that the 'packaging' mattered at Communa. All these actions indicate that I had become well aware of the scripts. I exercised 'dramaturgic circumspection' to make my goodbye run smoothly.

> I was a bit nervous beforehand, but it became a pleasant day full of gift exchanges, appreciative speeches, and warm personal words:
>
> We were standing in the circle and I could see how Luise took a short curious glimpse at the bag with my presents, probably already knowing what the purpose of this was. All people were aware that it was my last meeting. I got some joking comments (e.g. from Edward: 'Anna, you look so sad'). This made me feel a bit calm, knowing that I would not start to give a present to everyone out of the blue, but that people could already tell I had a reason (Is that weird??? I think the central point for me was: I did not feel like making too much fuss, yet, I felt I should because this is how things are done here. And then knowing that they know why, makes the 'fuss' more legitimate…).
>
> I thanked everyone for the good time I had and that I really enjoyed working here. People smiled at me as much as I can tell/remember and reacted to the present with little outcries such as 'aw how sweet!' – when I gave the bag with the Swedish presents around.
>
> . . .
>
> After I am done, Helene rises to speak and says 'we of course (!), have also prepared something for you'. She then held a speech, warm and very eloquent, more or less of this content: 'From the first moment on we had a feeling that

> this is an excellent fit, with you and the organization. . . . We hope you did not work too much, but also found a good balance between your work and thesis and that this stay was useful for you. We will miss you quite a bit.'
>
> Antonia interrupts: 'We will miss you a lot!!'
>
> Helene continues: 'And we hope that you come back and let us know how you are doing. . . .And about the present we have for you: we heard that you like chocolate.' She takes up a huge (!) bag from a delicatessen store that has a slogan on it saying, 'Junge komm bald wieder' ('boy, please return some day' – the lyrics of a famous sailor's song).
>
> I am not sure, e.g. if I should go around and hug everyone (like Sabrina has done, and I observed that hugging is done frequently at Communa). But I don't feel like doing it, so I just say again: 'thank you'. (fieldnotes 29.11.12)

The above fieldnotes illustrate that recognition took place smoothly. I was granted close cooperation, which made me feel calm. All of us had an idea what the script required ('we of course have also something prepared for you'). Overall, it seems that all parties had carefully thought about the symbolic gestures that should accompany the goodbye, in line with how things were usually done there (e.g. make it personal).

I reflected upon this event in my fieldnotes, and my feelings towards being so warmly farewelled and my ability to accept the praise and presents:

> All this [the farewell situation] was very nice and I am certainly 'in the moment' and just enjoying that things went so well. But there is also some sort of exchange at stake. Why I 'fit' so well, as Helene said, is maybe because I also realized, early on, how to adapt to Communa's culture and to take on the same ceremonial gestures they use? Perhaps my study interest even triggered such an extreme adaptation from my side, because I paid so much attention to all these gestures, which Communa often subsumed under the theme of 'recognition'.
>
> When I was handed over the present, I was not very surprised, and I immediately knew how to react. Thus, the clumsiness about how to react to all the positive feedback I had when people thanked me for Sascha's movie, was gone. I responded 'thank you', I smiled, and made a few comments about how this was really a nice present. Knowing how to react to a situation like this, this time I could also 'soak up' the nice treatment much more, and simply feel good about it. . . . while this situation felt special to me, and made me feel touched, there is a lot of routine and practice to it to make a goodbye situation like this beautiful, nice, and not overly cheesy, unfitting or perhaps even clumsy. Like Helene, who as a board director is doing this a lot, and who perhaps, therefore, is very eloquent and good at addressing people personally in public, finding the right tone while not crossing any personal borders. (fieldnotes 29.11.12)

My reflections highlight that despite the excessively 'staged' character this farewell had, it succeeded at making me feel self-secured, flattered, positively enhanced. I noticed an important difference between being an experienced actor versus being inexperienced. First, I could take on recognition easily once I had learned to act, and despite an awareness that there was some type of ongoing performance, I could 'soak up' self-affirmative expressions much easier.

Performance Disruptions

While performances that were characterized by close and successful dramaturgical co-operation enhanced feelings of joy, performance disruptions also occurred in Communa's daily organizational life. Generally, such disruptions seemed to disclose the scripted, planned, staged and strategic nature of recognition scripts more than smooth performances. I noticed that in instances where impression management techniques (like dramaturgical circumspection, dramaturgical discipline, etc.) were not fully in place, or where not all members cooperated very closely for a common definition of the situation, the credibility of performances tended to decrease considerably.

I became greatly aware of this at my last meeting of the volunteer management group. While this group had so intensively worked with the issue of giving a proper farewell to volunteers, its members seemed to be quite overwhelmed when one of its own voluntary members, Jonna, surprisingly announced during the meeting that she was going to leave the group. Here are a few audiotaped passages from this meeting:

> Could I say something at the beginning of our meeting? . . . I want to say goodbye to this working group. Overall, it has just gotten a bit too much for me with all the voluntary posts I have . . . So I have decided to say this now immediately at the beginning of our meeting, because when it comes to splitting up work tasks and so on... (Jonna)
>
> ** hm hm, nodding and understanding, and a bit surprise in the group, no one speaks immediately **
>
> What a pity, no! (Anke)
>
> ** someone else supports this**
>
> Yeah, too bad… (Jonna)
>
> **mumbling**
>
> But you can always come back.. (Anke)

After Jonna's announcement, the volunteer management group seemed overwhelmed with this unexpected decision of Jonna. No one really knew how to react to this situation. No one rose, for instance, to hold a warm goodbye speech. People seemed disappointed, but at the same time they perhaps wanted to react in a 'right' way, i.e. accepting that it is OK when volunteers leave the organization. It was interesting that the whole group who in the last meeting had so intensively discussed the importance of a good farewell seemed to be speechless when Jonna announced her own departure.

Interestingly, the group had actually prepared a present for me, *knowing* that this was my last participation in their round. The discussion leader moved on quickly after Jonna's announcement:

> OK, then I want to thank you first Jonna for all the papers that I have gotten from you. And I'll start with the protocol… there are a few things we will take up later, but first we wanted to thank Anna for having written them the protocols all the time. And we… and I have in the name of the group gotten a little good-bye present for you… (Verena)
>
> Ahh (Anna)
>
> … from which I hope you don't know it yet [it is a bestselling book in Germany, written by a Swedish author]. If you've read it already, you can just give it to me, I would also be happy to read it **loud laughter** . . . It is written by a Swede and in that sense I thought this could fit… (meeting, 12.11.12)

I reflected on this instance in my fieldnotes after the meeting:

> I was VERY surprised. I did not expect a thank you in this context, since my last day was still some days away. I was touched. Moreover, I felt in that moment that this was somehow quite radically eclipsing Jonna's announcement to step out, probably it came so suddenly, and there was some disappointment, and perhaps annoyance that they did not hear about it earlier, but it is quite a contrast then to the warm words to me. . . . Verena finds it important to highlight why this book is 'fitting' for me. So in a way, could you even say they did it all right in my case, but quite the opposite of a 'recognizing' farewell in Jonna's case because they were taken by surprise?? (fieldnotes 12.11.12)

I was pleasantly surprised. But this feeling was also mixed with a sensation that I was the receiver of a 'formally correct' farewell, while Jonna was not.

It could be said that Jonna had threatened the common definition of the situation, as she had not announced in advance that she would be leaving. Her flexible script enactment demonstrated how disoriented the volunteer management group became when they were deprived of their possibility to plan recognition, to exercise 'dramaturgical circumspection'. Later in this meeting, the discussions came back to

the theme of saying goodbye. The following dialogue emerged when one group member explained to another group member who came late:

> Yeah, you were not there when this was announced. Jonna has said at the beginning of the meeting that she has too many things to do . . . And that she can, for now, not be part of this group anymore. No? Am I saying this right? (Antonia)

Instead of Jonna, the discussion leader answered in a factual manner:

> Yeah, and this is of course also a problem—I say this now like this—as a case. I mean if we hear about this at short-notice that someone is stepping out, then we have in this situation hardly any way to react, except of saying 'thank you.' (Verena) (fieldnotes, 12.11.12)

Verena expressed here that the lack of information limited her possible response to a mere 'thank you', something which she deemed problematic. I wondered however, why 'thank you', a few warm words were not sufficient to express recognition. The interaction around Jonna's leaving at this meeting felt uncomfortable to me and I cannot imagine that Jonna felt particularly elevated, energized or enhanced by it. Arguably, the disruption made people's dependence on scripts, and perhaps their inability to be spontaneous within the larger recognition order, visible. Thus, script disruptions appeared more likely to highlight the staged nature of recognition performances, and in so doing, created more space for questioning their credibility.

Impression Management and What is 'Real'

In reflecting upon the above instances, Goffman's point comes to mind that the borders blur between what is 'real' and what is 'pretense' in the performances of everyday life. It appears overall, that the more conscious or planned interactions were performed, the more 'real' they felt to the members who participated in them. For example, the fact that recognition was given to me in such a 'smooth' way during my own farewell, the recognition giver being very eloquent, tactful, overall a good 'actress', made it easy to take it on, to generally 'buy into' the situation.

Also, strategic intent and sincere feelings seem to come hand in hand—I would argue that Helene, for instance, did not only recognize me for the sake of a good show, or to, let us say, encourage me to write good things about Communa in my thesis. And the same goes for my own actions: they were explicitly planned and staged at my farewell. But given that I very much enjoyed working at Communa, liked my colleagues as well as the overall friendly and attentive atmosphere, I also acted 'as if' as a form of expressing *sincere thankfulness and sympathy* to them for letting me in.

However, just as a functionalist and a humanist orientation (simply put) in recognition can be reconciled without much friction in a successful performance, so can performance disruptions that often include feelings of embarrassment, helplessness, etc. enhance people's awareness of contradictions (e.g., planned versus spontaneous/authentic as the volunteer management group meeting shows). This, it could be argued, decreases the credibility of performances when people sense that what is said or done in social situations has little substance. The stark contrast I noted between Jonna and me in the group meeting, for instance, made me wonder whether my goodbye present was 'really' an expression of recognition, or more a sign that the volunteer management group was working correctly. The answer is probably that both are true to some extent. If we follow Goffman (1959) it also does not matter to determine such a 'truth' as such, but rather to notice that the credibility communicated in performances has an impact on how we feel and occupy our acting space.

Thus, closely related to the constant tension between what is authentic and what is performed, are the emotions and thoughts that individuals experience in performances. If we feel more 'real' or affirmed in performances, we may subordinate ourselves more readily to existing scripts. However, in the apparent comfort and feelings of enjoyment, safety, etc. that smooth performances can generate, is also the potential for self-realization (I did feel actually more enhanced when performances were believable) and arguably greater authorship over the scripts one follows. A very small, perhaps unimportant detail was my decision not to 'hug' everyone at my farewell, even though I thought this may fit the script. Arguably, I had become a more secure performer, and in that security lay more decisiveness about what actions aligned with myself, and what did not.

To sum up, my empirical material suggests that potential for control certainly lies in the creation of powerful scripts, yet it is not likely that 'management' remains the author of those. The common criticism that people are performing 'as if', and thereby sustain dominant power relations, does not leave space for noticing the enjoyment, and perhaps actual self-worth that people may experience and gain *in* the performance of scripts. My empirical illustrations support the point that control efforts are nothing fixed, and that one side imposes on another. Rather, we can think of control efforts as scripts that are somehow in the 'middle' of all involved parties, who then work with it in different ways, sometimes managing to achieve close dramaturgic cooperation, sometimes not. Overall, the credibility of performances seems to have a high impact on how individuals feel and occupy their acting space. In line with this observation, the last empirical chapter turns now to the individual level, by exploring volunteers' individual reception and evaluation of recognition performances.

Chapter 9 – Performing Selves Through Counter Scripts

This chapter investigates how individual volunteers evaluate the roles and tasks provided for them by Communa's recognition scripts, and how this shaped their self-presentations. Drawing upon volunteers' personal reflections (expressed to me mainly in one-on-one interviews), I show how volunteers decisively rejected the idea that they were in great need of recognition by the voluntary organization—opposed to the assumption that characterized Communa's recognition scripts. Performances that unfolded according to distinguishable recognition scripts were often described as embarrassing, dishonest, unnecessary, too grand, and overall not really credible. When ordering and interpreting these rather skeptical responses, I noticed how volunteers' reactions to recognition scripts appeared in themselves quite scripted. That is to say, even though most interviewees emphasized the uniqueness of their own relation to recognition efforts, their positioning strongly resembled that of other interviewees, and highlighted a range of collective techniques to reject/accept managerial recognition efforts.

Hence, *how individuals perform their selves in relation to recognition scripts—how they attempt to manage a positive impression of themselves (Goffman, 1959)—reveals the existence of much more complex normative action expectations, connected to being an altruistic volunteer*. Next to the narrative that volunteers should be recognized because they are such great individuals, I realized, was the widespread belief amongst volunteers that they are admirable individuals precisely because they do not demand managerial recognition. In order to live up to these competing promises for recognition anchored in different managerial and non-managerial scripts, people largely performed in line with Communa's recognition scripts (e.g., went on stage, accepted prizes, performed as a committed volunteer). Yet they did this not without simultaneously drawing on counter-scripts to justify their performances. Overall, the discussion of how people present their selves in relation to recognition efforts aims to add another (more individual) angle to the discussion of how performances can be assessed, that appear to be in line with managerial demands, even when resistance is expressed.

Being Targeted by MbR

To give a first impression to the reader, I briefly outline how aware individual volunteers were about Communa's attempts to create a culture of recognition and appreciation, and how they experienced this. A large number of 'general volunteers' (approx. 75%) did not know that recognition was an important theme on Communa's managerial agenda. But when we started speaking about this topic, almost all people (approx. 95%) described how they had been targeted by fairly explicit recognition efforts by Communa. Sophie, for example described how for her birthday, she always got 'such great cards with loving words and a huge boquet', as well as a 'large number of event invitations as a thank you'.

Next to the great majority of interviewees who recounted to have received similar expressions of recognition, there was also a small number of people (approx. 5%) who said that they were only 'little' addressed in such ways (Klaus), or even described a 'lack of recognition' by Communa (Will). Will, in referring to his own experience and observations, argued that he experiences very little 'institutionalized guidance, possibilities to participate in decision making processes' or other forms of recognition like 'public acknowledgement'. He described how 'in earlier times one was not even seen as a person here. If you would run into someone, people would pass you *as if you were nobody*' (Will, emphasis added). As a volunteer, Will did not feel that anyone at Communa would 'notice or care when I leave the organization', and he added that several individuals had left Communa because they had made similar experiences.

I want to emphasize, that such statements present an exception to how volunteers described their recognition experiences at Communa. In what follows, my focus is therefore on the dominant accounts of being targeted by MbR, and how individuals reflect upon it. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that some people were less included into and targeted by Commmuna's recognition scripts. In my discussion I will come back to this observation when discussing how different experiences of exclusion can be understood in relation to MbR.

Skepticism Towards Managerial Recognition

When I asked volunteers about their experiences of recognition they received at Communa, people often made a distinction between recognition experiences that came through their actual voluntary work (e.g., developing friendships, being needed by the mentee family, etc.), and recognition that was expressed to them by the organization (e.g., invitations to festivities, being praised, receiving vouchers, etc.), or mediated through the organizations (e.g., being nominated for a recognition event).

Overall, notable skepticism characterized the way in which volunteers reflected upon recognition efforts that were connected to the voluntary organization, and/or managerial intents.

Most volunteers argued that engaging voluntarily was something 'self-evident' (Nicole). Nicole elaborated that she wished 'that people would not engage voluntarily in order to gain social acceptance, but simply because it gives one a high degree of satisfaction' (Nicole). She thus implied that no one should strive to be socially recognized in the first place, but that there should be a sincere core to one's work. Another volunteer emphasized that he did not expect any recognition by Communa, or anything in return for his engagement, as 'giving something to society' gave him enough satisfaction and motivation (Tony). As opposed to other people who would voluntarily engage 'because they like being seen in public', this, as Tony stated, 'is not the case with me at all'. He elaborated:

> Rather, I would feel embarrassed, and getting a certificate, or having a photograph in the newspaper, *just look what a great guy this is*, or something like that, that simply would not be an option for me. . . . I got a certificate for my engagement after a year, I have no idea where it is… and I don't really depend on these various events we're invited to as volunteers. (Tony)
>
> What would be embarrassing about being explicitly acknowledged? (Anna)
>
> Because I consider this as boasting, about what a great guy I am . . . *I don't find this proper. I would really find this embarrassing.* (Tony)

Tony's statements are characteristic for a majority of my interviewees (approx. 80%) who emphasized that they did not depend upon explicit recognition by the organization (e.g., in forms of invitations, publicity, awards). He said he would not find such recognition 'proper' and quite 'embarrassing', and referred instead to alternative sources of recognition ('giving to society') that arguably have more substance. Such a line of reasoning, as well as the comment that he would not need this, but perhaps *others* would like to be seen in public, were represented among most of my interviewees. Even though Tony did not speak explicitly negatively about those who allegedly need recognition, quite a strong moral underpinned his reflections ('you should not volunteer in order to brag/boost how great you are').

