



Moving Beyond Alienation: The Role of Collaboration in Today's Indonesia Labor Environment

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ABSTRACT: In an era characterized by fragmented work relationships due to utilitarian orientation, the experience of alienation is becoming increasingly prevalent, especially in how to achieve common goals in the workplace. The question is, how can this issue be addressed philosophically? This paper offers a philosophical reflection on collaboration as a form of collective commitment among individuals that can meaningfully address the condition of alienation in contemporary work environments. Drawing on Axel Honneth's theory of recognition and the philosophical notion of intersubjectivity, a critical response to fragmented work relationships can emerge, thereby proposing that collaboration is not merely a managerial strategy but a collective commitment that can philosophically subdue fragmented work relationships. By conceptualizing collaboration as a collective commitment based on recognition, this approach reclaims work as a place for individuals to mutually recognize their respective roles in achieving common goals at work rather than simply "being" in the same workplace to gain as much individual benefit as possible. The paper then explores how collaboration can foster pro-social resonance and mitigate the fragmentation effects of relational alienation. Ultimately, this philosophical response serves as a critique and alternative to the current way of working that distances individuals from common goals in their work environment, leaving each other busy seeking individual gain rather than making it a place to make sense of the shared world they inhabit (the work environment) as a coexistent space.

Keywords: Utilitarian Orientation, Alienation, Collaboration, Intersubjectivity, Recognition, Collective Commitment, Coexistent Space.

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1. Introduction

In today's workplace culture, collaboration is frequently reduced to a tool for maximizing efficiency and maintaining managerial control. When viewed merely as a means to achieve predetermined outcomes, collaboration loses its ethical and relational depth. This instrumentalization often results in alienated work experiences, shallow interpersonal connections, and a diminished sense of collective meaning among employees. To counter this, Axel Honneth's theory of recognition offers a compelling framework. His emphasis on recognizing individuals as full moral agents—rather than functional units—reveals the potential for collaboration to become an intersubjective process grounded in mutual respect and acknowledgment. When recognition is embedded in everyday work practices, it can affirm each person's dignity, capacities, and social worth, providing the groundwork for meaningful and engaged cooperation.

This shift reimagines the workplace not just as a system of productivity but as a site of shared humanity and transformation. Genuine collaboration, built on recognition, fosters solidarity, creativity, and ethical commitment. In doing so, it restores trust and purpose in professional relationships and reclaims labor as a space where individuals not only contribute but also flourish together. This research aims to critically examine how collaboration in contemporary workplaces can move beyond its instrumental and efficiency-driven form by embracing a model rooted in mutual recognition, as articulated in Axel Honneth's theory. It seeks to demonstrate that when collaboration is grounded in the intersubjective acknowledgment of each

worker's dignity, autonomy, and contribution, it becomes a transformative practice capable of overcoming alienation. Through this philosophical lens, the paper aims to articulate a vision of the workplace as a space for ethical relationships, shared ownership, and collective flourishing.

2. Theoretical Overview of the Main Concepts

Alienation in Today's Indonesia Labor Environment

In the modern era, which is heavily influenced by market logic and efficiency, work relationships are often fragmented by a utilitarian orientation—a perspective that assesses everything, including humans, based on their usefulness and measurable results. This orientation places effectiveness, productivity, and target achievement as the main benchmarks, thus reducing work relationships to mere means to achieve organizational goals (Lin et al., 2015, pp. 1463–1464). In conditions like this, individuals are no longer treated as whole individuals with intrinsic value but rather as "tools" in a production or service system. Interpersonal relationships that previously could be a means of getting to know each other, supporting each other, and building solidarity are now replaced by shallow and transactional functional interactions. As a result, the experience of alienation is becoming increasingly common (Vafeas et al., 2025, pp. 10–11). In Indonesian context, workers often feel separated from the meaning of their work, coworkers, and the collective goals that should strengthen relationships in the workplace. For example, in the context of working relations in Asia (which is famous for his philosophical concept of togetherness), this fragmentation creates a work atmosphere that tends to be individualistic, full of competition and lacks a sense of belonging to a shared vision (Lin et al., 2015, pp. 1465–1466).¹ Efforts to achieve shared goals also lose their emotional and relational dimensions—becoming mere technical collaboration without emotional ties, without awareness of togetherness as human beings. In such a work environment, the sense of collective involvement and responsibility tends to weaken, as people do not feel part of something larger than themselves.