In addition, Tony indicated a distinction that I would encounter throughout the interviews, namely that between *recognition for image-purposes* and the *real recognition*—that which has a substance. Recognition that came from so-called 'higher levels' and that was easily linked to organizational recognition efforts was considered less authentic and legitimate, and regarded with great skepticism. This became clear, for instance, when I asked Simone whether she expected something in return for her voluntary engagement:

> No, I don't expect something in return, in the form of some [laughing] recognition certificate or something. Of course not! Nor do I expect something in return, in the sense that the [laughing] mayor honors me at some event. I wouldn't go to such an event. (Simone)

Having been with Simone to a large recognition event (we both sat in the audience), I remembered that she whispered that this was 'not her thing', and I asked her in our interview to elaborate:

> So you told me that this was not really your thing. Can you tell me why? (Anna)
>
> For me, they [politicians] are not legitimate authorities. Politicians aren't… people who can transmit recognition in my way. On the contrary: I would perceive my work as devalued, if a politician were to [laughing] give me a handshake for it. (Simone)
>
> Ah yes? (Anna)
>
> Well, but *perhaps in this sense I am somewhat different to other people*. (Simone, emphasis added)

Like Simone, the majority of volunteers I spoke to indicated that recognition given by people who held an officially higher position in society (e.g., the mayor, a board member, etc.) was somehow superficial and not fitting who they were. Not all interviewees rejected such targeted recognition as straightforwardly as Simone did, but often indicated they would find it nice to be publicly honored, but ultimately it did not matter much to them.

Interestingly, Simone also asserted there might be *other* people who actually liked such obvious, grand, or explicit recognition efforts. She claimed to not belong to that camp. All volunteers that I spoke to, however, expressed similar views as Simone and Tony. I had asked several volunteers who had been at the mayor's reception, to describe this event to me via email retrospectively. Their answers reflected deep skepticism:

> The honored people got interviewed on stage, and talked about their activities. The mayor represented voluntary engagement as a pillar of our democracy and tried to present our city as outstanding in this regard. The atmosphere was mixed. I had the impression that many people nodded in confirmation, but others also refused to give applause, and made cynical comments . . . (email, Maren)

Maren's description of the mayor who 'tried to present' his own city as outstanding, suggests that the event occurred not only for the sake of recognizing the volunteers but also for image purposes. Her observation that people made cynical comments

resonated with my own participant observation of such events. After people had been praised by politicians at one event that I attended, I overheard a woman in the audience saying to her neighbor 'Oh well, I'm glad I don't have the struggle with those authorities who want to recognize me' (fieldnotes, 26.09.12). Even though recognition events were generally well attended, people appeared overall skeptical and explained such skepticism by highlighting how explicit recognition often lacked substance:

> I found the event *too big to perceive it as a real 'thanks'* or honoring for my mentor engagement . . . Much more I cannot say. The program was refreshingly short, the food good . . . If I were invited again I would probably not go . . . In total I would say this was an impersonal event. Even though I could have expected this, *it stood in stark contrast to my mentorship itself, which is something very individual and which has a lot to do with oneself.* If I had not gone to the city hall, no one would have noticed. And this is exactly the opposite from what characterizes me as a mentor. (Birke, emphasis added)

Birke's reflection neatly summarizes the main lines of volunteers' reasoning. Recognition when expressed in quite direct, targeted and often hierarchical ways was regarded by most volunteers as superficial, apparently inauthentic, too strategic, too grand, and in that sense not really suitable to reflect or honor what people really did or who people really were.

Scripted and Performed Skepticism?

Interestingly, volunteers did not appear to differ much in their overall reflections of how recognition fit 'who they were'. The managerialist literature, as well as Communa's recognition scripts suggest that workers have all different 'languages of appreciation', depending on their personality and that a right 'fit' would intensify the positive effect of recognition practices (Chapman & White, 2011). If we follow this argument, it would only be logical that some volunteers expressed to me that, yes, they liked being on stage, they liked being praised, while others would express a preference for spending quality time with people, or receiving support at work as a form of recognition.

While there were differences in the details that people described as recognizing (e.g., some mentioned a panel discussion as 'real' recognition, others when their mentee child waved 'goodbye'), I could, however, not detect those very distinct preferences that were emphasized from a managerial perspective. Most volunteers claimed individualization ('I may be different from others here'). However, their evaluation of recognition efforts actually resembled those of other volunteers strongly: recognition

that was seen as having a substance (i.e., recognition that came through actual work and work relationships) was generally considered to align with oneself, and therefore meant something. This was typically contrasted to image-related, less meaningful recognition, that arguably helped either side to boast/brag.

Against this background, I began to wonder how 'real' was the emphasis on efforts. This is not to say that I suspected volunteers lied to me, but that I increasingly realized that *simultaneously* to experiencing recognition in the ways they described, volunteers' accounts also revealed distinct self-performance or 'impression management' techniques (Goffman, 1959). Especially one interview situation enhanced my awareness of how my interview partners were constructing themselves in our interaction. When I spoke to Bent, he made a distinction between 'real' recognition as experienced through the actual voluntary work (e.g., the human relations developing in it) and more 'instrumentalized' recognition, referring to public events, receptions, or awards:

> But this instrumentalization (referring to official recognition efforts) is not really my thing… well, it may be important for a few people… (Bent)

Since Bent argued it may be important to others, and I had heard this argument before, I inquired again:

> But so you believe that this explicit/formal recognition is important to some other people? (Anna)
>
> (Long pause). I can imagine that there are people for whom it is important.. (Bent)
>
> I have asked because everyone says, it does not matter for me, but for other people, formal recognition is indeed important. And I don't want to say that I don't believe you. But I find it interesting that almost all assume that for example such 'mayoral receptions' are important to other people, but everyone I ask, would say, well, it's not important to them. That's an interesting dynamic…(Anna)
>
> That is quite an interesting dynamic! And I am hesitant because… what we do here only actually makes sense *if I am very honest* with you here. And I have to think about how much… *if my vanity is perhaps involved in this or not.* (Bent)

Bent reconsidered his primary judgment and acknowledged that there may be something in receiving these types of invitations as an expression of recognition that speaks to him, something that apparently spoke to his 'vanity'. And he added when I asked him how he felt at the moment of receiving this invitation:

> But it has made me happy that Nika has invited me… it has tendered my vanity. (Bent)

Upon reflection, Bent admitted to being more touched by the recognition effort (i.e., being confirmed in his vanity) than he originally declared. That Bent speaks of 'vanity' is interesting. It suggests *being seen as* vain, and therefore in need of recognition, is not desirable. Yet, despite the risk of being seen in undesirable ways, also the possibility of actually *being* affirmed was apparently there for Bent in this event. I often noticed such an ambivalent response to explicit recognition efforts.

Most volunteers invited to be honored at such events attended them after all, and when being asked on stage, did perform in line with respective scripts (e.g., said thank you, smiled, performed the role of a committed volunteer, etc.). As I have described in the previous chapter, there seemed to be enjoyment for volunteers in recognition performances, even in those who distanced themselves. Overall, volunteers' accounts suggested that some recognition scripts were easier to enact (e.g., being touched when receiving nice words from one's mentee), while others were difficult to adhere to (e.g., going on stage at a recognition event) given the volunteers' ambivalence towards them. In order to enact the more ambivalent recognition scripts, which held promises for individual enjoyment despite their tainted character, people drew upon a variety of counter-scripts to balance or justify their enactment of managerial scripts.

I thus became increasingly aware how volunteers not only performed 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959) and dramaturgically cooperated in relation to recognition scripts crafted by Communa's managers, but that such self-performances followed simultaneously much broader scripts, for instance about what it means to be altruistic and a good volunteer. In what follows, I order and discuss dominant patterns that characterized the responses of individual volunteers when reflecting upon recognition they had experienced in the context of their work for Communa.

Mostly, volunteers distanced themselves from targeted recognition efforts by emphasizing their independence. But under certain conditions, acceptance and even pride in response to managerial recognition were expressed. By discussing these responses as different 'impression management' techniques, I do not imply people's evaluations of recognition are fake, or not representative of their feelings and self-views. Given that impression management is a necessary condition of being oneself and social (e.g., in an interview situation), I merely want to highlight how volunteers' emotions and evaluations of recognition efforts cannot be separated from broader social scripts that reflected expectations of a 'generalized other' (Mead, 1934). Those fused in different forms with the recognition scripts that Communa's managers had crafted highlight once more the diffused character that normative control took in the studied context.

Distancing Oneself from Recognition

Individual volunteers were keen to emphasize that, for various reasons, they were *not dependent* upon self-affirmation issued by Communa. This opposed the view transmitted in Communa's recognition scripts that volunteers expected intensive attention, praise, or guidance in their work (see Chapter Seven). Volunteers generally argued that they were independent from expressions of recognition connected to explicit managerial efforts. Instead, individuals described how their self-worth was already strengthened by other sources—sources that were apparently disconnected from targeted recognition efforts and that were portrayed as having real substance. Hence, a key technique for individuals to manage the impression others would have of them was to engage in *conveying 'real' sources of their self-worth* to demonstrate distance or even independence from Communa's recognition scripts. The main sources for self-worth that volunteers referred to were interpersonal relations through voluntary engagement, parallel work life, own family/partnership, and inner strength.

Interpersonal Relations

All interviewees described how their actual work on the projects presented an important source of self-worth to them. Especially those who worked as mentors for Turkish children recounted powerful experiences of recognition. Annika, for instance, described how she received a lot of recognition through her mentee-family. The occasion was the first Christmas season that approached after she had met the family, and which she encountered with some uncertainty about how to deal with, given their different cultural and religious background:

> I was a bit afraid of this topic of Christmas, I did not feel very comfortable about it. You know, during Christmas season you tend to ask people what they wish for, or what their plans are for Christmas. So I always tried to avoid this with them. And then there was the 23rd of December and I got a call from him. Like I said, it's very rare that he or his mother call me to arrange a meeting. And I told them, well it's the 23rd. I was quite busy before Christmas. I had literally no time. 'You MUST come' they insisted. So I said, OK, then I'll come over now. I got there and they had this little package prepared for me. I had to sit down and he [the boy] said to me 'I want to give you something for Christmas'. When I opened the package I saw a cup from my favorite soccer team, and one for my husband whom they did not even know yet at that time. What followed was a very intense conversation with Dennis and his mother about the meaning of these festivities. I asked them: 'But for you Christmas does not mean anything, no? Why are you doing this?' And they answered: 'But for YOU it has a meaning, no?' Relating to what you [addressing me as the interviewer] asked about earlier: I felt a deep recognition of my person in this

> moment. Since it was 'my' big festivity. Which it is actually not even so much, since I am not a deeply religious Christian… But I found this in any case very very touching . . . It impressed me deeply, this situation, because it was so completely unexpected, no? (Annika)

As the quote highlights, receiving care and interest in her person, in the form of a Christmas gift, gave Annika a strong positive sense that she mattered as a person to others, in a highly individualized way. In addition, the instance also portrays her in a favorable light in line with general volunteering ethics that grand and professionalized recognition is not desirable. This low-key, personal story of recognition arguably helps Annika to highlight that the individuals whom she helps, see her in a favorable light.

I had the impression that just like Annika, other volunteers felt generally very comfortable to recount how they experienced intense recognition by their mentees and the related families. Nicole, for instance, described an uncomplicated and trusting relationship between her and the family. She said that over time, close bonds have developed, and that she is seen as an extended 'family member', which is an important form of recognition for her:

> And in the meantime, *I am an extended family member*. I mean I sit there with them at the dinner table, but I also set the table, I take things from the table back into the kitchen, put dishes into the dishwasher… And when it comes to this 'thanking', I do not need to hear it explicitly. I know that they are grateful, simply because of the friendship that we have in the meantime. So I don't need to hear it every time: I see it, I feel it, and then that's good.' (Nicole, emphasis added)

Nicole described a close friendship with her mentee family as an important source for self-confirmation. This description does not only say something about how she experienced recognition. To speak about such good relations arguably also gives the impression to others that Nicole is, in fact, a good volunteer. She is not someone who is out for praise, but who establishes close bonds with the Turkish family, and who, in that sense, is someone who lives up to demands of being a pro-active, engaged, altruistic citizen. Tony also emphasized such close relations:

I find it really special that after such a long time, I continue to have such a good relationship with my mentee family… so I think I would certainly be disappointed if the boy said now, that he no longer felt like meeting me (Tony)

Tony admits a certain dependence and strong emotional connection to his mentee boy and the Turkish family. While I trust that most individuals had developed close bonds with the mentees and their families (I shadowed two mentoring couples, and close affectionate bonds were more than obvious), the ease of the volunteers in speaking about such emotional connections and vulnerabilities struck me. Apparently,

it was much easier to admit that one's sense of self-worth was dependent upon such interpersonal relations that emerged in volunteering, than admitting enjoyment/pride that came, for instance, from ceremonies.

Current/Former Work Life

Volunteers often referred to their present or former work life as an important source of self-worth. Nicole, for instance, is a voluntary mentor who has established a very close relationship with her mentee girl. Due to this relationship and Nicole's eloquence, she is often invited by Communa to speak publicly about her engagement. In addition to her voluntary engagement, Nicole likes to talk about her successful career in one of Germany's largest advertising agencies, which she describes as 'more than a full-time job' (Nicole). Her job seems to be a major source of self-worth to her, and she explained:

> I . . . work for 10 hours a day. And you're never really done, no? Of course it is something very interesting, and I really work with interesting themes, and interesting people. So in that sense, it is a permanent encounter with many things that are moving in my field. I am part of key developments, changes, societal discourses. It's a challenge with which you permanently grow. (Nicole)

As indicated in the quote, Nicole works with entrepreneurs and companies widely known in Germany, thus representatives of Germany's political and economic elite often surround her. Communa awarded Nicole with a communal prize for her voluntary engagement in order to recognize her voluntary efforts. Nicole, however, expressed hesitation to take it on:

> You got this prize? (Anna)
>
> Yes, from Communa. It was given to me by the senator of education. For my voluntary engagement. (Nicole)
>
> And Sascha chose you? (Anna)
>
> Sascha suggested me. And asked me if I was OK with it. And I said, OK, but honestly *you can also choose someone else*… I don't really need this. I like doing this voluntary engagement anyway. I mean of course, I am happy about it. But Sascha really insisted . . . And so it was the question whether I should take this on or not… and I said of course, because I also think that the organization of the project is so good . . . But on the other hand, *through my employment, I already feel completely accepted and socially appreciated* . . .And it is not, let's say, a general statement about the right or wrong kind of recognition that a foundation should express towards volunteers. So for me personally, I like being part of this on an evening like this. And it should not sound arrogant. But of

> course, I have a huge amount of contact and exchange with people who shape the cultural life of this country. Simply through having some prominent people working with us, who are known by everyone. Not that this falls back on me… but I am used to, let's say, working under these conditions. So I don't need this prominence to feel recognized. (Nicole)

Nicole described she was happy for having been chosen for the award. Like most interviewees, she did not fail to put her joy into perspective, and to distance herself, arguing that she would not really need to be publicly honored, and that Communa could 'also choose someone else' to be rewarded. In elaborating upon her job, Nicole justifies her independence, suggesting that others who would perhaps have a different background may find such recognition more special. Interestingly, just like Nicole, all volunteers I spoke to said that they were not dependent upon such grand appraisal, public events and the like.

Klaus also said he did 'not rely' upon being explicitly praised by Communa:

> I have been invited to several events! But so far I have not gone… because it's only to meet other people from our town. But *I know enough of those*. (Klaus)

Overall, Klaus evoked the impression that he did not care much about being integrated through his voluntary engagement, for example by being invited to social events. In his portrayal, he was mainly engaging for the cause. When I inquired further whether it mattered to him to have more regular contact with Communa's other organizational members, he reacted defensively, and said:

> No, I mean, what should I say about this? There is organizationally speaking not much for me to do here. I find this also good. I am not the type of person who wants to be bossed around. Therefore I find this distance also quite good. (Klaus)

Despite saying to be OK with being distanced, I had the impression Klaus was not as closely integrated into Communa's work processes, as he would perhaps like to be. At another point in he interview he said:

> I have thought about engaging perhaps more here at Communa. I mean, I am a good organizer. I mean, I worked in marketing and *I have led a whole department*. Sometimes I think that I would engage here. But sometimes I also think that they have to learn by themselves how to manage an organization. (Klaus)

By drawing upon his leadership skills and referring back to his former work life, Klaus indicated that it is actually not him, who is needy of Communa (e.g., their social events, the feeling of being needed through work), but that it is rather the other way round: due to his longstanding experience and skills acquired in a prestigious job, Communa would profit from integrating him further.

Of course, there is a danger of over-interpreting what Klaus 'really' meant. But my interpretation is that he also used his former work experience to construct an alternative, legitimate, source of self-worth that assisted him to evoke an impression of himself as being independent from Communa's explicit recognition (e.g., through being given responsibility). My sense was that he was more eager to work for Communa than he suggested in the interview. His choice for taking a sabbatical from his former (prestigious) work has arguably left him with a gap to fill in:

> I am out of my working life now. I used to be a manager with employees and so on . . . And then it's over. And you are a house-husband. My wife works, and I cook for her at night. But this is somehow, well, not really balancing. (Klaus)

Paradoxically, while his previous work identity seemed to be lost in some way, it still helped him to support claims for independence from Communa's recognition efforts. As I have overall highlighted in this section, the eagerness to position oneself as independent (e.g., from public recognition, from prominence) does not only tell us how people feel/think. It also tells us about the general norms that exist in relation to volunteering, and that provide subtler behavioral scripts that work in combination with the more obvious affirmative external definitions, communicated through targeted recognition efforts.