The work of Rahel Jaeggi and Hartmut Rosa provides a highly relevant philosophical lens for understanding the problem of alienation in contemporary work. Both view alienation not simply as an individual psychological disorder but as a structural symptom of disrupted social relations. Jaeggi rejects the traditional definition of alienation as the loss of human "true essence" and asserts that alienation is a form of broken relationship, namely when individuals fail to identify with the social practices they engage in reflectively (Jaeggi, 2017, pp. 59–60). In the work context, this occurs when workers no longer feel meaningfully connected to those around them or to the collective purpose of the work itself.

Alienation in Jaeggi's framework is relational and contextual. This means that alienation is not the result of an individual's failure to adapt but rather the result of social structures that force individuals to live inauthentic lives (Jaeggi, 2017, p. 61). The modern world of work is dominated by efficiency, targets, and performance standards, and these relations often fail to provide space for self-knowledge and meaningful engagement. Jaeggi calls this "loss of appropriation" – the inability of individuals to embrace the world interpersonally. Workers in such a specialized and differentiated world lose their autonomy in defining their roles and feel thrown into an alien system.

Hartmut Rosa's concept of resonance enriches this analysis by adding affective and temporal dimensions to the work experience. Rosa views human relations with the world as instrumental relations and the possibility of experiencing resonance – a reciprocal, living, and transformative connectedness (Rosa, 2019, pp. 22–23). In the workplace, resonance is present when workers feel that their work "answers" their existence and that there is emotional reciprocity and recognition between them and their social

¹ Research that is relatively new in the Asian context, for example, reveals that utilitarian orientation refers to an individual's motivation to obtain material rewards from their work. Employees with a high utilitarian orientation are motivated to improve their work performance to obtain higher salaries, bonuses, and other benefits. They focus on increasing the effectiveness of work input and output to maximize the material benefits obtained. In addition, this orientation also encourages employees to perform tasks outside the main role (extra-role performance), which, although not always formally rewarded, can provide indirect benefits such as a better reputation and future promotion opportunities. Specifically, utilitarian orientation has a stronger impact on in-role performance than out-of-role performance because in-role performance is more directly related to the material benefits employees obtain.

environment. However, resonance becomes rare in a work order highly determined by the logic of acceleration and results.

The absence of resonance, according to Rosa, not only causes alienation but also creates an existential void (Rosa, 2019, p. 20). When individuals no longer feel an affective dialogue with the social world in which they find themselves—especially with their coworkers—they become alienated from themselves. In this context, alienation is not merely a feeling of loneliness but a structural condition that distances individuals from the possibility of experiencing a meaningful life. The world of work becomes silent in that it does not "become a space" for interaction between the subjects who experience it.

Both Jaeggi and Rosa show that the crisis in the world of work is not primarily about technical incompetence or efficiency but rather about the breakdown of networks of meaning and social relations. The utilitarian orientation that emphasizes roles and functions shifts work from a collective social activity to a fragmented one. Workers are seen not as subjects who contribute based on reciprocal relations but as units of production whose existence is determined by achieving targets and accumulating output. In such a world, relations between individuals are relegated to mere transactions.