Inner Strength

In addition to referring to immediate relationships in volunteering, and to the confirmation through one's current/former work life, several people also referred to an inner source of confirmation. Here, the idea that you should not be externally guided (e.g., find acceptance, appreciation, affirmation from others), but that recognition came from within, was expressed. Simone's story is illustrative here. She argued that she would 'never' rely or 'depend upon official recognition' issued by Communa for gaining self-worth (Simone). Instead, Simone expressed that gaining 'self-esteem' was not only in the hands of the 'recognition giver' but that people 'themselves' were responsible for 'getting what they need'. Simone seemed to connect the need for external recognition to being a passive human being, a notion that she rejected when portraying herself:

> So, if not official recognition, what are your sources of self-confidence; where do you take the security from, that what you are doing is good? (Anna)
>
> Well, for one, I certainly have gotten some of this due to my professional activity . . . I have experienced great recognition (Simone)
>
> . . .

> So because you have often received positive feedback before, this gives you security? (Anna)
>
> Yes… But actually, during my life I have also attended many, workshops and therapies and who knows what else, where you learn precisely this kind of thing: how to deal with recognition, how can you [laughing] achieve that you [searches for words] … well, that you stand for something, what you have learned, and that you also establish such a self-confidence and self-assurance in this direction . . for example this model of team centered interaction… have you heard of it? . . . That, for example, is a really, really strong system, that emphasizes that you are the person who is responsible for what you do, and where you are always taken back to observe, whatever I do, I am responsible for it, and umm [pause] … and I am also proud of it, etc. As a result, you can also achieve strength of character in your own person. (Simone)

While not many interviewees reflected so explicitly on how they have achieved a type of inner independence from allegedly superficial recognition efforts, others also emphasized how they found recognition in themselves. Tony, said 'real recognition cannot come from the outside, but needs to be found within yourself', and Maren also spoke of an 'inner confidence' that gave her the feeling that what she was doing was good. In sum, referring to an inner strength, that emerged independent of targeted recognition efforts, seemed to be another strategy that individuals used to portray their selves towards me.

Family/Partnership

Lastly, my interviewees also spoke about recognition sources that were linked to their engagement, again outside of Communa's direct sphere of influence. This was not the most prominent way of portraying independence, but still important enough that I want to give one example of Klaus:

> So when we come back to the theme of recognition, do I understand you correctly that you don't expect a lot of it as you're doing something that is almost natural to you…? (Anna)
>
> Yeah, and *my wife loves me for this* I think. She loves me for doing this. And this means much more to me. And this is clear, she loves me for the way I am . . . And yeah, that's the way it is. That is important for me I think, speaking of recognition. My private relationship. (Klaus, emphasis added)

Thus, Klaus described a source of recognition for his engagement external to the organization, or broader society (i.e. his wife and her love for him as an emphatic person, expressed through his engagement). Also being loved by your wife does not

represent an outrageously vain, self-referential personality, but reflects back on Klaus as someone who cares about deep relationships.

To sum up this section, contrasting non-legitimate to legitimate recognition sources, and arguing to be primarily touched by the legitimate ones, helped people to portray their independence of Communa's recognition scripts and to overall manage an impression that who they were was in line with broader accepted volunteering values. By that, I refer to volunteers' emphasis on what is of substance (e.g., interpersonal relationships, career, inner strength, partnership/family) and was presented as a true source of recognition. In addition to forthrightly distancing themselves from targeted recognition efforts by Communa, the interviews also revealed a number of impression management techniques that were mobilized to justify moments where allegedly superficial recognition was acceptable, or indeed accepted.

Accepting Recognition

Under certain circumstances, volunteers expressed acceptance or even pride to be recognized in fairly standard, perhaps even superficial, ways for their voluntary work at Communa. Apparently, adhering to dominant and somewhat tainted recognition scripts and to even enjoy such adherence was possible for individual volunteers without losing 'face' (Goffman, 1959), by *contextualizing the given recognition interaction*. That is, while dominant recognition scripts at Communa were generally kept at distance, people admitted being positively impacted by these efforts under very specific conditions. Those claims to a specific context, paradoxically, revealed again similar/repetitive patterns mobilized by different volunteers to show why it was fine to accept recognition. Those patterned responses included mainly: admitting insecurities, emphasizing one's non-binding involvement, and emphasizing substance.

Admitting Insecurities

Volunteers often expressed acceptance of recognition efforts by making an explicit link to personal insecurities and/or situations that had been stressful for their self-confidence (e.g., criticism, mobbing). Admitting one's own insecurities seemed to present a form of showing that the given recognition, even when shallow, was justified, and not targeting the wrong person (e.g., someone who has a big ego anyway).

Helene, for instance, is the leader of a prominent voluntary project outside of Communa. Within Communa she belonged to the so-called 'function owners', hence holding heightened managerial responsibility. Her two voluntary posts amount to

more than 20 hours of voluntary work per week. Helene fully commits herself voluntarily to a good cause. Sometimes, though, she recalls struggling with comments she receives from her family (or friends) as to why she is not engaging in paid work, implying that voluntary work is worth less. To the outsider, Helene appears very self-confident, perhaps a bit 'above others' or 'distanced' as she says herself. She is an eloquent speaker, and is often sent to events to represent Communa. Her specific volunteering project has been frequently at the center of public attention (media reports, receiving awards).

Despite such obvious successes, Helene recounted how recognition is rarely expressed directly towards her. She reflected that even though this may not be so obvious to others, she actually had 'a lot of self-doubts' concerning her capacity as project-manager, including her ability to lead people, or to deal with finances (Helene). She added that also because of her self-doubts, she preferred a voluntary engagement above a paid position, saying that 'this is also a certain protection… protection against criticism, protection against… well, giving me more leeway to make mistakes'.

Against this background, Helene described how an award that she received for her voluntary engagement by a high-level state authority helped her to re-negotiate these insecurities. The nomination for the award came via a phone call from a prominent politician. Helene recounted:

> I laughed out loud when he (the politician) told me about the prize [laughs] since I hadn't reckoned with this at all. But it is certainly... it is–I believe–only human, that that somehow you… I think, this is fantastic, so *it made me enormously happy*. [Pause, voice is tranquil, but also somehow emotional] I think, it was almost as if my husband got just as happy, if not happier, since he is the one who realizes, more than anybody else, how *often I have doubts about myself*, and often have the feeling, hey, you should really be able to do this, and you should be able to do this better, and things don't work out the way you really think it should, and that sort of thing. And if somebody comes from the outside and says yes, what you are doing is really good, that is certainly … precisely in situations when something doesn't work quite well, you can remember this, and somehow think: it can't really be that bad. (Helene, emphasis added)

Even though Helene expressed surprise and perhaps even initial embarrassment about being so prestigiously awarded, her words reflect the importance the prize played in comforting, assuring and boosting her sense of self.

Interestingly, such comfort and joy of recognition in the form of a rather top-down prize, award or very explicit praise was never expressed as such by my interviewees, but was always contextualized. Helene did this by opening up, highlighting insecurities that stood in contrast to her otherwise self-confident appearance. In that sense, Helene's story can be seen as a particular strategy to make recognition

acceptable by showing one's own vulnerability. With the danger of repeating myself, this does not mean that Helene did not 'really' have the portrayed insecurities. But it shows simultaneously, those insecurities can be mobilized to portray oneself in a favorable light against the backdrop of larger normative expectations of modesty or seriousness in volunteering.

Bent also recounted how external recognition helped him to repair a diminished sense of self. Different from Helene, Bent expressed more distance from the recognition effort (e.g., a ceremony) that he was addressed by, but also accepted it in order to 'brag' about himself in front of others. Such admittance of 'bragging', however, involved that Bent referred to insecurities he had suffered from. Being highly specialized, he works for a multinational corporation in the high-tech industry. He reports that his chances of finding another job that matches his capabilities are very small due to this specialization. At work, however, Bent experienced mobbing and isolation:

> And also I am a little bit, well, in some sort of mobbing situation there. I cannot really escape this situation because I am so specialized in what I am doing. Therefore I am left only with the option to endure and fight. But this tires you psychologically. It really gets to the substance of yourself. So I was urgently looking for some form of meaning and something that I can do apart from my job . . . it's been 10 years in which I've been completely isolated at work and this was quite psychologically terrifying. (Bent)

Bent described how being isolated and mobbed at work has gotten to the core, the 'substance', of himself. The voluntary engagement, as Bent says, has given him some balance or compensation for the meaninglessness he experiences in work life. When asked how he experienced recognition in voluntary work, Bent spoke predominantly about how relating to his mentee child and the Turkish family 'stabilizes (him)self' (Bent). The experience of 'friendship' is the most important self-affirmation that Bent described to receive through his voluntary engagement.

When I asked Bent about how important recognition issued by Communa was for him, he expressed skepticism. Like most volunteers he expressed the view that 'those who get involved with something like this (i.e., volunteering), should not want to collect awards' (Bent). In line with this, Bent claimed to not care much about awards, ceremonies, explicit praise by a representative of Communa and the like. But when he was invited to the major's reception, he took the invitation—not without some irony, and mockery (see next section), but he accepted it and went to the event.

To deal with this contradiction between enjoying a performance that he rejected in principle as it did not support a positive self-view (he did not want to be an 'award-collecting volunteer' as he said), he also mobilized his insecurities. I asked Bent to send me a short email report about his experience of the recognition event. He wrote in a bullet-point style email:

> I bragged at work about this reception. It led to talks about my voluntary engagement with my colleagues. And I got positive feedback.
>
> My boss gave me a day off, but he is also a corrupt ass-licker. I wanted to get my own back on him. :-)
>
> Otherwise, the food was all right.
>
> Everyone got a pin, which I found embarrassing. My dad admired people who had received the 'Eiserne Kreuz' [an award for extraordinary deeds in the war, in the form of an iron cross] for successful killing. I find human nature at this point rather disgusting and also bizarre. (email, 7.12.12, Bent)

On the one hand Bent described a distance towards the recognition-event, labeling the food as 'alright' and a pin as 'embarrassing'. Note, however, that Bent also 'bragged' about this reception to others. He apparently appropriated the more general identity construction the reception provided (i.e., you are an engaged and honorable member of society if the mayor invites you) to 'get back' to others who have threatened his sense of self/self-confidence as he told me (Bent). Arguably, being mobbed justified 'bragging' and thereby also accepting external praise, which otherwise was not OK for a volunteer. Bent's description also suggests that by *performing* in line with an identity construction he rejected in principle, he actually experienced enjoyment in *being* that engaged highly praised volunteer.

To sum up, the strategy of admitting insecurities helped volunteers to justify the acceptance of recognition that one may not, due to larger normative scripts, be easily inclined to take on. The empirical example of Bent also reveals how the managerial idea that recognition becomes self-affirmative and potentially effective as a form of control if managers successfully 'fit' recognition to the personality/identity of the respective workers is narrow. Arguably, being invited to the mayor's reception did not 'fit' Bent's self-view, but by managing the impression others (e.g., me as the interviewer, his colleagues) had of him, he made it fit eventually. Through performing he became, interestingly, more than just a detached actor.

Emphasizing Non-Binding Involvement

In addition to admitting insecurities, I noticed that most volunteers emphasized their non-binding involvement with organizational recognition scripts that were otherwise in tension with broader volunteering values. That is, accepting recognition that was seen as strategic, superficial, and overall less substantial was possible by humorously portraying certain recognition interactions, expressing curiosity or duty as a reason for performing in line with it, and overall portraying a casual dealing with recognition efforts.

Remember how Bent wrote that the 'food was all right' at the mayor's reception I heard often comments about the food, or that people went to check out the 'building where the reception took place' (Maren). Thus curiosity (to hear a particular politician speak, to try the food, to look at the building, etc.) was expressed as legitimate reason to participate in otherwise perhaps not so legitimate recognition interactions.

In addition, volunteers often expressed surprise and humorous disbelief that they were the ones chosen. Birke, who prominently featured in one of Communa's PR publications, said that she 'considered this quite funny'. However, she did not see this as recognition of herself, but rather 'did this mainly to help them, because I thought, oh well (laughs), somebody has to do this after all' (Birke). Also Bent stated, for instance, that he 'found it amusing that I am now invited to the mayor's reception'. Even after admitting that it had actually made him 'happy' to be invited to the event, Bent added his 'fear' was 'that this will become a boring evening' (Bent). At another point in the interview, Bent also mentioned that he had 'recently bought a suit' for another occasion, and that this impacted his decision to go ('now that I have the suit anyway').

These different statements evoke the impression that volunteers, even when they performed in line with dominant recognition scripts, entered a non-binding agreement. By non-binding, I mean that volunteers seemed eager to assure me that even when they performed in line with dominant recognition scripts, their self-understanding and emotions (e.g., finding something funny or boring suggests that one can take a step back) were not bound to such performances. Speaking about something that is boring, about one's sense of responsibility or duty, and evoking a casual attitude (having a suit anyway) were arguably all techniques for justifying participation in performances that followed questionable scripts within a volunteering community (e.g., scripts that suggest volunteers are vain).

In that sense, one strategy that helped volunteers to accept recognition was to present one's own engagement in performances as detached by expressing a somewhat dismissive/cynical and functional attitude. Interestingly, as Höpfl (2002) also remarks, such 'disaggregating' of selves in performances can be seen as both an effort to preserve one's privacy and self-respect, as well as a portrayal of 'professional competence'. That is, such apparent non-involvement, despite performing, can also be seen as following broader scripts that suggest it is desirable to be able to disengage one's 'real' self from a performed self. Interestingly, what could be an actual strategy for acting in performances (e.g., detaching oneself) can also be the expression of a self-performance (I am a good individual who can detach him or herself from superficial scripts).

Emphasizing Substance

A third major strategy amongst volunteers was the elaboration of why an expression of recognition that could generally be seen as problematic/superficial was acceptable because it had in this specific case an actual substance. I call this strategy 'emphasizing substance to denote how, in addition to contextualizing one's own attitudes toward recognition efforts (e.g., admitting insecurity, emphasizing detachment), also those efforts as such were specified, and thereby released from their tainted character.

Often volunteers seemed to 'pick' out what really mattered to them from recognition efforts that otherwise implied standardization, such as receiving public attention, presents or praise. Lena, for instance, described how a quite standardized recognition form acknowledged her 'real hard work', and how it therefore became a meaningful gesture. Lena invests a considerable amount of her time (about 50 hours per month) voluntarily to support Communa with a variety of administrative and organizational tasks. Lena comes across as straightforward (she does not seem to mind stating her opinion in public), outspoken, hard-working, and quick-witted. Despite some distance created through irony and jokes, one quickly senses, however, that Lena is extremely helpful, and driven by a strong desire to support others. She defines herself very much through the picture of being a 'do-er' (Lena), 'a person who . . . realizes given tasks in a good way, who has a good sense of humour while doing this, and who is friendly, and who has gotten nervous only once so far'.

Lena has herself been the subject of several recognition initiatives, and describes overall some ambivalence towards those (her main problem being that recognition felt sometimes 'exaggerated'). However, she described an instance to me that she felt was 'thoroughly positive':

> This public appraisal… that is not really my thing . . . But I remember one situation in which Astrid (her colleague) and I were extremely happy, it was quite at the beginning here (after Communa had moved into a new building). We were carrying soo much at that time. We were permanently carrying stuff and boxes through the building, which we are actually both not allowed to do because of our back problems. … And then we each both got a massage gift card from Communa. . . . This is really something that has to do with me and with what I have done. (Lena)

In with her self-view of being a 'do-er', Lena described how this one instance of recognition was actually of real substance because it addressed her real hard work. The voucher is thus not only a nice treat, something that is given here and there as a standardized recognition, but in this case a deeper symbol that acknowledges her dedication to, and even her physical sacrifice for the organization.

Similar to Lena's story, Hanna also recounted how she received a fairly grand and public form of recognition, but how she could accept it easily. Hanna is a voluntary

mentor of a Turkish boy whom she meets approximately once a week. She holds a full-time position at the higher management level of a multinational and widely known interior-design company. She emphasizes her busy work life, and the balance she constantly attempts to establish to have time for her family. She describes herself as 'open and communicative', as a very 'dedicated' and–as a matter of fact–busy mother, who is simultaneously building up a career and engaging in various social, sporting, and charitable activities. Hanna expresses that it matters to her to 'give back to society', not only by donating money (she mentioned a godchild in an African country) (Hanna).

Having interacted with Hanna in several instances (in office encounters and at events organized by Communa), my impression was that next to being, in fact, very passionate about giving to others, her involvement at Communa also gave a lot to herself. By that I mean, for instance, that Hanna seemed to enjoy the business the voluntary engagement added to her life. I felt that it was important to her to be well-connected, both to people from a similar background to hers (i.e., career-oriented, a bit 'upper class' perhaps, socially engaged, active) whom she met at Communa's various social events, as well as people whom she described as 'less privileged', referring for instance to the Turkish family (Hanna). She emphasized these relations extensively. Arguably, it was not only being well-connected, busy, ethically engaged, a successful-career woman, and mother simultaneously, but also being seen as such by her community that mattered.

One of Communa's recognition efforts, a large newspaper report about her voluntary work, communicated this image of Hanna described above to the outside, while she by would no 'go advertising herself'. The article, published in a nationwide weekly newspaper, and advertised on the front page, described how Hanna welcomes her mentee child in her own home, and how important these intercultural encounters are for German society. The article was often used as material to further promote the project. It has been one of Communa's far-reaching media coverage. It helped to promote the organization's work, but it presents also a targeted recognition effort towards Hanna (i.e., 'making volunteers publicly visible'). Hanna said about this publication:

> So many people talked to me about the article, that was simply incredible . . . Somebody sent me the link, right after it was published (it was also published online). And then the board director called me, Verena talked to me… so many did . . . And even those . . . whom I only know from sight, for example neighbors who tell me, I saw your picture in the newspaper. And I found this incredible, this makes me a bit proud. *Because that was not simply a human* interest story, but rather about something important, and that was a very special praise. (Hanna, emphasis added)

> Yes, I can imagine, it is somehow a special kind of appreciation of what you do. (Anna)
>
> Well, the hammer had really... And the next day our German boss wrote an email, and he wrote to me that he saw me on this front page and that he was completely enthusiastic and found it great, what I commit myself to, and he also… that he had learned about a new facet about me . . . It was incredible (Hanna)
>
> . . .
>
> So this was a special way of getting feedback? (Anna)
>
> Yes. Yes. Absolutely. (Hanna)

Hanna's enthusiastic description of this newspaper report shows how she accepted it almost immediately. Regarding her straightforward acceptance of this recognition effort, one aspect seemed to be of key importance. Hanna stated she would not use her voluntary engagement to 'advertise' herself, implying that it would somehow not be correct to brag about one's engagement (as extensively highlighted earlier). Yet, she did consider her engagement as something that actually had a real substance, which was important for society. Even if the recognition effort that targeted her could be seen as superficial in another case (e.g., an article that just gives publicity), she emphasized that this particular article was not a 'human interest story', but really portrayed who she was.

Towards a Discussion

This chapter highlighted and discussed how individuals draw upon a number of strategies to present their selves largely as volunteers who are not impacted by superficial recognition, but by substantive recognition. Impression management techniques arguably help people to act in line with and also to draw borders between what is legitimate recognition and what is not, and overall, to convey a positive impression of themselves towards the outside. Generally, I do not imply that the expressed ambivalence and independence as reported in the above portrayals of individuals' impression management was 'fake'. However, the intensity and creativity with which individuals strived to explain their 'non-neediness' from targeted recognition efforts was too noticeable to not be examined further.

Such examination reveals the existence of larger normative action expectations–of broader scripts that lay out how one should think, feel, and act, as an engaged volunteer. The accounts of my interviewees reflect especially a phenomenon

demonstrated in other identity studies, that people tend to make crude simplified distinctions between sameness and otherness (Ybema et al., 2009). Ironically, the ways in which people express difference from others in my study (*I don't need recognition, but others do*) reveals sameness.

Overall there is an important normative orientation to portray oneself as moderate and not 'vain' or in need of explicit identity boosting. At the same time, however, the accounts of volunteers revealed how enjoyment, pride, and satisfaction could still accompany the enactment of tainted recognition scripts. Individuals apparently addressed this ambivalent relationship by deploying a number of impression management techniques laid out in this chapter. When responses to managerial recognition scripts appear, in themselves, quite scripted, this puts into question the potential of such responses to be subversive to dominant power relations.

Differently put, the question emerges how we can evaluate people's various attempts to distance themselves from dominant recognition performances (which have a control intent) while still acting as if they agree, and, to make the matter more complicated, express resistance that seems to reflect yet again broader scripts that volunteers act in line with. Following Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959), the question emerges whether volunteers' performances in interactions (their dramaturgic co-operation as well as their self-presentation) can be seen as reflecting an original, individual response (the 'I') or rather the sum of normative action expectations (the 'me') that volunteers strive to live up to in their performances? The accounts of volunteers thus give us additional material to discuss and evaluate performances at work, that appear to be broadly in line with managerial intents.

Chapter 10 – Management by Recognition: A Collective Accomplishment

In the previous four chapters, I have explored how Management by Recognition, as a specific form of normative control, plays out in the context of Communa. The aim of this chapter is to bring together these empirical insights with the literature discussed in Chapters Two, Three, and Four to gain a more profound understanding and evaluation of the often paradoxical dynamics and effects of MbR in particular, and normative control attempts in general.

As the title indicates, I suggest in this chapter that recognition is accomplished collectively. Arguably, both managers and general volunteers relate to recognition attempts in order to manage themselves and/or each other. My empirical chapters demonstrate, for example, the importance for managers to show how the 'really' mean recognition, and the importance for volunteers to show how they are only influenced by 'real', rather than fake and instrumental recognition. Arguably, the need for all involved parties to work on making recognition authentic relates to an inherent tension in MbR. Since recognition is by definition something that lies outside of an economic/instrumental sphere, the suspicion of instrumentality/inauthenticity appears inherent to managerial attempts to work with this concept. I see MbR as a collective accomplishment therefore not in the sense that all actors harmonically strive towards the same goal, but in the sense that different organizational members share the need to make recognition 'real' and meaningful, for various reasons. MbR in practice is thus more complex than one would expect on the basis of most of the literature discussed in chapters Two and Three: MbR is neither a straightforward way to make organizations more humane (as proponents tend to portray it), neither does it lead to totalizing forms of control (as some critics suggest). The aim of this discussion chapter is to go more deeply into the complexities of MbR in practice.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, I discuss how recognition when mobilized with the goal to achieve greater control, places limits on instrumentalism. The efforts to do so result in tensions that are described in my empirical chapters. In the next section, I address these tensions more deeply, for

instance by showing how the ideal of MbR challenges the contemporary ideal of the individual as an autonomous and self-reliant subject. In the section that follows I examine the organizational dynamics that MbR gives rise to. These dynamics, I suggest, affects managers as much as they affect workers, which illustrates my overall point that MbR is a collective effort. The final section (before the conclusion) takes a closer look at the impact of MbR on individual volunteers. I distinguish four experiences of volunteers: exclusion, enhanced obligation, inclusion and enhanced self-worth.

Immanent Limits of MbR

In this thesis, I have pointed out how control efforts that draw upon emotional relations of people with themselves and others—like recognition—are characterized by a notable *tension between authenticity and instrumentalism*. Both theoretical and empirical chapters highlight how managerial attempts to subsume recognition under an instrumental logic tend to question the very nature—the 'realness'—of this mobilized emotional and intersubjective relationship. This tension, in my view, is an important explanation for the complex manifestations of MbR in practice. When recognition becomes a means to an end, it stands at odds with a commonly held view that recognition is an end in itself. As I have shown throughout the empirical chapters, social interactions take the form of performances, where the question of the authenticity of recognition is constantly at play. Managers attempt to show how they *really* mean recognition, while also having a strategic intent, for example, by taking time to talk to workers (see Chapters Seven and Eight). And those managed by recognition go a long way to explain what they experience as sincere or fake/instrumental recognition, and how these different expressions of recognition relate to who they are (see Chapter Nine).

Interestingly, authors discussed in this thesis evaluate the tension between authenticity and instrumentalism differently. The managerialist literature outlined in Chapter Two proposes that MbR creates a *win-win scenario*: tighter control and predictability over workers' conduct while enhancing experiences of self-realization and even self-determination. Volunteer management authors (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008; Shin & Kleiner, 2003), authors in HRM and work psychology (Luthans & Stajkovic, 2000; Semmer & Jacobshagen, 2010), as well as contemporary popular management writers (Chapman & White, 2011) portray MbR as a highly effective and inherently humane control strategy. The managerialist literature thus suggests that authenticity and instrumentalism when managing by recognition do not contradict, but reinforce each other. The more 'sincere' recognition is, the better it will function as a control mechanism which simultaneously enhances individual

autonomy, given that people are more free to realize their selves within recognition-intensive regimes (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003; Ventrice, 2003).

Much of the critical literature reviewed in Chapter Three opposes such a stance and suggests, on the contrary, that the tension between authenticity and instrumentalism becomes, simply put, a *zero-sum game*. Authors describe how culture management trends have mobilized 'warm' concepts similar to recognition, such as the family, teams, friendship, empowerment or participation to enhance greater control in organizations (Barker, 1993; Casey, 1999). When evaluating this trend, the critical literature suggests that instrumental logic inherent to the sphere of work makes the realization of promises for individual emancipation very difficult, if not impossible (Willmott, 1993). An important argument here is that because management targets highly emotional relations, influence over workers becomes more complete. There is no 'real' or 'inner' self that escapes managerial grips, especially not if individuals engage in social performances that cement dominant power relations (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Hochschild, 1983; Kunda, 2006). Normative control is thus seen as an extremely smart and encompassing form of control where individual autonomy decreases as managerial/organizational control increases.

While these literatures are important conversation partners, I have been skeptical both towards the idea that an instrumental outlook can be reconciled with claims for authentic recognition, as well as towards a binary and rather totalizing image of normative control. Through exploring social performances that follow normative control intents, I followed authors who emphasize a more open and nuanced reading of the mutual influences that individuals and groups have on each other in organizational life (e.g., Ekman, 2010; Lundholm, 2011; Rennstam, 2007). Different from dominant accounts of normative control, I seek to avoid a one-sided emphasis on the threats or opportunities of *greater managerial influence* when individuals' emotional relations with themselves and others are mobilized.

Bringing my empirical observations together with the outlined academic debates, this discussion chapter brings forward and revolves around the central argument that *recognition—when mobilized with the goal to achieve greater control—places limits on instrumental/managerial action*. Importantly, I stress that normative control does not simply become more pervasive (or totalitarian) when it draws upon the subjectivity of employees. As it taps into human emotions and subjectivity, normative control becomes vulnerable too, because it is always confronted with doubts about the 'realness' of the frames of references it mobilizes (e.g., recognition, but also friendship, family, etc.). Voswinkel (2001) points out that while expressing recognition tends to sustain and legitimate the authority of the party that recognizes another party, there is a constant risk that recognition is not accepted by the other party. This can diminish the authority of the recognizing party. In the case of MbR, this risk/vulnerability can manifest itself in a decrease of managerial control, especially when the tension

between authenticity and instrumentalism becomes too pronounced. Paradoxically, to make MbR 'function' (in a managerialist/instrumental sense), this tension needs to be managed in a way that limits total instrumentality.

By elaborating on how all involved parties in my study engage in practices to place limits on instrumentalism to make recognition work, I unpack this argument in this chapter and reflect upon a number of points raised in the literatures discussed in Chapters Two and Three. The insights from my study of MbR have implications for the evaluation of the dynamics and effects of normative control more generally. Instead of supporting a win-win or zero-sum scenario, *I suggest that the very frames of reference that normative control efforts mobilize to be effective (i.e., recognition in this work, but also other ideas such as family, friendship, or self-realization) delimit its impact, as they are rooted in a non-economic sphere.* The tension between instrumentality and authenticity in MbR/normative control is thus neither dissolved in a happy 'win-win', nor can it be reduced to the argument that normative control colonizes individuals.

Rather, normative control is conceptualized as an ongoing collective accomplishment facilitated by the efforts of various involved parties to alleviate the tension between instrumentalism and authenticity in their social performances. As my study shows, different messages communicated through MbR (e.g., whether recognition communicates respect or esteem) impact such balancing efforts. Thus, there are some recognition interactions that are more likely to support distressing power relations, while others alleviate them, and make the realization of MbR's humanist goals possible. This discussion attempts to give us a more systematic understanding of these dynamics.

Paradoxes of Recognition Revisited

In this and the next section I suggest that different parties engage in a collective effort to ease tensions created by MbR—notably the tension between instrumentalism and authenticity. In order to better understand the need for such easing of tension, I first revisit how recognition is at odds with a managerial logic and how this is expressed in my empirical material.

The sphere of work is, by definition, goal-oriented and thereby instrumental (Arendt, 1958). The respective goals that people strive to accomplish through work may be different – for instance, shoemaker's goal is to make shoes. For Communa, the studied voluntary organization, a major goal is to achieve particular social objectives such as enabling people regarded as socially/economically disadvantaged to participate in the life of the local municipality (see Chapter Six). Pointing out the instrumental nature of work is not to say that work is exclusively about achieving goals. Work can

also be an ethical sphere where humans strive for a 'good life'—where they maintain social relations, keep up routines, or engage in craft-work that may have no economic value (Honneth, 1995; Islam, 2012). It is, however, hard to imagine work life without any instrumental interest, and as my study shows, even voluntary work is importantly oriented towards goal-achievement (see especially Chapters Six and Seven). Such goal-achievement does not have to be problematic as such. In my view Communa's organizational goals contribute to improved living conditions in their local community. I therefore think an overly suspicious attitude towards their effort to impact volunteers' behavior is inappropriate. But this is not the central point here. The central point is that even if Communa's goals are judged as legitimate by me or others, their efforts to achieve those through recognition retain an instrumental character.

Recognition, in contrast, is by definition non-instrumental and located outside of economic exchange logistics: recognition is understood as an end in itself (Kocyba, 2011, Islam, 2012). As I argue in this work, the attempt to make recognition an explicit part of (instrumental) work life creates tensions and raises suspicion about the authenticity of recognition. Interestingly, while recognition appears to be so fundamentally at odds with the instrumental work sphere, authors have shown how expressions of recognition—in the sense of appraising, approving, positively enhancing, and securing people—have become all the more important in contemporary work life to secure workers' motivation (Chapman & White, 2011; Holtgrewe, 2000; Ventrice, 2003). This trend can be explained, for instance, by the erosion of traditional markers of honor or esteem that a person holds in social and work life (e.g., formal titles and ranks, standardized occupational careers) (Charles Taylor, 1994; Kocyba, 2011).

But if this is true, and individual workers are increasingly dependent upon recognition, an important ideal in contemporary societies is challenged: namely, the ideal of the individual as autonomous and self-reliant (du Gay, Salaman, & Rees, 1996). Suspecting recognition of being instrumental in the sense of influencing workers suggests simultaneously that workers can be rather easily impacted by managerial praise or affirmation. My study has shown how this assumption is notable and widespread amongst both managers as well as those who were managed by recognition. In Chapter Seven, managers express the strong belief that workers are needy of recognition. In so doing, they create and/or affirm a general view of the voluntary worker as somewhat insecure, perhaps even 'vain'. While those who were managed by recognition strongly reject such ascriptions in relation to their own person (see Chapter Nine), they nevertheless reproduce them. Even volunteers who suggest managerial recognition could not impact them still assume MbR to be instrumental, hence confirming the possibility of recognition to address the insecurities or even vanities of people on a more general level. Differently put, suspecting recognition of instrumentalism also admits a strong dependency of the

individual on external evaluation. This, in turn, stands in contrast to current ideals about a personhood that is largely self-activated and independent. Hence we see how the tension between instrumentalism and authenticity in my study of MbR is inevitably entangled with (and may intensify) other paradoxical relations, such as that between autonomy and control, or between individualism and collective belonging (see Ekman, 2015).

My empirical insights confirm those authors who argue that *the possibilities for giving as well as receiving recognition become highly muddled and indirect in contemporary work life.* As Kocyba (2011, p. 239) states, 'it can be self-defeating, if we let others know that we are overtly seeking recognition . . . Paradoxically, recognition can be gained only by those, who do not give the impression that they deserve such external motivational support'. This observation is interesting in comparison to the empirical illustrations of Chapter Nine. It suggests that individuals' self-performances (in Goffman's sense) as being non-needy present an alignment with larger normative orders that offer only indirect and even paradoxical pathways for gaining recognition. Thus, not only the 'managers' but also those who are 'managed' participate in instrumental ways in the social order of recognition. Arguably, in so doing they contribute to the complexity of this order. My study also shows how those who intend to manage by recognition struggle with how they should go about such recognition management. As the specific tensions between standardization and individualization, between strategic/planned and authentic/spontaneous recognition, or between a top-down versus a bottom-up approach highlight, there are no easy 'win-wins', no universally accepted scripts for making sure recognition functions (see Chapter Seven).

What we can say, though, is that remaining behind my empirical illustrations is the constant question of whether expressions of recognition conveyed by management are 'really' recognition. More specifically, my empirical study poses the constant question: when and under what conditions do expressions of recognition become at least 'real enough' so that they do not defeat themselves in terms of losing influence over people, or in terms of creating experiences of misrecognition? In my view, the performances of all parties in MbR-interactions are oriented towards this question. As Voswinkel (2001) points out, expressions of recognition have the integrative potential to achieve ethical social relations characterized by differentiated equality where people's egoism/instrumentalism is tamed by the dramaturgical demands of social life. The author points out, however, that this is only possible if a 'balance in the ambivalence of recognition' is found (Voswinkel, 2001, p. 101). Arguably, finding such balance is not the sole project of 'management'. Because recognition holds the promise to foster ethical social/emotive relations (similar to other concepts mobilized by normative control attempts), people collectively engage in efforts to outbalance contradictory extremes in MbR such as that between instrumentalism and authenticity.

Managing Recognition Collectively

This section argues that it is not only managers who shape people's experience and evaluation of recognition according to a binary and hierarchical logic. Rather, I discuss how different parties engage in collective efforts to outbalance the paradoxes inherent to MbR. As outlined earlier, the managerialist literature (Chapman & White, 2011) assumes that certain actions by management (e.g., spoken language, explicit praise, giving material objects) generate experiences of self-enhancement and well-being amongst (voluntary) workers. Some authors give a more differentiated picture of how recognition works when part of a managerial strategy—often emphasizing the importance of finding a right 'fit' (Ventrice, 2003). But even then, their view is highly management-centered, suggesting that it is the task of management to find those fits, and that 'recognition that comes from the managers' is most 'meaningful' (Ventrice, 2003, p. 55, see also Wagner & Hartner, 2006).

In contrast to those assumptions in the managerialist literature, my empirical study shows how individual workers regard especially recognition efforts which they connect to managerial intents often as illegitimate or instrumental. Chapter Nine shows how volunteers actively distance themselves from recognition considered to be instrumental. This is not to say, however, that, overall, workers reject the concept of being acknowledged, seen or praised by formal superiors. Indeed, about one third of my interviewees expressed this was important to them.