Furthermore, the loss of resonance in work also impacts the breakdown of intrinsic motivation to work. Rosa emphasizes that when individuals do not feel that their voices are heard or that their presence has an impact, they lose the desire to participate actively (Rosa, 2019, pp. 24–25). This leads to passive alienation, which is not always marked by conflict or explicit rejection but by passivity and lethargy. Workers remain physically present, but effectively and existentially, they are absent—distanced from their colleagues and the workgroup itself.

In such a situation, work loses its social value as a space for human encounters. Jaeggi sees that alienation is not only the loss of relationships with others but also the loss of the ability to build a reflective relationship with oneself (Jaeggi, 2017, p. 60). When social structures impose a way of working that demands absolute conformity to procedures and goals, individuals no longer have the space to ask: With whom am I doing this? The absence of these reflective questions is a symptom of deep alienation. Thus, alienation in work cannot be overcome simply by increasing material well-being or improving the management system. The solution requires reconstructing how we understand work—not merely as a tool for production or target achievement but as a social activity that allows for forming meaning in encounters between individuals. Rosa and Jaeggi, although with different approaches, both emphasize the importance of expressing philosophical reflection regarding the restoration of the relational dimension in the work environment so that the work environment, increasingly fragmented by utilitarian logic, turns into workspaces that allow for existential resonance for modern society.

This section has revealed the philosophical background of the problem that the work environment must be fostered collaboratively and that every worker must be collectively committed to collaboration. Collaboration as a collective commitment begins with the recognition between subjects that they do not merely "exist" to fulfill utilitarian logic but gain existential resonance so that the work environment becomes a space for making meaning. So, even though alienation is rampant in contemporary work, collaborative commitment provides a turning point for healing.

The assertion that collaboration as a collective commitment can be a turning point for existential alienation in the work environment requires a deep philosophical reading of the relational structure of work itself. In this case, the intersubjectivity approach becomes important: individuals cannot be understood merely as autonomous entities working for personal or institutional interests but as subjects whose existence is formed through reciprocal recognition with other subjects (Apriano et al., 2025, p. 322). In other words, collaboration is not just technical cooperation but an existential relationship that unites individuals in a joint process to create meaning amid a fragmented work structure.

By fostering a work environment that deeply lives the values of collaboration, we build a more effective work system and create conditions for existential recovery. Amid a cold and stressful work world, collaboration as a collective commitment is a form of warm and meaningful presence. It does not eliminate suffering but provides direction and meaning in undergoing the work process as part of a shared life. So, amid rampant alienation, collaboration is not just a strategic choice but a philosophical imperative. Next, we will see the collaboration framework as a collective commitment based on Axel Honneth's thinking on

Recognition, which allows us to expose this alienation in a philosophical imperative.

3. Methodology

A methodological approach that integrates textual analysis, critical interpretation, and philosophical inquiry would be instrumental in conducting a philosophical response to alienation in today's labor conditions. The textual analysis allows for a close examination of key philosophical texts, including works by Axel Honneth, intersubjectivity, and collective commitment theory, as well as contemporary writings on alienation in today's labor environment, which are logically utilitarian. This step enables the identification of the core philosophical arguments and concepts that can inform a nuanced understanding of alienation in modern work environments.

Critical interpretation comes into play by engaging with these texts in a way that highlights their relevance to current labor practices. It involves analyzing these philosophical works' assumptions, limitations, and implications within the context. Finally, philosophical inquiry enables the integration of these contexts, offering insights into potential remedies for alienation. By drawing this, this approach ensures that the response to alienation is not merely theoretical but grounded in practical and ethical considerations that address workers' lived experiences today. Ultimately, this research aspires to inform practices that create more effective and meaningful workplace interactions, enriching individual lives and collective endeavors.

4. Discussion

Collaboration as Collective Commitment based on Recognition

This section aims to prove descriptively and critically that collaboration as a collective commitment based on recognition is a concept that emphasizes the importance of an affirmative attitude towards individual existence in a sustainable social group. This concept has major significance related to the problem of alienation in relationships in the work environment, which has recently become a problem in the world of work.

Based on its nature, collaboration as a collective commitment is a philosophical concept framed in the context of social philosophy in group processes (Tuomela, 2011, pp. 75–76). This concept reveals the importance of interpreting existence as a coexistence (Tuomela, 2007, p. 22). Recent research shows that collective commitment is a concept that emphasizes the importance of the bond between individuals in a group to achieve common goals (Dalbosco, 2015, pp. 325–326). In this context, collective commitment functions as a glue that unites individual intentions into common intentions, thus enabling the creation of effective collective action. This is important because common goals are not something that is given but must be pursued together by each member of the group.

Collective commitment is central to integrating individual dynamics into a larger social scope, namely groups with common goals. In the context of the philosophy of intersubjectivity, collective commitment is not only seen as a pragmatic agreement but as an existential expression of the relationship between individuals (Cali, 2015, p. 15). This means that involvement in a group is not merely the result of rational calculation but rather arises from an authentic encounter between individuals who recognize each other's existence. In this kind of recognition, individuals release their self-alienation and engage in dynamics that transcend the limits of their ego to form liberating and mutually supportive relationships so that they can not only give meaning to their existence but also give meaning to common goals together.

The theory of recognition pioneered by Axel Honneth occupies an important position in contemporary social philosophy discourse, especially in efforts to understand the relationship between the formation of personal identity and the structure of social justice (Honneth & Farrell, 1997, pp. 16–17). In his view, human existence as a moral subject cannot be separated from the experience of recognition given by others in various areas of life (Honneth, 2014, pp. 25–26). Honneth builds his argument by referring to Hegel's thinking and expanding it through a symbolic interactionism approach so that recognition is not only understood as normative appreciation but also as an existential need that forms self-awareness and human dignity (Honneth & Margalit, 2001, pp. 111–112).

Recognition, for Honneth, operates in three main areas: love, rights, and social appreciation (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 180). The first area, namely love, includes deep emotional relationships in the context of family,

friendship, and intimate affection, which are the foundation for the formation of self-confidence in the early stages of human life (Genel, 2022, p. 22). In a love relationship, the subject experiences himself as a person who is worthy of unconditional love, thus creating a solid psychological basis for the formation of identity (Apriano et al., 2025, p. 334). Without recognition in the form of love, individuals are threatened with falling into affective emptiness and a crisis of existence.

The second area is rights, namely formal recognition given by the legal system to individuals as autonomous moral agents. Recognition in the form of rights allows individuals to be present in public space as subjects who can act and are recognized equally by fellow citizens. In this sense, legal recognition is not merely a legal guarantee but a symbolic expression of human dignity recognized by society. When this right is violated or ignored, a form of disrespect arises that erodes self-respect and creates alienation in the social order.

The third realm is social appreciation, namely recognition of the contribution and abilities of individuals in collective life (Levräu, 2019, pp. 167–168). In this realm, the subject is not only seen as a morally worthy person but also as an entity that has value based on the role or achievements he offers to society. Through social appreciation, a sense of self-esteem is formed that strengthens awareness of the existential significance of a person in the social structure. The absence of this appreciation, such as in the practice of marginalization or social invisibility, is a form of symbolic neglect that threatens the sustainability of personal identity and social solidarity.

The implications of this theory go beyond the limits of distributive political theory, which only focuses on the distribution of economic resources. Honneth asserts that social collectivity must include the symbolic dimension of human life, namely the recognition of the identity, integrity, and existential experience of the subject. In this sense, collectivity is an intersubjective relation concerning how humans treat each other in terms of respect, appreciation, and love. Recognition becomes a moral criterion for authentic social relations, which guarantees the formation of a community in which each individual feels seen, appreciated, and accepted as an integral part of the whole (Petrola, 2020, pp. 188–189).