Annika, with whom I introduced this thesis, recounted for example a strong recognition by Sara, her project manager. Annika told me how, contrary to her professional work life, she was 'simply seen' at Communa, notably by Sara. When I asked Annika what Sara had done to 'see', she answered:

> Sara did it in such a humane way, that you had the feeling you are really seen . . . simply addressing me in such a friendly way, when we met on different occasions. You know, exactly what the politician could not do, just being with me in the moment. And Sara could do this . . . but she also really stood behind the project, she was so active herself. She was in constant contact with the mentees' parents and she could tell me, for instance, how Dennis' mother had commented on my engagement. (Annika)

During our interview, Annika expressed strong admiration for her project manager Sara, and described how her recognition meant a lot to her. But similar to the individuals presented in Chapter Nine, managerial recognition is said to matter only when its assumed inherent instrumentalism is outbalanced or transcended. In the above quote, Annika speaks of Sara's 'humane' way of being, of her integrity, which she contrasts with the politician described in the introductory chapter.

Chapter Nine shows a number of other, more indirect, ways in which volunteers outbalance assumed instrumentalism in managerial recognition. By referring to alternative sources of recognition such as one's former work life, the interpersonal relationships with one's mentee and so on, volunteers suggest that even though the recognition they receive from management may be instrumental, there is a true reason to be recognized. Such evoking of alternative recognition sources does not outbalance the suspicion of instrumentalism directly in relation to the manager (as Annika does in the quote above). However, it does affect the managerial recognition effort, in the sense of giving it more substance. Simply put, even if managerial recognition is seen as instrumental, volunteers help in adding another layer, where, on top of being instrumental, the recognition effort is *also* authentic because it is based on what people *really* did. Hence, it becomes legitimate to go to a recognition event.

In relation to the managerialist literature (Chapter Two), my empirical illustrations thus highlight how management's role in planning and practicing recognition with the goal of creating a 'win-win' is overestimated. Many factors and individual experiences that help in finding a balance between authenticity and instrumentalism lie outside of the immediate influence of management, such as for instance the relations volunteers have with their mentees. This is why I suggest instead that all parties involved in interactions that follow the intent to manage by recognition manage those tensions collectively, and in so doing make recognition 'work'. By MbR that 'works', I refer both to the disciplining effects of instrumental recognition, as well as the realized potential of recognition to secure and self-enhance individuals—these dynamics imply each other.

Also, in relation to the more critical and interpretivist literature on normative control (Chapter Three), my illustration of the collective efforts to manage tensions in normative control attempts adds nuance. Many critical and interpretivist management scholars who draw upon a discursive, post-structuralist notion of power (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kunda, 2006) suggest that individual identification processes are key to understanding how normative control unfolds. There is an acknowledgment that management is not omnipotent. Yet prominent authors investigating corporate culturalism (Casey, 1999; Ray, 1986; Willmott, 1993) and individualized forms of normative control (Costas & Fleming, 2009) portray management as still a key actor for crafting identity positions in work life that individuals strive to live up to, often in ways injurious to themselves.

At first sight, my empirical study could be read in a way which suggests that managers at Communa (i.e., voluntary function owners and paid staff) have indeed great authority in planning and practicing recognition discourses and practices (see Chapters Six and Seven). However, Chapters Eight and Nine show a more diffused character of mutual influence, especially in the way in which scripts that outline action expectations are used. Thus, focusing on how managers engage in cultural

value-communication creates a picture which is too static. This picture suggests that there are somewhat fixed units, and that those who are 'managed' encounter and respond by identification or disidentification (or most likely a mix of both). Authors (e.g., Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) describe how organizational discourses shaped by management stimulate individual 'identity work' as a response. That is, an individual's efforts to make sense of, regain, or maintain a positive personhood admit those discourses through cynical distancing, work-self versus private-self separation, and the like. While these studies have been very valuable to enhance understanding of subjectivities at work, they often evoke two units that are studied as empirically separate: managerially inspired discourses on the one hand, and workers' personal identification/disidentification on the other.

My empirical study of Communa's recognition efforts, however, shows that workers not only *react* to or make sense of recognition efforts, but they 'do' something with and to those efforts. Take the simple example of a recognition ceremony where a volunteer is praised in a speech and handed flowers. The effectiveness of such a recognition effort as normative control depends not only on the manager having an idea of what he/she wants to construct as a praiseworthy identity in the speech, and how exactly to deliver the speech in a trustworthy way. It also does not only depend on how the individual interprets this event and how she relates it to her self-understanding. Instead the power of MbR lies importantly in how the interactions unfold. Do participants practice dramaturgical loyalty? Do volunteers go to a ceremony? Do they dress up for this or not? Do they smile when they are on stage? Do they participate in the after-party? Do they tell friends and relatives about it? And so on. Thus, in addition to investigating how images 'sent' by management and 'received' by workers align or misalign with each other (see Kunda, 2006), the unfolding of dramaturgical cooperation in control interactions (see especially Chapter Eight) gives us additional insights to understand what tensions people are confronted with, how they work on overcoming them, and how this may have (potentially problematic) disciplining effects.

Speaking of effects of MbR, I turn now to assessing and systematizing what MbR 'does' at Communa. Here, I distinguish between effects of MbR on general organizational life, which are largely unintended by managers and effects on individual organizational members.

Unintended Organizational Dynamics

Already in the 1930s, sociologist Merton (1936) drew attention to the fact that actions of people have consequences that are neither forseen nor intended. This does not mean that unforeseen consequences are necessarily 'bad', depending of course also

on the perspective of judgement. For example, the development of medicine for a specific disease has side effects, of which some may be detrimental, but some may also benefit the curing of other diseases. The point is that in human action there is an 'interplay of forces and circumstances which are so complex and numerous that prediction is quite beyond our reach' (Merton, 1936, p. 900). This idea is not groundbreaking, but it deserves some attention in the context of my study as I also noticed a number of effects of MbR that cannot be directly related to the managerial intents outlined in Chapter Seven.

This section thus elaborates upon effects of MbR that are unintended by those who manage by recognition. The interest here is in how MbR affects organizational and managerial life at large. In this regard, I suggest that the attempts to manage by recognition partly enhance the very dilemmas MbR seeks to address, and that MbR places such high focus on symbolism that the 'substance' of Communa's work and organizational goals could suffer from this.

Recalling the managerial objectives behind MbR described in Chapter Seven, it seems that those who seek to manage by recognition encounter the problem that individual volunteers demand constant and partly excessive recognition. Remember how managers expressed struggle with the question of how to address people's 'vulnerabilities' and 'egos' (see Chapters Six and Seven). Different from this managerial claim and concern, Chapter Nine illustrates how volunteers strongly reject the expectations of managerial recognition. While it is impossible for me to determine which perspective is more 'true', my impression is that the managerial belief that individuals are recognition-needy (or even vain) has effects on organizational life. Arguably, this belief materializes in MbR practices, which can—paradoxically—enhance individual vulnerabilities and expectations of recognition.

When looking at how individuals experience recognition at Communa, most volunteers argued that they did not expect to be explicitly acknowledged for what they do. They were often surprised when this happened, for example, when being called up to go to a recognition ceremony. Similarly, I did not have many expectations before I started working for the organization about how I should be treated by my colleagues or superiors. As the empirical chapters show, I became only gradually aware that what I was doing was recognition worthy because I was exposed to explicit and continuous praise.

My overall impression is that 'recognition' becomes a vital topic for volunteers especially *after* having been confronted with it by the organization, either in being personally addressed or experiencing others being acknowledged. For example, knowing that some volunteers were invited to a particular evening event, enhanced consequently 'vulnerabilities' of others who were not (see Chapter Seven). Also by making practices to enhance visibility of workers (e.g., through speeches, newspaper articles, etc.) a prominent concern, volunteers become arguably more aware about the

possibility of being recognized in such ways. Even though I cannot assess to what extent people were or were not 'needy' of recognition prior to their voluntary engagement, my impression is that MbR in itself enhances awareness amongst volunteers that what they do is recognition worthy. This, in turn, could accelerate expectations, perhaps even demands, to be invited to particular social or honoring events, and be told by Communa's representatives how valuable one's work is.

Hence, my impression is that MbR itself partly enhances the recognition-neediness that Communa's managers attempted to address. MbR thus contributes to creating a work environment where actions to make individuals visible or special are the norm. To keep such a recognition intensive culture up and going demands considerable work by different parties. This brings me to my next point. My impression here is that the intense and explicit labour that went into engineering a 'Culture of Recognition and Appreciation' does not only help Communa to achieve its organizational ends. It also becomes a symbolic activity in itself that generates considerable labour. A pessimistic reading is that such efforts can even take time away from individual managers to engage in Communa's actual project work.

Throughout the empirical chapters I discuss the intense and often time-consuming labour that went into implementing recognition. As I show in Chapter Seven, even those who explicitly work on the enhancement of an organizational recognition culture, expressed doubt as to whether anything that is formally given (e.g., recognition events, certificates, explicit praise, presents) can achieve 'real' or 'authentic' recognition. This observation supports my earlier point, that efforts to manage by recognition involve ongoing work to make recognition authentic. But in a large organization like Communa with over 400 volunteers, it is difficult for managers to always make recognition personal, spontaneous, and 'real' because they may not know who everyone is or what people have done. Despite admitting that MbR places sometimes-unrealistic demands on managers, they held onto the importance of managerial recognition. Based on the empirical descriptions, especially in Chapter Eight, I want to suggest that this was the case because MbR is also an important organizing principle amongst managers.

My suggestion is that MbR at Communa is not only practiced to make voluntary workers feel recognized and enhance management control, but that it has a simultaneous internal and symbolic function. MbR promises that there is an ideal way of managing volunteers. As I show especially in Chapter Eight, recognition interactions created enjoyment amongst different members who participated in those interactions. Recognition targeted not only those who were directly recognized, but also gave a larger sense of purpose to organizational members, especially to 'managers'. In recognizing others, function owners also reaffirmed each other and established a common understanding that the fragile relation between volunteers and their organization could be shaped successfully.

Knowing that MbR is limited in its execution, but strongly believing in its power as an idealized management principle, again, enhances tensions. It means, for example in my study, that managers had the responsibility to establish a contradictory ideal state (i.e., sincere relations of recognition that help to enhance managerial control), while knowing or experiencing inherent limitations to this. Arguably, MbR creates overall high moral standards for social encounters that are difficult, if not impossible, to maintain in everyday social life. In so doing, MbR disciplines not only those targeted by it, but also those who initiate it. As I highlight in Chapter Eight, high-level managers experience how the scripts that they engaged in co-crafting (e.g., you should greet everyone personally, look into their eyes) 'return' to them with even greater demands (e.g., not only should you look into a volunteer's eyes, but also know the name of that person). It seems that established recognition rituals not only impact general volunteers, but they also put managers into a mode of being where they find excessive recognition natural and accept new/intensified demands put upon them. As I show in Chapter Eight, managers also experience stress when they do not manage to live up to these—arguably impossible—demands.

It is important to also reflect upon broader organizational dynamics when MbR practices that take up intense labour, emotions and energy from workers have an important symbolic character. Remember how I put considerable energy into performing well with Communa's recognition scripts (e.g., at the Christmas party)—time and energy that I did not, for example, invest in efforts to recruit more volunteers, which was part of my work assignment. Despite awareness amongst managers that authentic recognition was sometimes limited in this large organizational environment, they still invested considerable time into it. Here the question emerges whether such time could not be used to achieve other organizational ends (e.g., not feeling guilty when you cannot say 'hello' to everyone, and instead sitting at the computer and working through one's email inbox, contacting project partners, etc. – of course overly simplified). This is not to say that 'recognition' should not be practiced. Instead the purpose of this section was to raise awareness about unintended effects of MbR, such as the insight that MbR also impact 'managers', both in terms of creating potentially stressful work experiences, as well as enjoyment and establishing a sense of purpose.

Impact of MbR on Individual Volunteers

Next to broader (often unintended) organizational dynamics, MbR also impacted volunteers in line with managerial intents, that is, that recognition would help control volunteers as well as make them self-affirmed. Speaking of control effects, I am hesitant, however, to make universal claims such as 'MbR is more/less effective and/or

ethically problematic than other forms of control'. As mentioned, I argue that efforts to manage by recognition and the inherent collective effort to outbalance tensions result neither in a win-win scenario, nor in a victory of instrumentalism/discipline over authenticity/autonomy. Nevertheless, we can distinguish in my empirical material recognition practices and dynamics that tend to give rise to distressing control effects (as outlined by critical management scholars), and others that can ease such effects. In order to make such distinctions, I first introduce Voswinkel's (2001) distinction of various recognition forms, before outlining how MbR impacts individual volunteers in different ways, creating experiences of *exclusion*, *enhanced obligations*, *inclusion* and *self-worth*.

Assessing Effects

In this section, I want to suggest, drawing on Voswinkel (2001), that recognition practices that communicate respect ('Achtung') and appreciation ('Würdigung') are more integrative and less likely to evoke tensions than recognition practices that communicate esteem ('Wertschätzung') and admiration ('Bewunderung')[3]. I further suggest in relation to Honneth' work (1995) that recognition interactions that enhance inclusion in a social group make the realization of humanist recognition goals, such as enhancing people's self-esteem, more likely.

Recognition theorists (e.g., Honneth, 1995; Ikäheimo, 2009; Petersen & Willig, 2004) delineate modes of recognition in a variety of ways. I draw primarily upon Voswinkel's (2001) distinction of different forms of recognition—namely respect, appreciation, gratitude, and admiration—to help conceptualize the dynamics and effects of MbR in my study.[4]In so doing, I do not seek to contribute to the broad field of moral and political recognition theory, but rather to explain and evaluate patterns in my empirical material and describe broad tendencies.

Voswinkel (2001) argues that there are different forms of recognition. He speaks of recognition as *respect* ('Achtung') and refers to recognition that is based on the idea

[3] I translate Voswinkel's (2001) concepts by using the English term that comes closest to the meaning of recognition described by the author. I noticed how various terms related and/or overlapping with recognition (such as respect, esteem, appreciation) are not used univocally in the literature. Hence, my translation of Voswinkel can be seen as a pragmatic approach to working with those concepts, rather than a systematic discussion of how these concepts fit into the broader debates and distinctions in the greater literature around recognition.

[4] Voswinkel (2001) delineates even further between the concepts, seeing *respect* and *appreciation* as modes of recognition, while *esteem* and *admiration* are described as different types of social relationships. While I find Voswinkel's distinction interesting, I do not think that adapting his very detailed explanations is needed to order my empirical material. To keep it simple, I therefore summarize his elaborations in the idea that there are different recognition forms.

that humans are equal in worth, and that such equal status creates belonging and inclusion to human collectives such as the world population, a nation state, or a cultural group. The social good that a person gains from respect is dignity, which can function as a legal imperative (e.g., you are entitled to universal human rights), but importantly also as a moral imperative. For example, when we are confronted with the question of how to encounter refugees coming into European countries, it could be argued from a legal perspective that they are legally entitelt to apply for asylum. But saying that someone has dignity also means to encounter those who arrive in search of security with a welcoming attitude and care for their needs and rights, not because they are legally entitled to this. Rather, the respect for who the other person is and what s/he needs comes from closeness through being human—from the understanding that anyone can be or have been in these situations.

Another form of recognition, according to Voswinkel, is *esteem* ('Wertschätzung'), which communicates an outstanding contribution of a person to a given human collective. Different from respect, which has a universal character (i.e., you get respect because you are human), esteem signals a gradual mode of recognition gained through individual performance and difference (e.g., having a visible stake in enhancing a corporation's performance). According to Voswinkel (2001), the evaluation of a person's unique contribution is based upon a common value-orientation within the given social collective. The social good that a person gains from appreciation is prestige, which Voswinkel (2001) describes as 'generalized esteem'. Once you have gained prestige, it will make it easier for you to gain additional social esteem (Voswinkel, 2001).

Thirdly, Voswinkel (2001) describes recognition as *appreciation* (Würdigung). This term describes relations where people experience a strong sense of gratitude towards each other. Here people are indebted to each other, not in terms of having to return something of the same economic value, but rather in a more profound moral sense. Voswinkel (2001) elaborates that relations of care tend to create appreciation, in the sense of being immediately touched by what someone does for you. Such relations of care are often gendered like caring for an elderly person, or caring for the household (traditionally female tasks). But I think appreciation suits also well as a concept to capture how individual volunteers experienced recognition from their mentees and mentee families as described in Chapter Nine. Appreciation, according to Voswinkel (2001) creates relatedness and decreases social distance. It values particularly the effort that someone takes to comfort/help another person, rather than the outcome.

Admiration (Bewunderung), on the other hand, is a form of recognition where one party acknowledges the performance/personality of another as superior and successful. Voswinkel (2001, p. 58) states that 'Admiration arouses the grand, while appreciation is related to the good'. Different from appreciation, which decreases social distance, admiration arguably increases social distance by focusing on a person's extraordinary

achievements/results. Admiration can relate to a person's inherited economic and cultural capital (e.g., money, beauty, manners), as well as on self-acquired traits/skills such as prominence or knowledge. According to Voswinkel (2001), admiration requires, in particular, dramaturgical and ritualized recognition, referring to the example that a professor should be addressed by her/his title. The concept of admiration is very close to that of esteem, with the difference that admiration establishes clear hierarchies in the sense of one person being seen as *better* than another. In esteem, there is the possibility that someone is esteemed for being not necessarily better, but simply different from someone else (e.g., in a team of 'overachievers', a manager may esteem a members who produces poorer work results, but is more cooperative and less competitive) (Voswinkel, 2001).