However, the point of criticism of this kind of recognition thinking is that it opens up a tendency for it to be interpreted as a formality. The point of criticism of the idea of liberating recognition is that, in practice, recognition can be reduced to a mere social formality. This normative statement is passively accepted without really touching on intersubjective relations (Koskinen, 2018, pp. 178–179). In the work context, this is reflected in organizational processes that verbally acknowledge the importance of personnel and work together but fail to bring to life the experience in which individuals truly recognize each other as meaningful individuals. Recognition, if only carried out as a symbolic procedure without affective and ethical involvement, actually deepens alienation because it creates a gap between the institutional narrative and the existential reality of workers.

A radical relational approach needs to be put forward to free recognition from this trap of formality. This means that recognition should not stand alone as a symbolic act but must be realized in everyday interactions that present the subject as a whole person (Genel, 2022, p. 23). In this case, we speak of collaboration. This collaboration includes recognizing the existence of others in the work environment who work together on different tasks for a common goal.

Furthermore, this critique reminds us that formal structures do not always guarantee the establishment of existential relations. Collaboration requires an ethical dimension that cannot be reduced to organizational procedures. Without this dimension, collaboration will also slip into a simulation of togetherness, which superficially appears as teamwork but is colored by isolation, instrumentality, and even emotional manipulation. This means that recognition must be a practice that is experienced, not just a norm that is announced (Deranty & Renault, 2007, pp. 92–93).

In strengthening the concept of the emerging critique, Honneth's philosophical thinking on Recognition can speak freely. According to Honneth recognition here is not just a formality but an act between individuals that allows everyone to give meaning to their existence as humans in the same world. Etymologically, recognition in German, English, and French has significant differences in meaning. In Germany, recognition primarily indicates a normative act to provide positive social value. In English and French, recognition includes epistemic meanings such as identifying or remembering something. In addition, recognition can

also mean acknowledging or accepting something in the context of a conversation, which is more self-referential (Honneth, 2014, pp. 50–51). This difference shows the complexity of the recognition concept, which is not only limited to social recognition but also involves cognitive and communicative aspects.

Honneth's position is very clear. For him, recognition is a form of rational response to the evaluative qualities individuals learn to appreciate in others. These qualities are internalized in social life, forming a "second nature" or second habit. Recognition is not just an ideological or manipulative social attribution but rather an appropriate and rational recognition that expresses appreciation for the value and contribution of other individuals in a real and meaningful way (Petrola, 2020, pp. 185–186). In this view, recognition is the starting point for a sustainable intersubjective relationship. This is the basis that allows for liberating social relations and enables individuals to transcend alienation. However, if recognition is reduced to an unlived formality, it will lose its power to liberate and instead strengthen the structure of alienation itself. Thus, in Honneth's context, recognition must be treated as a dynamic, never-ending, and always open-ended existential practice that opens up the possibility of deeper relationships.

From Honneth's view of recognition, we can elaborate on it in order to bring to the surface the face of collaboration as a collective commitment based on Honneth's philosophy of recognition. In collaboration, recognition is a mechanism that binds group members emotionally and rationally. With recognition, individuals not only feel personally valued but are also able to identify themselves with a larger common goal. This process allows for the internalization of collective values that strengthen solidarity and commitment to common goals so that collaboration is not only instrumental but also socially and morally meaningful.

Recognition as the basis for collaboration also demands a rational and credible affirmative attitude. This means that recognition must be based on an objective assessment of the quality and contribution of group members, not just illusory or manipulative social attributions. Thus, collaboration built on recognition becomes more resistant to conflict and distrust because each member feels that they are treated fairly and equally in the cooperation process.

Furthermore, collaboration based on recognition enables collective innovation and creativity. When individuals feel recognized, they are encouraged to contribute to their full potential and dare to put forward new ideas without fear of being ignored or belittled. This creates an inclusive and dynamic work environment where differences are valued as a source of strength, not an obstacle. However, recognition in collaboration is not only interpersonal but must also be institutionalized in organizational policies and practices. Recognition only in words or symbols without being followed by real actions will lose credibility and effectiveness. Therefore, institutions need to develop formal mechanisms that guarantee recognition of members' contributions, such as through awards, redistribution of resources, or policy changes supporting justice and equality.