Table 3.
Different Forms of Recognition According to Voswinkel (2001)

Recognition Forms	Signals/Establishes
Respect (Achtung)	Equality/Dignity
Esteem (Wertschätzung)	Difference/Prestige
Appreciation (Würdigung)	Gratitude/Mutuality
Admiration (Bewunderung)	Superiority/Inferiority

Based on the different forms of recognition worked out by Voswinkel (2001), my suggestion is that recognition interactions that are characterized by esteem and admiration (marked dark grey) tend to intensify the paradoxes inherent to MbR, and in so doing also make potentially detrimental effects on individuals like exlusion or stress more likely. Recognition interactions characterized by respect and appreciation (marked light grey), on the other hand, tend to ease the major tension between instrumentality and authenticity. They allow for more immediate 'humanist' effects of MbR as less energy is lost on negotiating the realness of recognition. It is important to note, however, that this distinction does not have direct practical implications for managers. Managers cannot not simply shift their focus from expressing 'esteem' to expressing 'respect', as these forms of recognition emerge *inter*subjectively.

Lastly, I want to add that the distinctions made by Voswinkel (2001) closely relate to the different dynamics of recognition outlined in Chapter Four, where I showed with Honneth (1995) how recognition creates belonging and distinction at the same time. To recall, Honneth argues by drawing upon Mead's (1934) figure of the 'me' and 'I' that inclusion into social groups is an important basis for people to become self-

confident and develop a healthy sense of self. Forms of recognition that create such inclusion are, arguably, respect and appreciation as described by Voswinkel (2001). As I understand Honneth (1995) it is against the background of being included in such common normative horizon, that being distinct and standing out is experienced by people as self-affirmative. This suggests that recognition in the sense of being distinguished through esteem and admiration (Voswinkel, 2001), can only self-enhance people when they have experienced inclusion on a more fundamental level.

Of course, these are rather abstract concepts, but in the following I show how they are nevertheless useful for understanding my empirical material in relation to the different literatures discussed in Chapter Two and Three. Based on my study, I argue in the remainder of this chapter that managerial recognition, deployed as a normative control strategy, can create a variety of effects on individual volunteers. I distinguish these by highlighting experiences of exclusion, enhanced obligations, inclusion and self-worth.

Experiencing Exclusion

I begin discussing the effects of MbR on individuals by showing how the positive rhetoric of MbR can also obscure distressing dynamics in organizational life. By distressing, I align with the skepticism raised in critical management research circles towards catchy, self-activating culture, and identity-oriented forms of normative control (see Chapter Three). They can create experiences of emotional stress, exclusion, and put pressure on individuals to engage in work in ways that may be detrimental to their well being. However, by drawing upon Voswinkel's (2001) different categories of recognition, I suggest that it is not MbR per se that creates these detrimental effects. Instead, recognition interactions that communicate esteem (rather than respect), and that tend to foster relations of admiration (rather than appreciation) are more likely to be injurious to individuals and social collectives.

As discussed in Chapter Four, MbR communicates inclusion as it recognizes a person within the common value horizon of a community, but in so doing, it also communicates exclusion in a variety of ways. Especially when managers practice recognition visibly, the recognized person is also differentiated in relation to his/her social collective. My study shows how this affects not only the recognized person herself, but also the broader community which a person is set apart from or related to. In my view, this is especially the case when recognition in the sense of esteem is communicated publicly (e.g., in a ceremony, in an email to several people, etc.), and when managerial recognition fosters relationships of admiration (Voswinkel, 2001).

Thus, MbR can create highly symbolic and visible standards, not only for inclusion into, but also for exclusion from human collectives. Arguably, the practices of recognition at Communa set high expectations for how someone who is a

worthy/good organizational member should be treated. For example, the promise to be featured in the newspaper, to be sent to a public recognition ceremony, to receive explicit praise, to be listened to individually, is prominent at Communa and appears as a constant possibility—in reach for everyone. Yet, in organizational practice this possibility cannot always be realized. Differently put, my impression is that when recognition is excessively and visibly practiced, experiences of exclusion from a group tend to become more intense and are more quickly felt by those who are, in that moment, not addressed by the recognition gesture.

We can think of the empirical example in Chapter Seven, where a board member states that 'vulnerabilities of volunteers needed to receive more attention' (fieldnotes, 20.09.12). She referred to an instance where some individuals had been 'hurt' that they were not invited to a particular event organized by Communa. In this specific case, the dilemma was that some volunteers who were simultaneously financial donors of Communa were invited to a discussion-event from which other volunteers were excluded. We could look at this instance through what popular management author Ventrice (2003, p. 168) calls 'fairness', in relating to the problem that 'recognition, by its very nature, singles out individuals or group of individuals'. Thus, one question is whether it is 'fair' to invite only those who have made a financial commitment, and this would have to be discussed in relation to the overall number of people engaging and donating at Communa, in relation to the specific content of the event, the room capacities, or other similar events. However, the ideals and expectations created by excessive recognition practices go beyond this issue of 'fairness' as recognized by the managerialist literature (e.g., Ventrice, 2003; Nelson & Spitzer, 2003).

My study shows how the presence of a recognition promise is likely to make experiences of being excluded from recognition more visible and possibly more hurtful. Here, I am thinking of the few accounts where people described experiences of misrecognition, for example by being treated as a 'nobody' (Will). If we remember Will's statements (at the beginning of Chapter Nine), he had a clear idea what recognition should include, such as 'public acknowledgement', 'institutionalized guidance' or 'possibilities to participate in decision making' (Will). In our conversation he demonstrated great awareness of a MbR discourse as he had worked with HRM issues within Communa. Arguably, knowing what recognition should, and also could look like at Communa, made his own impressions of not being addressed by this potentially more hurtful, and left him overall with the sense that he was 'not valued' (Will).

When speaking of dynamics of exclusion at Communa, I also think of the incident described in Chapter Eight where I received an explicit farewell by the volunteer management group, including a present and praise, whereas the group had difficulty finding warm words for another member who had not announced her departure in advance. To be sure, people present did not treat the leaving volunteer in any

disrespectful way. But being in an environment where one experiences, on a daily basis, what recognition could and should look like, bears the danger of making rather 'normal' or mundane interactions appear misrecognizing. But the contrast in relation to what recognition could and should look like became noticeable.

Thus, the contrasts between the possibility of recognition and the experiences of exclusion when this possibility is not realized become more visible and potentially hurtful in Communa's recognition-intense organizational culture. When we think about the intense recognition presence, we can also notice how especially commonplace expressions of recognition that involve a larger number of people (e.g., when communicated within a group, or at a larger event) align with the mode of 'esteem' rather than 'respect' (Voswinkel, 2001). These public expressions signal gradual rather than universal recognition, by singling out a person or group of people in relation to the larger collective, based on achievement. As Voswinkel (2001) notes, these modes of recognition enhance an admiration by others, but in so doing, they increase social distance and competition between people.

Returning to the situation of my farewell in the volunteer management group, we could imagine I had received the present only at the end of the meeting or in a private encounter, from those people who were actively part of selecting it. That would have also made me feel recognized, without so intensively stimulating 'admiration' (Voswinkel, 2001) from others. Simultaneously, it would have diminished the distance between me and the other volunteer. Those who actively recognized me would not have had to account for why they could not 'correctly' respond to the other volunteer. Perhaps a more natural way of saying 'thank you' and 'goodbye'—for being a volunteer just like others who are sitting at the table—would have been possible. Of course, these are only speculative scenarios. But in discussing them, I suggest that gestures, where universal 'respect' rather than 'esteem' are the point of departure for a recognition expression, make more relaxed, inclusive experiences of being with each other possible.

Experiencing Enhanced Obligations

Another effect of the visible recognition promise at Communa is that it prompts people to work harder for the organization, potentially in ways that are destructive to their own well being. To highlight this point, I primarily draw upon my own experience of working for Communa. Here, I suggest that in exerting after-recognition discipline, MbR has affected my behavior and mindset. The decision to include my own experiences of recognition in this thesis was motivated by my realization that Communa's recognition culture impacted my emotions and actual labour in considerable ways. I have discussed my own role in the organization, especially in Chapters Five and Eight. I described, for instance, how my fieldwork

experience was a constant, often tiresome stretch between my researcher role and my role as a volunteer engaged for Communa.

Even though I had a clear 50%-50% arrangement, I often worked beyond what was expected for Communa, and squeezed my research tasks into night shifts or weekends. This was, of course, not only detrimental to my well being as I experienced this time as a positive challenge too. Yet, it certainly increased my level of stress and exhaustion. Because I signaled to Communa my willingness to work for them, and because I delivered the given tasks reliably and apparently in good quality, I received an increased number of tasks during my internship. My fieldnotes demonstrate how this put pressure on me, especially towards the end of my internship, to live up to all these different tasks and roles in which I was involved in the ethnographic engagement. At one point towards the end of my internship, I wrote in my fieldnotes that 'I am so busy with this power point presentation and number crunching, which is absolutely not my thing, and discussing it with . . . really didn't lift my mood. In addition also the protocol and other admin tasks are still on my list . . . taken together this really makes me feel like I need . . . a break, some time to recover from this whole situation' (fieldnotes, 19.12.2012).

During the internship, I had moments where I did not sleep well and worked more than eight hours a day in order to manage my own research tasks and fulfill the tasks given to me by Communa. But why did I work so hard for them? I had said to myself that I would achieve greater integration through working for Communa and hence improved access. But this argument did not count in the end where I had already gained access. In addition, there was no obvious pressure from Communa's side. On the contrary, my direct supervisor asked me several times whether I felt I was able to manage my workload and emphasized that I could retreat from work for Communa if I needed more time for my own project.

So why did I perform voluntarily beyond what I felt comfortable with? Arguably, being confronted quite early on with experiences and promises of self-elevation (see especially Chapter Eight), being introduced to everyone as the 'active intern' who did such 'great work', made me eager to receive more affirmation, even when I was simultaneously estranged by it.

Thus, the received recognition that was at first unexpected, but then became more and more part of the 'deal', made me strive to keep up a performance level that ensured future recognition by other organizational members. In that sense, we could speak of the disciplining effect of MbR that increased *after* having been targeted by it. After having been included in the recognition scripts and especially in organizational performances that communicated esteem and admiration towards me (e.g., being praised as the 'active intern'), MbR impacted me in the sense of having established an identity for me that I strived to live up to. I would have experienced it as a personal failure if I did not manage my tasks, which reflects Barker's (1993) and Casey's

(1999) argument of how normative control personalizes responsibility and increases emotional stress for individuals to live up to ideal characters.

We can label this type of control exerted through MbR 'after-recognition discipline'. It follows from having been included in organizational scripts. Another volunteer who is in a managerial position also expressed a similar experience to me. She described how she was prominently recognized by Communa for her work style and consequently assigned increased responsibility in one of the projects. This, she added,

> has the disadvantage that you already feel an inner obligation more, and are no longer entirely (laughing) independent as you were previously. (Verena)

This form of control that others and I experienced in relation to MbR is similar to what authors label 'aspirational control' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Costas & Kärreman, 2013). It is similar, in that control is established by creating an image of who you can become in the organization—a recognized member. However, rather than being a somewhat independent and abstract future identity position, MbR's disciplining power seems to come largely from what one has *already* become, and the pressure to live up to this role in the future.

Arguably, here detrimental effects of MbR are intensified by expressions of recognition that foreground esteem and admiration (Voswinkel, 2001). Returning to the example of me being an 'active intern', the stakes to lose face (Goffman, 1967) are much higher when the received recognition has publicly communicated esteem and admiration. Being introduced as an 'active intern' foregrounded recognition in terms of esteeming a particular achievement of mine (something that was admirable), rather than a more inclusive sense of respect (i.e., I deserve recognition simply because I am a volunteer at Communa, just like anyone else, not because I am so 'active'). The danger of losing such esteem then appears to hinge on one's ongoing performance as an 'active' person, rather than on a more fundamental sense of recognition through belonging to a collective.

In parts, my study thus supports authors (e.g., Barker, 1993; Casey, 1999) who emphasize that normative control is morally problematic when encouraging organizational members to work hard, even if it may be detrimental to their psychological and physical well being. However, while work stress and instances of exclusion certainly exist and may even be enforced by MbR, individuals at Communa do not suffer from burnout or depression on a large scale. I heard of only one instance of work-related breakdown over the past years. But burnouts did not seem to be a common phenomenon at Commua—very different from studies like Barker (1993), Casey (1999), or Kunda (2006), which see a clear dominance of these problematic effects.

In making this comparison, I want to acknowledge the voluntary nature of the work that most people do at Communa. For some, volunteering has the character of a full-

time paid employment, especially for the function owners, including obligations to a number of different parties that bind people to the organization. But for those volunteers who are more loosely associated with Communa's projects, the possibility to simply step out when confronted with demands that one does not want to meet is certainly given. One organizational member told me that members who leave the organization because of conflicting interest, often do not have an open conversation about it. Many 'dissappear', saying that they 'have to take care of the grandchildren' (Will). Arguably, the choice to 'disappear' is more tricky in paid employment. This could suggest that the voluntary nature of work at Communa plays an important role in my observation that the work environment was in sum—despite instances of exclusion and enhanced moral obligations—not detrimental for people.

Despite acknowledging the role that the, literally, voluntary nature of work may play at Communa, I am convinced that the overall healthy work environment is the result of more complex factors. After all, even those who are paid workers at Communa described very positive, cooperative working conditions with little power games (see Chapter Six). I experienced Communa's work environment in similar ways. While I cannot account for all factors that may contribute to the overall positive work atmosphere, I suggest that practices related to MbR, despite the ambiguities and tensions it creates, played a key role here. Thus, while I acknowledge possible distressing or detrimental effects of MbR, the picture in my study is much more diverse, as I discuss in the next two sections.

Experiencing Inclusion

In this and the following section, I discuss how MbR—despite distressing effects outlined earlier—can be seen as a management idea and practice that fosters individual experiences of enhanced self-worth. My study of Communa suggests that MbR's humanist goals are especially realized when 'respect' and 'appreciation' (Voswinkel, 2001) are communicated to individuals in their daily work for the organization. I further emphasize how respect and appreciation (Voswinkel, 2001) at or through work are not necessarily created by managers, but can also evolve outside of the realm of managerial influence. To set the stage for these arguments, I want to return to the question of how we can better understand volunteers' performances.

At the end of Chapter Nine, I raised the question of how we can evaluate volunteers' uniform attempts to distance themselves from dominant recognition performances, while still acting *as if* they agree by attending recognition events and not subverting them in visible ways. Does this suggest that MbR effectively controls workers, possibility in distressing ways as outlined above? The argument popularized amongst critical management scholars is that expressions of disidentification do not provide meaningful embodied resistance (Contu, 2008). While individuals hold on to the

notion of authentic 'inner' selves, Fleming and Spicer (2003) suggest this is a fantasy that helps sustain obedient practices at work, exactly because people believe they are free inside.

In line with this idea and the distressing/unintended effects of MbR discussed above, it could be argued that Communa's members are strongly impacted by the ideological framework that MbR creates. Chapter Eight shows how interactions evolving from this management principle create not only after-recognition discipline, but also 'in-recognition discipline', connected to the very routine that is performed in the given moment. For example, when people clap, and a moderator asks you to go on stage, the stakes to break out of the routine character of this situation are quite high. Annika's story that introduces this text, as well as the instance where I was publicly recognized for making a farewell video in Chapter Eight, suggest that MbR has a fairly immediate impact; it requires dramaturgical cooperation (Goffman, 1959, 1967) to avoid individual or group embarrassment. Hence we both did not subvert the apparent normative social orders, even though we were skeptical towards those. But this does not mean that MbR' humanist claims were not reached.

In relation to my autoethnographic material, it is important to note, however, that in- and after-recognition discipline worked strongly because I *also* experienced joy, comfort and integration into Communa's social collective in terms of 'respect' and 'appreciation' (Voswinkel, 2001). Instances like the farewell event where I was publicly recognized for making a video (see Chapter Eight) demonstrate this. So I want to unpack my response here a bit further.

Recognition events, like the farewell, made me comply with dramaturgical demands, and overall enhanced pressures on me to live up to the role of being an 'active intern' (see earlier section on 'enhanced obligations'). While performing, I experienced similar ambivalence towards this recognition form as many of my interviewees, and remained somewhat disidentified 'inside'. But was this sense of disidentification perhaps only an illusion that made me perform even better in line with organizational demands? I do not think so and want to suggest instead that such disidentifications have an important function, beyond the 'illusion' of having an independent core.

Critical scholars would evaluate individuals' acting *as if* while disidentifying (Fleming and Spicer, 2003) as an evidence of compliance and false consciousness. But if we follow Goffman (1959), such resistant self-understanding is not more or less 'real' than when people 'perform' in the sense of going on stage and overall acting in line with cultural prescriptions. Goffman (1959, p. 252) argues that 'the very structure of the self can be seen in terms of how we arrange for such performances'. In that sense, both performing in line with a given recognition event, as well as performing resistance towards oneself (e.g., as an internal dialogue as Mead (1934) suggests, or in an interview), impact the way in which MbR can unfold.

Arguably, because I felt a certain distance towards overtly public recognition, my performances needed to draw upon something that outbalanced this sense of distance. If instrumentalism, discomfort, and pressures to perform were the *only* dynamics I had experienced in relation to MbR, it would not have been able to work on me in the way it did. That is, if there were nothing 'behind' recognition efforts, I do not think these efforts could compel people to perform in line with cultural demands. In my case, I experienced from the first day a close integration into Communa's social circles, I was invited to work in a variety of different groups, and I was warmly introduced to co-workers and guided in my work tasks. These rather immediate, less explicit recognition forms (that were interestingly also part of the managerial rationale behind MbR outlined in Chapter Seven) gave me a more fundamental experience of belonging—more in the sense of 'respect' (Voswinkel, 2001)—where my individual performance was not at the forefront. For instance, I was immediately invited to use the informal address (the 'Du'), as soon as it was agreed upon that I would become a volunteer at Communa, just as any other volunteer would be.

Being integrated into Communa's social collective in these ways gave me the chance to get a more personal picture about who the people were who praised me, to evaluate their intent beyond categories such as 'real' or 'fake', and to learn performing cultural scripts (see Chapter Eight). Thereby, I learned to perform my own role with greater knowledge, which increased my self-confidence, and made me overall more able to enjoy recognition performances. My point is thus that workers' performances in relation to normative control efforts cannot be evaluated simply in terms of whether they comply with organizational demands or not, as critical management scholars tend to do. Instead, we also need to look at what apparently compliant performances 'do' more generally to and with individual workers (including 'managers'). In this regard, my empirical material shows how self-enhancement, and thus the humanist claims of MbR, are advanced when people manage to alleviate the tension between authenticity and instrumentalism in interactions that follow MbR. Such 'outbalancing' is eased through different factors.

It seems that individual self-enhancement and confidence is fostered when MbR expressions succeed in making individuals experience recognition in the sense of respect and appreciation (Voswinkel, 2001). For instance, at my own farewell event (see Chapter Eight), I was recognized for having contributed to Communa's goals through a speech. Had I not been introduced to Communa's recognition scripts in the three months prior, it is quite likely that I would have felt highly uncomfortable to be singled out publicly. In addition, I may have had greater doubts about the sincerity of the event, and perhaps suffered from limited dramaturgical practice. However, at the recognition organized for my farewell, I was united with the other involved actors in knowing dominant recognition scripts and, overall, being able to perform in line with those. Hence, I had a basic sense of inclusion that was independent of my contribution to Communa's organizational goals, and also closely

connected to knowing that some close colleagues appreciated (rather than admired) me. By that, I mean that I had experienced gratitude when helping out colleagues; I sensed that I mattered to people, irrespective of whether I delivered, say, a PowerPoint presentation on time or not. The evolving recognition performance at my farewell event was enjoyable and self-affirming. Arguably, because we spoke the same language, and were skilled actors, the performance ran smoothly.

This shows also that it was not in management's hands alone to secure a smooth performance. Rather, the different factors described here needed to come together to make MbR 'work'. In my view, experiencing embarrassment or insecurities as to how to act on 'stage' enhances a sense of not belonging to a community. Also Annika's example from my introduction suggests that she could have enjoyed being 'singled out' and 'differentiated' in public more, had the politician made her feel integrated in a common social world in the first place – for example, by asking her about her profession or by admitting to be nervous on stage.

Experiencing Enhanced Self-Worth

Overall, my study shows also how doubts about the authentic intent of the recognition giver are often set aside when recognition performances run without major performance interruptions (Goffman, 1959). Thus, it is not the 'original' intent of the recognition giver (not even what is interpreted as the original intent) that determines experiences of authenticity in recognition interactions in the first place. Instead, the dynamics of the recognition interactions as such—dependent on whether individuals gain a more fundamental sense of self-respect (Voswinkel, 2001)—impact importantly on how the suspicion of inauthenticity in MbR is handled, and tension alleviated.

Different from a widespread approach to treat social performances and impression management (Goffman, 1959) as inauthentic, the idea that in performing, we become who we are, opens in my view a less deterministic reading of culturally compliant performances. My empirical material suggests that in performing, people can *also* find self-affirmation and experience enhanced self worth. Such experiences can arguably create distance to dominant normative expectations. The highly emotive and individualized character of normative management concepts like recognition (but also family, friendship, identity, etc.) does not only make control stronger, as many suggest. In my view it also makes management control 'weaker' or at least more dependent on 'collective' efforts, as 'managers' alone cannot alleviate the suspicion of instrumentalism.

When those targeted by normative control set out to outbalance instrumentalism, for instance through cynical distancing, they can also gain agency over their performances. In Chapter Nine, for example, Bent expresses distance and rejection of

managerial recognition events in sarcastic terms (labeling the food as 'alright' and pins as 'embarrassing'). Yet I have shown how his performance in the majors' reception gave him an opportunity to use the positive, altruistic identity construction the reception provided, to get back at his colleagues who mobbed him. Thus, in *performing* in line with normative action expectations he was critical about, because he saw them as instrumental, he actually experienced enjoyment in *being* that engaged highly praised volunteer–at least in the eyes of others. Therefore, just as recognition performances can create stress, ambivalence, or insecurity about how to act, they can also set free comforting and securing emotions (e.g., happiness about coming together with like-minded people, pride at being praised). Such comforting emotional experiences do not only blind or stultify people, as some would argue with regards to the integrative power that symbolic culture management practices have. In my view, such emotional experiences also enhance individual autonomy.

The examples of Chapter Eight, where individuals describe how they 'learn' to perform, show how becoming a good and sometimes detached actor does not necessarily enhance alienation, but might also raise individual independence from normative expectations. Learning to act, for instance, can increase the acting space for future interactions, in that people know about different possible acting options. In that sense, performances that are quickly under suspicion of being 'fake' can enhance feelings of elevation, self-confidence, specialness, and happiness. Such enjoyment in well-rehearsed acting means individuals are not only controlled by the scripts in a restraining or negative sense, but they experience self-realization and self-worth, also *within* adherence to dominant scripts.

Within such enjoyable performances, disidentification has an important function. Different to the argument that expressions of resistance become meaningless when they are just part of a balanced performance (e.g. Kunda, 2006), my impression is that these expressions of distance also pave the way for people to be able to experience more fully the positive, joyful aspects of recognition performances. Looking at Bent again, we could say that based on portraying himself as distant and establishing rejection to 'instrumental' recognition, he could allow himself to go to the event and enjoy the food, enjoy being touched in his 'vanity', talk to a few other like-minded people and so on.

Towards a Conclusion

In summary, two points raised in relation to my study of MbR at Communa are key. First, even if normative control can have distressing effects on individuals, such management efforts are not totalizing as such. Because normative control attempts (like MbR) draw upon workers' subjectivity and emotive relations with each other,

they do not only have the potential to target people's 'inner worlds', but are also more vulnerable to being suspected of instrumentalism and inauthenticity. Closely related to this insight is the other point that the different effects of MbR are collectively achieved when all parties in the respective interactions engage in outbalancing the tension between instrumentalism and authenticity. By bringing forward these two basic points, I align with authors in the field of management and organization studies, who see control in organization as emerging in social practices, rather than in managerial intents, and who promote an dynamic understanding of organizational power relations (e.g., Ekman, 2010; Lundholm, 2011; Mumby, 2005; Rennstam, 2007).

My study suggests that MbR only functions when the instrumentalism inherent to MbR is limited. The critical authors whom I have considered in Chapter Three suggest that by addressing 'private', 'authentic', 'real', 'informal' or 'different' identities of workers, management techniques have become ever more sophisticated and totalizing in their control. That also implies, for instance, that management is never authentic. My study shows, however, a more complex picture, acknowledging that managers also struggle to achieve recognition and realize MbR's humanist goals, without evaluating their efforts as necessarily fake or evil. The tension between authenticity and instrumentality in normative control efforts is arguably one that all parties attempt to alleviate. Contrary to a totalizing view of normative control, I argue that managerial practices/discourses become more vulnerable and open to interruptions when they draw upon social relations that are, by definition, highly individualized, private, and emotive. MbR, in this reading, is an attempt to manage something that is more complex to manage than the body of industrial laborers in classic Taylorism.

My interpretation is that, because of such uncertainty and tensions, MbR has effects that do not easily fit in a 'win-win' (see Chapter Two) or 'zero-sum' scenario (see Chapter Three). Saying that all parties make recognition work by outbalancing inherent instrumentalism, I do not imply that this is ever possible. Thus, different from a 'win-win' scenario promoted by the managerialist literature, I acknowledge that tensions prevail when managers target peoples' inner worlds. MbR does not, as such, make these tensions disappear, but people who are confronted with such management trends in organizational practice work together in their performances to *alleviate* these tensions, which in turn impacts the effects MbR has. While it is difficult to find exact formulas for when MbR 'does this' to people and social dynamics, and when it 'does that', I use Voswinkel (2001) as an attempt to classify control effects. Admittedly, this is not a waterproof framework that will help to evaluate every situation in detail. Rather, I use it to show tendencies that MbR cultivates more distressing control effects when it involves gestures that communicate esteem and admiration (e.g., public praise), rather than respect and appreciation (e.g., addressing all volunteers with the informal 'Du', inviting everyone to the same party).

Chapter 11 – Conclusion

I set out to write this thesis with the overall goal to theorize and empirically unpack a management trend that I term Management by Recognition. While this trend has grown in prominence over the past ten to fifteen years it is not systematically explored in academic texts. This is not to say that MbR is a completely new phenomenon. It shares key similarities with cultural control and other efforts to manage identities at work. For that reason, I have conceptualized MbR as a distinct form of normative control that builds explicitly on the idea of appreciating and self-affirming individuals. My observation is that this pronounced focus on becoming a recognizing work organization has spread in thematic intensity and quantity—leading to whole publications solely concerned with how to recognize employees (Chapman and White, 2011; Ventrice, 2003) or practitioner-oriented guidelines for voluntary organizations (Die Beauftragte für Migration, 2009). This, in combination with the culture engineering effort at Communa described in Chapters Six to Nine, made MbR an interesting, little-studied, and relevant topic to investigate, in my eyes.

In this concluding chapter, I aim to summarize the insights that my study has generated, and to discuss the implications of my thesis for academic debates concerned with efforts to manage people's inner worlds in the voluntary and for-profit sector, as well as for practitioners. In so doing, I argue that my thesis enhances knowledge in these areas in four overarching senses: 1) it creates space for discussion by coining the concept of MbR, 2) it enhances understanding of how different actors collectively accomplish control in organizations, 3) it offers a more optimistic reading of normative control, while acknowledging possible distressing effects, and 4) it provides new insight to interested practitioners about the complexity of MbR, and possible unintended organizational dynamics.

Thesis Insights in a Nutshell

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this thesis is to *gain enriched understanding of the social interactions that constitute and challenge MbR as a form of normative control.* To address this purpose, I followed the idea that a better understanding of MbR in particular and normative control in general could be gained by putting an explicit

empirical focus on individuals' social performances. Through an in depth ethnographic study, I could follow longer sequences of interaction that emerged in relation to MbR from different perspectives. This investigation was guided by the research question: *How do organizational members perform in interactions that emerge from the intent to manage workers by recognition?*

The empirical chapters (Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine) highlight different aspects of such individual performances, while all of them support Goffman's (1959) point that humans carefully cooperate in social life in order to grant its smooth unfolding. Chapter Seven shows especially how management representatives at Communa engaged in developing literal and metaphoric scripts that outline how MbR should be correctly practiced. In Chapter Eight, where I unpack how these scripts unfold, we see how managers' performances are characterized by fairly strict script adherence. In following and reinstituting ritualized recognition practices like greeting everyone, or checking up on people, managers' performances appear largely predictable. Also when we look at how those targeted by MbR respond to recognition practice in Chapter Eight, for example when being praised, we encounter a fairly predictable action pattern. Volunteers rarely interrupt the recognition scripts in visible ways.

Based on this first impression, managers appear to have a dominant role in shaping action expectations that all organizational members at Communa fulfill. But a second, more careful look shows how these apparently smooth performances where voluntary workers act 'as if' they have accepted dominant cultural prescriptions (Fleming & Spicer, 2003) tell us more than just that. Chapters Seven and Eight highlight how scripts are not purely 'managerial' in their origin. They are informed by a broader societal discourse on volunteering and management fashions. Chapter Eight and Nine show how the 'scripts' that members of Communa follow are multi-authored. For example, managers at Communa do not only follow their 'own' scripts when practicing recognition, they also begin to adapt to action expectations that general volunteers raise in relation to MbR. Also, the dominant action expectation of being modest or to avoid bragging that we see in Chapter Nine does not seem to be primarily authored by managers, yet it influences importantly how people act in MbR interactions. In addition, Chapter Eight and Ten discuss how performances that appear to comply with larger cultural scripts do not foreclose positive experiences of being included into a social collective, of gaining enhanced self-worth, and of becoming a more confident and independent person.

These different observations about how organizational members at Communa perform in MbR-interactions show us that the practices of those who are officially appointed to exert 'control' are not necessarily the most important source in shaping workers' mindsets or behaviors. This insight supports the argument that control is accomplished in social interactions, and that efforts to manage by recognition are importantly that: attempts to achieve control, rather than totalizing managerial units.

Most authors that I have referred to in Chapter Three when introducing the concept of normative control would probably agree that management control is, of course, not omnipotent in shaping workers' minds and conduct. Yet dominant studies tend to enforce a manager-managed binary by presenting managerial discourses/practices as rather certain units at one side of work relations. This study has attempted to loosen such a binary, and to highlight the weakness of management, and the constant risk that managerial control efforts do not materialize. I argue that, because normative control attempts (like MbR) draw upon workers' subjectivity and emotive relations with each other, they do not only have the power to influence people's 'inner worlds'. They are also more vulnerable to being suspected of instrumentalism and inauthenticity.

Overarching Contributions

Based on the various insights outlined above, I suggest that my study contributes in four overarching senses to the literatures outlined in Chapters Two and Three, as well as to a better understanding of how MbR works in practical terms:

1. In **coining the concept of MbR**, this study isolates and analyzes a specific normative control technique increasingly promoted by management authors and deployed in organizational practice to influence workers' intrinsic motivations. I thus offer a conceptual basis and vocabulary for studying recognition as a key dimension in normative control and for analyzing a growing phenomenon in contemporary (paid and non-paid) work life.
2. By foregrounding interactional dynamics and social practices, this study **enhances understanding of how different actors collectively accomplish control in organizations,** as well as how they are impacted by it. I thus offer a detailed account of how MbR is enacted and negotiated by organizational members in different hierarchical positions, thereby adding insight to the 'non-managerial' or even 'non-manageable' dimensions of normative control.
3. This thesis questions the predominantly pessimistic accounts of normative control as a managerial effort that 'colonizes' workers. By discussing the immanent limits of MbR, I suggest an alternative for theorizing normative control efforts as social practices that reach their goal, ironically, when their inherent instrumentalism is limited. I thus **offer a more optimistic theorizing of normative control** that does not foreclose the possibility that managers may 'really' mean recognition or that workers 'really' experience recognition, and that this may have liberating effects. Different form a 'win-win' scenario (as in Chapter Two), I acknowledge, however, that tensions are never fully

resolved when concepts such as recognition, friendship, family, etc. are used with a normative control intent, and hence distressing effects for the individuals can always emerge.

4. This study provides **new insights for interested practitioners** about the complexity of MbR, and possible unintended dynamics that affect importantly also those who 'manage'. It shows, for example, how MbR can have an important internal function in the sense of providing managers with an enhanced feeling of purpose, but it also highlights how the 'substance' of work tasks may suffer from excessive symbolic practices.

I want to use the remainder of the chapter to further unpack these contributions. I do this by first discussing what specific implications my insights have for academic debates concerned with efforts to manage people's inner worlds in the voluntary and for-profit sector. This is followed by an outlook on current developments in volunteering that suggest MbR will continue to be an important practice, and by discussing how, in light of such developments, practitioners can draw upon the insights of this thesis.

Theoretical Implications

In this thesis, I have been in a 'conversation' with a variety of different bodies of literature. Under the label 'managerialist literature' in Chapter Two, I have discussed authors in the voluntary sector literature, in HRM, and in popular management thought who promote recognition as an important tool to enhance control over workers and increase intrinsic motivation. Chapter Three has discussed critical/interpretivist accounts of normative control–a perspective that has helped me to draw attention to distressing effects that normative management efforts like MbR may have. In relation to the outlined contributions above I outline here more specifically what my study 'does' to the existing theories.

One important contribution of my study is that it brings attention to a phenomenon in organizational practice by coining and theorizing the term Management by Recognition. As I have mentioned earlier, MbR is not a completely new empirical phenomenon. In addition, we can note how it is implied and touched upon in present research on normative and/or identity control in organizations. For example, Kenny (2006) discusses how individuals in organizations are emotionally attached to certain recognition-worthy identity positions (e.g., being a senior police officer), and how such attachments can impact people to subject themselves to norms that are potentially injurious to them. Studies on high-performance cultures (e.g., Muhr et al., 2013; Muhr & Kirkegaard, 2013) describe vividly how people's striving for

recognition plays an important role in making people work extreme hours, even when they fantasize about a healthy work-life balance. Willmott's (1993) seminal article on culture control also emphasizes that an important mechanism of normative control lies in turning the average worker into a winner, by making him or her stick out.

Thus peoples' desire to become a recognized member of society, by both being included as well as lifted up from a social collective (Honneth, 1995), can be used by work organizations to achieve their goals. In isolating the mechanism of recognition in normative control, and making its dynamics more visible, my study provides a new focus and vocabulary for analyzing what happens when people commit themselves to work organizations, without apparent or direct external pressures. Interestingly, while the theme of recognition is an integral part of the normative control literature, it is rarely directly addressed. But the fact that practitioners increasingly make recognition an explicit managerial strategy, points to the importance of better understanding the role of recognition in contemporary work life. Based on this thesis, future research could inquire, for example, how tensions as described in this text—most notably that between authenticity and instrumentalism, but also those between standardization and individualization or between top-down versus bottom-up approaches—play out in other organizational contexts.