Collective commitment born of recognition also plays an important role in overcoming complex social and political challenges. In globalization and cultural pluralism, recognition between groups is a prerequisite for building sustainable cross-border cooperation. By mutually recognizing each other's diversity and contributions, groups can overcome attitudes of rejection and prejudice that have hampered international collaboration. In addition, recognition as a basis for collaboration requires open dialogue and critical reflection on shared values. This process allows for expanding the evaluative horizon and developing new norms that are more inclusive and responsive to shared needs. Thus, collaboration becomes a tool for achieving practical goals and a means of profound social transformation.

Based on this, collaboration as a collective commitment based on recognition is a philosophical reflection that transforms the work environment in the problem of alienation. This means that work is no longer just a field of production of economic value but a field of encounter between subjects that shape and are shaped in joint involvement. In this relationship, common goals are not determined from the outside as targets to be achieved but emerge from within due to the resonance between subjects that animate the workspace itself. Collaboration becomes more than just cooperation; it is a practice of openness, shared meaning, and forming a more human social world.

The critique of the formality of recognition encourages us to characterize collaboration that allows for interactions that resonate deeply. True recognition cannot be forced but must grow through honest and

attentive daily practices. Thus, forming a liberating collaborative work environment must involve a reflective critique of superficial and image-oriented forms of recognition. Without this, collaboration will remain a managerial jargon, not a path to recovery from alienation, a holistic and ethical approach to building cooperation. Thus, collaboration rooted in recognition is functionally effective and sustainable and can present strong solidarity when facing common challenges.

Challenges to Collectively Committed Collaboration

The negative impact of an overly dominant utilitarian orientation can appear in relations between workers that become less harmonious or feel alien. This is because individuals with a utilitarian orientation focus on material rewards and personal achievements, so they tend to pay less attention to aspects of interpersonal relationships and social cooperation in the workplace. As a result, relations between workers can become less close and cause emotional distance or conflict that disrupts teamwork.

We have founded that an overly dominant utilitarian orientation can cause relationships between workers to become less harmonious or feel alienated because the main focus is on material rewards and personal achievements, so the existential relationship aspect is less noticed and creates alienation from each other. However, we have also seen that collaboration as a collective commitment based on recognition is philosophically effective.

In Jaeggi's conception, alienation is not simply a psychological state of disconnection or dissatisfaction; it is a structural and relational failure that arises when individuals are denied meaningful engagement with themselves, others, and the world around them (Jaeggi, 2017, pp. 70–71). The modern workplace, dominated by efficiency and performance imperatives, creates an alienating structure. Workers become entangled in predefined roles and institutional scripts that demand compliance rather than critical, self-determined engagement. Jaeggi terms this the "loss of appropriation"—a situation where individuals no longer recognize the world they inhabit as something they can relate to meaningfully or shape through their agency. Instead, they feel displaced, as though inhabiting an alien system that speaks a foreign language of metrics and targets. Jaeggi reconfigures it through a critical theory lens: alienation is not fate but a contingent result of social forms that fail to foster appropriation, reflection, and self-realization. In this view, the workplace becomes a field of structural misrecognition—not only do workers fail to be recognized by others, but they are also distanced from recognizing themselves within the practices they are compelled to perform. This undermines the precondition for genuine collaboration, which presupposes not only coordination of action but also mutual recognition of identity and agency.