My thesis suggests that while there may be an increased desire to opt out of capitalist working life, we are far from entering a 'post-recognition' age, as Fleming (2013) indicates. The MbR trend described in this thesis rather suggests that recognition remains key in today's society to manage workers' intrinsic motivations. I will emphasize this point further when speaking about current developments in volunteering. But also in for-profit organizations, 'employee recognition' has advanced to one of the buzzwords of the past ten to fifteen years. While there are many resemblances of MbR to widely studied culture and identity control attempts, this is a specific focus that deserves further academic attention in my view. I have suggested that there are important overlapping managerial concerns between the voluntary and for-profit sector with how to address workers' autonomy and intrinsic motives. It would be very interesting to investigate this claim further, by studying MbR in for-profit organizations.

In coining the term MbR, my study also provides vocabulary for scholars who study the specific challenges involved in managing a voluntary workforce as outlined in Chapter Two. The concept of MbR brings together a number of efforts observed in voluntary organizations to manage peoples' intrinsic motivation, and it adds an important critical layer to voluntary sector research that is, so far, dominated by a largely functionalist/managerialist orientation. Because my study sees MbR as a form of normative control, it offers a research approach to voluntary sector scholars that recognizes complexities and possible detrimental effects of positive management concepts, while taking serious the challenges involved in volunteer management.

Thus, in bringing these functionalist-oriented accounts in volunteer and general management into a conversation with critically inspired authors, and unpacking the complexities of organizational life in my empirical study, this thesis' questions a too win-win scenario as too simplistic.

Even though the link to the concept of normative control appears logical, given the large absence of 'strong' or direct monetary/hierarchical control forms in non-profit organizing, it has hardly been made (O' Toole, 2013; O' Toole & Grey, 2015 present an interesting exception). Conversely, there are a number of critical management scholars who investigate power and subjectivity in voluntary organizations (Kenny, 2006; Kornberger & Brown, 2007; Villadsen, 2009). However, a direct conversation between these critical literatures and the volunteer management literature has rarely happened, which places my study in a widely unexplored area of different works concerned with the management of voluntary elements at work that can, however, gain important insights from knowing about each other.

While some authors in the voluntary sector/managerialist and most of the critical interpretivist literature would agree that a stimulus-response scheme is insufficient to 'really' describe what is going on in organizational life, many studies still express great trust in management to design and implement organizational control based on recognition practices. In relation to the managerialist literature, this study shows how, despite the broadly promoted win-win scenario (see Chapter Two), there can be 'losers' amongst all involved parties. I outlined the need to pay increased attention to contradictions, clashes (e.g., between standardization versus individualization, strategic versus authentic recognition, top-down versus bottom-up approaches) and subtle power relations that are created by positive culture management practices. In line with the work of critical/interpretivist management scholars (see Chapter Three) who discuss similar tensions in culture-management, I argued that the overarching clash between instrumental and humanist motives that is reflected in those specific recognition tensions cannot be so easily reconciled. This clash creates inherent ambivalence rather than a friction-free win-win, as all parties involved in MbR interactions can lose autonomy in the unfolding of those encounters.

In addition, my study highlights how we can understand the gains and losses of autonomy and control beyond the traditional 'manager-managed' binary. By returning to the idea that control interactions can be captured by the dramaturgic concept of the 'script as acting material', I substantiated my claim that control in organizations is inherently diffused. This insight adds nuance in relation to evaluating people's ambivalent responses to normative control forms that are often characterized by simultaneous distance and acceptance. As outlined earlier, prominent critical authors (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Kunda, 2006) suggest people's ambivalence towards normative control, expressed often in rhetorical distancing yet physical enactment of ideal corporate personae, can be read as a sign that workers are

ultimately fully colonized/controlled by culture-oriented management practices. Contrary to this view, and by following authors who call for less totalizing accounts of organizational control and power relations (e.g., Ashcraft, 2005; Ekman, 2010; Mumby, 2005), my study shows how there are no 'total losses'.

In relation to critical/interpretivist accounts of Normative Control, my study presents a suitable case for investigating more intangible, culture-oriented, immaterial modes of control, given the absence of any monetary rewards. It could be said that the present study of MbR investigated normative control in a fairly pure form. Such an intense and practice oriented empirical engagement has contributed insights to the emotive experiences of workers when being targeted by managerial recognition. Recognition, by definition, is a highly emotional concept as it addresses so essentially individuals' self-understanding and self-worth. My key insight is that even when managerial recognition appears to be instrumental, staged, and perhaps 'fake', that does not necessarily impede self-affirmation, as many critical scholars tend to argue. In that sense, my overall contribution to the critical/interpretivist literature lies in adding to a nuanced view of organizational control that goes beyond dualist conceptions of managers versus managed, or control versus autonomy. Next to these different theoretical insights, my study has also practical implications that I discuss in the remainder of this chapter.

Current Developments in Volunteering

The current political situation during the phase of writing up this text is one in which voluntary work has prominently featured in the media and daily life. With the unprecedented high numbers of refugees entering the European Union (EU) during the summer of 2015[5], we are also constantly reminded of those who voluntarily give their time, skills, energy, and affection to welcome the people who are fleeing violence and discrimination (most notably war-refugees from Syria). Civic engagement in the countries where people arrive and apply for asylum[6] is needed in all sorts of ways. Refugees on the move—often for months and under unimaginable hardships—have

[5] In total, more than 1,006,000 migrants and refugees crossed into the EU in 2015 by sea and land. Circa 942,400 people have claimed asylum in member states of the EU (BBC News, 2015). These numbers stand in stark contrast to a total of 626,715 asylum applications to EU states in 2014, or approximately 200,000 asylum application to EU states in 2006 (Eurostat Statistics, 2015).

[6] Next to Hungary, Austria and Finland, Germany and Sweden are amongst the European countries that, due to their liberal immigration policies, have received most asylum applications in 2015 (BBC News, 2015).

immediate needs, like a place to stay, warm and clean clothes, food, or medical treatment. 'We' who are fortunate to live in those safer countries can now observe increased numbers of volunteers waiting at train stations to sort clothes or toys, to hand out food, to translate, or to help refugees to find a place to stay for the first nights. Perhaps we are even volunteers ourselves or know others who are.

But the need for voluntary engagement does not stop after such immediate assistance. If we follow the current developments, we know that the many new residents of countries like Germany or Sweden need support to understand and master the culture they now live in, the language, the legal system, and so on. Here, locals volunteer to become mentors or legal guardians for unaccompanied minors. Volunteers participate in language cafés or other initiatives that foster cultural exchange. These are just a few out of countless examples that we could observe over the past months, in the media and in day-to-day life. Politicians have over and over emphasized and recognized how important such voluntary engagement is. One of the most prominent political actors, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, invited representatives of aid organizations in September 2015 to thank them, and recognized particularly the importance of those who engage voluntarily to support immigrants (Die Bundesregierung, 2015).

These developments suggest that EU-states will also in the future be highly dependent on a large voluntary workforce that engages in concrete tasks to meet the needs of newcomers and facilitate intercultural communication. Such need for voluntary workers is closely connected to the theme of this thesis: MbR. Political authorities, but also managers in voluntary organizations will continue to practice MbR as a strategy to secure and shape future voluntary engagement. This confirms the relevance of giving detailed insights into this phenomenon. In this context, I want to highlight one concrete example of a recent recognition ceremony, to show how my study can help to better understand the potential challenges and pitfalls in MbR.

In the German Federal State of Berlin, the State Office for Health and Social Matters (Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales ('Lageso')) is responsible for registering and attending to the first needs of those who apply for asylum. This state institution has, however, become rather infamous during the summer and fall of 2015 for not being able to deliver even the most basic care to arriving refugees. Volunteers present day and night in front of the Lageso have helped to provide food, clothes, or medical services, and thereby outbalanced the failure of official state authorities to humanely organize the influx of asylum seekers. Amongst those volunteers is an alliance of civil society actors called 'Moabit hilft'. Berlin's mayor and Berlin's social senator have invited members of Moabit hilft to a reception at the city hall to honor their voluntary engagement. Moabit hilft, however, has publicly refused to come to this event.

In an interview with the Süddeutsche Zeitung (Beitzer, 2015), the spokesperson of Moabit hilft, Diana Henniges, explains this reaction. Henniges calls the reception a

‘farce’ and describes an experience of being left alone by the public authorities, especially with regards to providing medical services. The basic care for volunteers during nights and weekends, she describes, is also provided solely by volunteers. According to Henniges, there would have been ‘cases of death’ amongst the refugees if volunteers had not provided these most basic services. She speaks, for instance, of refugees who have been infected with HIV, and who are in severe danger if they catch a cold while waiting in long unsheltered queues. Against this background, Henniges says that volunteers find it highly cynical to ‘drink Champaign and listen to choral singing’ while new refugees in need of immediate assistance keep arriving (Beitzer, 2015). She argues that instead of a ‘reception in the city hall, a roundtable would be better’ where different parties can discuss the next steps that need to be taken.

The reaction of volunteers towards this particular effort to be recognized is interesting in that it provides an extreme case of the dynamics that my study has also highlighted. The example shows how MbR is under suspicion of being instrumental and superficial. Instead of being more totalizing than direct control forms, my study suggests, in line with this example, that the mobilization of people’s emotional relations with themselves and others can be seen as a risky endeavor for management. Arguably, in the above case, the tension between the emotional relations that politicians strive to establish with volunteers (i.e., make them feel special, recognized) is too obviously at odds with the working conditions that those volunteers encounter. In this case, MbR was overturned by those addressed in publicly refusing to go the event, and using this publicity also to formulate claims (e.g., a round table) towards the public authorities. Looking at the homepage of the Lageso today shows that the Federal State has taken on responsibility for providing health services by paid doctors.

The results of my study of MbR help practitioners to understand how important a balance between instrumentalism and humanist claims is to make MbR work. This is not to say that my thesis gives managers a handbook on ‘how to best’ manipulate workers, especially since managers alone cannot address the inherent tensions. But this thesis gives a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and paradoxes involved in MbR, which brings me to discuss the practical implications of this text.

Practical Implications

Lastly, I want to address the question of what practitioners can gain from the insights generated in this study. As the reader has noted by now, this is not a hands-on account, giving advice on how to best manage recognition in organizations. This study has, for the most part, been highly descriptive and analytical of social dynamics, rather than giving action orientations. Nevertheless, I think that practitioners can

yield direction for how to implement and practice recognition in work organizations from this thesis.

Within my academic community, defending a more critical interpretivist approach to study management, I often notice a reluctance to engage in depth with more straightforward, often popular management thought that is labeled as 'functionalist'. It is often seen as providing little worthwhile, or politically problematic, information about how work organizations function. While I have partly taken on this critique (e.g., in my critique of the 'win-win' logic), I have also attempted to stay close and true to the literature that I critique. This commitment has led to a detailed account of a variety of managerial strategies for MbR in different—paid and voluntary—work contexts. The summary of different approaches to MbR and the resultant summary of recognition practices in Chapter Two is, in my view, useful for individuals who want to work with implementing or enhancing recognition in organizational practice. I thus offer an overview of different perspectives on recognition, and while I also express my opinion and doubts about managerialist accounts, the reader who is a practitioner can go back to the original ideas, compare those with my study, and develop her or his own approach to working with the ideas presented.

The goal of this thesis was not to critique MbR as a bad management concept as such, but to engage with it in a variety of ways, striving to provide a more realistic account of how it plays out in organizational practice. My analysis foregrounded cracks and moments of breakdown to achieve precisely such a nuanced account. I believe that reflexive practitioners can profit from such empirical proximity, to be aware of unexpected dynamics, and to think of ways of how to work productively with them.

To name one concrete example, we can look at the clash between the managerial perspective that volunteers are often vain and recognition-needy, and the volunteers' accounts that strictly reject such a view of themselves. While we can say that such expressive distancing was an individual impression-management strategy and an overall alignment with broader values within a volunteering community, I also drew out how these responses are nevertheless real. The ways in which people describe recognition experiences due to other sources and interpersonal relations show that self-marketing and image is not all that matters. People do find recognition essentially in doing something worthwhile for them (e.g., like helping a young mentee to experience success in German society). Hence, when thinking of how to build up a culture of recognition and appreciation, practitioners can be inspired by this thesis to make more humble judgments about why and how people are motivated. While vanity, self-involvement, etc. may all be part of the story, those engaged in managing recognition may also learn from this text that next to creating visibility and other obvious forms of recognition, it is often small things that matter outside of the immediate 'recognition business'. This thesis hopefully provides a slight hold for

practitioners on omnipotent managerial fantasies; a space for reflection on social dynamics, and on how one wants to see the people one 'manages'.

After extensive engagement with recognition, my personal view is that MbR recognition is not a bad idea or management practice as such. The reason why I attempted to stay nuanced in my accounts of MbR was closely related to the realization that MbR can work in making individuals feel self-enhanced and motivated, despite all the cracks, paradoxes, and cynical moments I describe in this work. Overall, the recognizing work environment that Communa created and the constant attention to individuals' work results played an important role in securing the ongoing commitment of volunteers. As I have shown in Chapter Six, competition amongst voluntary organizations is fierce. Against this background, it is an achievement, in my view, to bind about 400 volunteers to the organization, with large numbers of people who make long-term often over years. While there are tensions and possible distressing dynamics that I highlighted (e.g., exclusion through MbR), Communa was overall a highly functional work organization that continuously attracts new donors, and efficiently extends its own projects and project support that target those who *do* need chances in society.

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Appendix I – Overview of Fieldwork

Main Empirical Material:

- Daily **participant observations** and **auto-ethnographic data** from the researcher who engaged as volunteer in project-management tasks at Communa's head office (September 2 – November 30, 2012) totaling in approximately 400 hours of participant observation and 120 pages of fieldnotes (times new roman, size 12, single spaced)
- 22 semi-structured open-ended **interviews** exploring individuals' reflections about recognition interactions, and 4 semi-structured open-ended interviews as part of a pilot study exploring research areas in voluntary work

Additional Empirical Material:

- 2 **group interviews** centering on the theme of 'giving and receiving recognition in voluntary work/engagement'
- **Organizational documents**, E-Mails and other organizational communication gathered and received at the time of my 'research internship'
- 4 **diary accounts** of individuals who were selected to participate in 'honoring' or 'appreciation' events organized, for example, by the major of the local municipality
- **Public documentation** on the role of volunteer's for society and practitioner-oriented recognition-guidelines

Appendix II – Overview of Interviews

Interview Context	Duration	Person	Function	No
Ethnography	55 min	Nika	Paid function owner	1
Ethnography	27 min	Sophie	General volunteer	2
Ethnography	31 min	Birke	General volunteer	3
Ethnography	46 min	Anke	Voluntary function owner	4
Ethnography	60 min	Annika	General volunteer	5
Ethnography	50 min	Matthias	Voluntary function owner	6
Ethnography	53 min	Lena	Voluntary function owner	7
Ethnography	78 min	Bent	General volunteer	8
Ethnography	51 min	Klaus	General volunteer	9
Ethnography	58 min	Maren	General volunteer	10
Ethnography	63 min	Tony	Voluntary function owner	11
Ethnography	48 min	Will	Voluntary function owner	12
Ethnography	70 min	Antonia	Paid function owner	13
Ethnography	53 min	Pernilla	General volunteer	14
Ethnography	45 min	Simone	Voluntary function owner	15
Ethnography	60 min	Jeppe	Voluntary function owner	16
Ethnography	77 min	Emilia	General volunteer	17
Ethnography	52 min	Nicole	General volunteer	18
Ethnography	28 min	Verena	Voluntary function owner	19
Ethnography	56 min	Rita	General volunteer	20
Ethnography	22 min	Hanna	General volunteer	21
Ethnography	51 min	Helene	Voluntary function owner	22
Pilot Study	86 min	Edward	Voluntary function owner	23
Pilot Study	58 min	Lisa	Paid function owner	24
Pilot Study	52 min	Luise	Paid function owner	25
Pilot Study	32 min	Gertrud	Voluntary function owner	26

Management by Recognition

An Interactionist Study of Normative Control in Voluntary Work

Many contemporary work organizations are concerned with how they can influence employees' intrinsic motivation. Their quest follows a widespread realization that people do not necessarily work harder because of monetary incentives or direct commands. Instead, people's inner motives, their urge to self-realize and get recognition, are seen as key factors influencing workers' mindsets and behaviors. In order to stimulate and shape such inner motives, management scholars and practitioners increasingly bring 'recognition' forward as a management tool.

This thesis labels this trend 'Management by Recognition' (MbR). MbR refers to the idea and practical effort of achieving organizational ends by making individuals feel recognized and affirmed for who they are and how they work. Based on an ethnography of the voluntary organization Communa, which aims to enhance a 'culture of recognition', this study analyses the mechanisms and effects of MbR. For this purpose, MbR is seen as a particular form of normative control that aims at shaping volunteers' moral orientation towards the organization by creating experiences of enjoyment and self-affirmation.

Exploring MbR in the light of current academic debates, this thesis problematizes a prevalent managerialist 'win-win' thinking, according to which MbR will ensure happier workers and enhanced control. At the same time, the thesis rejects the deterministic management-focused view of control found in the critical/interpretivist literature. Instead, my study examines MbR through an interactionist lens. It suggests that MbR is not simply an activity that managers 'do' and the managed 'receive'. On the contrary, MbR is seen as a collective accomplishment in the sense that both managers and voluntary workers work on recognition attempts in order to perform their selves and influence others.

My study shows how MbR is neither a simple good for an organization (as the managerial literature suggests) nor an all-pervasive form of normative control (as some critics suggest). I argue that the complexity of MbR stems from the nature of recognition as something that cannot be put to instrumental ends: the very nature of recognition places limits on its instrumental/managerial use. Such limits, however, cannot be known in advance, but are decided and experienced in interactions.

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