Hartmut Rosa complements this critique by shifting the focus to the affective and temporal dimensions of our relationship to work and others. His notion of resonance contrasts alienation: resonance is the experience of being in a reciprocal, transformative relationship with one's environment—a relation in which one not only acts but is also "answered." Rosa argues that resonance is not a constant state but a possibility that arises under certain conditions, particularly when instrumentalism does not flatten human relations (Rosa, 2019, pp. 70–71). However, as he laments, modern work structures driven by the utilitarian orientation—more tasks in less time, constant optimization, and perpetual change—systematically erode the conditions for resonance.

Within such a context, realizing the idea of collective commitment to collaboration becomes difficult. Collaboration requires more than shared tasks; it requires temporal depth, space for reflective engagement, and emotional reciprocity—precisely the aspects squeezed out by a system obsessed with results. When workers do not feel "answered" by their environment or colleagues, the possibility of forming meaningful connections dissolves, and with it, the motivation to commit collectively. Collaboration becomes a functional arrangement rather than a moral practice—another item to check off the productivity list, rather than a space of mutual becoming.

In our analysis, collaboration is useful in prioritizing synergy between individuals with various orientations, including utilitarian orientation. When employees with a utilitarian orientation are also aware of the importance of existential relationships, they tend not only to focus on direct material benefits but also contribute to teamwork and performance outside the main role (extra-role performance) that supports mutual success. Thus, organizations must build a work environment that encourages

collaboration to create a harmonious and productive work environment. However, several challenges arise when collaboration is to be upheld as a collective commitment in a work environment that a utilitarian orientation has swept away.

One of the fundamental challenges to collectively committed collaboration in today's work environment is the pervasive instrumentalization of human relationships. As work is increasingly driven by market logic and utilitarian metrics, people are evaluated based on output, efficiency, and role-specific contributions rather than as holistic individuals. This narrows the scope of workplace interactions to transactional exchanges, reducing colleagues to functional roles or "means to an end." In such a context, the deep intersubjective recognition required for genuine collaboration struggles to find space, as individuals are not seen or treated as full moral subjects with intrinsic worth.

According to Axel Honneth, mutual recognition is the foundation for liberating social relations (Honneth, 2014, pp. 70–71). However, in a fragmented work environment, recognition becomes superficial or absent. Without recognition, workers cannot affirm one another's contributions or value. This lack of acknowledgment fuels alienation, detaches individuals from their work, and erodes the emotional fabric necessary for collaborative efforts. Workers who do not feel seen or valued are unlikely to invest emotionally in shared goals, undermining the possibility of a collectively committed collaboration.

Another obstacle arises when recognition is institutionalized but stripped of its existential authenticity. In many organizations, recognition takes the form of performance reviews, awards, or surface-level affirmations that do not engage with the personhood of workers. As Honneth warns, recognition loses its transformative potential when it becomes a formality. This creates a paradox: recognition is present as a discourse but absent as a lived experience (Apriano, 2024, p. 396). Such tokenistic practices fail to strengthen collaboration and may exacerbate cynicism and distrust among coworkers.

Collectively committed collaboration is not merely about functional alignment but involves emotional identification with others and with shared goals. However, in competitive or target-driven environments, emotional dimensions are often undervalued or dismissed as irrelevant to professional life. Without emotional investment—feeling part of something larger, sharing a sense of purpose, or genuinely caring about coworkers—collaboration remains technical rather than transformative. The absence of emotional resonance prevents the development of trust and solidarity, both central to sustained collective commitment.

In light of the challenges outlined above, it becomes clear that collectively committed collaboration is not merely a managerial technique but a deeply ethical and philosophical endeavor. Collaboration demands a form of intersubjective acknowledgment that goes beyond the utilitarian calculus of roles and results. Following Honneth, recognition must not be reduced to formal procedures or strategic gestures—it must emerge as an existential praxis, where individuals are seen, affirmed, and valued as ends in themselves. Only through such recognition can collaboration transcend the alienating logic of market instrumentalism and restore the moral depth of human coexistence in the workplace.

This reveals the paradox of modern work: even as collaboration becomes more necessary in complex, interdependent systems, work's cultural and structural conditions often undermine the very basis for that collaboration. Alienation is no longer an exception—it is a pervasive atmosphere shaped by speed, competition, technocratic rationality, and fragmented relationships. In such a context, calls for teamwork or synergy risk being hollow unless they are grounded in genuine moral engagement and mutual visibility. Therefore, collective commitment must be grounded in ethical intentionality. This intentionality refuses to see others merely as instruments and instead opens space for shared vulnerability, dialogue, and co-creation of meaning. This demands personal openness and institutional transformation: leadership that models ethical responsiveness, organizational rhythms that prioritize relationality, and work cultures that elevate the moral significance of recognition over mere efficiency. Ultimately, the fragility of collectively committed collaboration lies in its dependence on the will to encounter the other—not as a function but as a presence. This will is neither automatic nor easily sustained in hostile structures. Yet, it remains the only path through which alienation may be resisted, and work may again become a space of resonance, purpose, and human solidarity.

5. Synopsis of the Main Research Outcomes

Moving Beyond Alienation: The Role of Collaboration in Today's Indonesia Labor Environment

In the contemporary world of work, marked by fragmentation, acceleration, and a utilitarian logic of output, the concept of alienation persists not as a relic of industrial capitalism but as a lived reality of many laboring individuals. Workers are frequently reduced to functionaries within vast systems, distanced not only from the product of their labor but from their sense of purpose, autonomy, and interpersonal connection. This condition resonates with Rahel Jaeggi's notion of alienation as a loss of appropriation—a state where individuals are unable to make the world and their activities meaningfully their own. Overcoming this alienation, therefore, demands more than procedural improvements or motivational strategies; it requires a profound reconstitution of the relational and moral fabric of the workplace. In this light, collaboration emerges as a promising path—not as mere coordination but as a collective commitment grounded in intersubjective recognition.

Drawing from Axel Honneth's theory of recognition, collaboration is reframed not as a neutral tool for task efficiency but as a moral space where individuals engage with one another through mutual acknowledgment of worth, capacity, and dignity. If alienation stems from being unseen or misrecognized within rigid work structures, then recognition becomes the antidote that re-humanizes the workplace. For Honneth, recognition is not merely a psychological experience but a social condition for identity formation and self-respect. Collaboration built upon such recognition thus offers a relational infrastructure where individuals can affirm each other's existence and co-create a shared world, resisting the disintegrating pressures of modern labor environments.

Within Honneth's three spheres of recognition—love, rights, and social esteem—we can trace a layered understanding of what ethically committed collaboration entails. The sphere of love, in the context of work, implies more than personal affection; it translates into affective solidarity, where collaborators relate empathetically, acknowledging emotional and existential needs. This recognition transforms workplaces into humanizing spaces where individuals are not merely defined by their functions but are welcomed as whole persons. Emotional presence, deep listening, and non-instrumental support become the glue that binds people together beyond shared deadlines.

The realm of rights, on the other hand, anchors collaboration in principles of equality and autonomy. It demands that all participants be regarded as moral agents with voices that matter. In practical terms, this means that collaborative structures must be democratic, participatory, and inclusive. Workers must be granted not only formal inclusion but also real agency—equal access to decision-making processes, responsibility distribution, and transparency. If collaboration is imposed hierarchically or co-opted as a managerial strategy, it risks reproducing the very alienation it seeks to overcome. True collaboration resists domination and fosters empowerment.

Meanwhile, the sphere of social appreciation emphasizes the recognition of individual contributions in a collective setting. In many alienated workspaces, labor is anonymized, and contributions go unnoticed, leading to disengagement and disidentification with collective aims. In contrast, recognition-infused collaboration nurtures a narrative of shared achievement, where each role is valued not by rank or visibility but by its significance in the larger endeavor. Appreciation here does not need to be monetary; symbolic acts, public acknowledgments, and narrative inclusion offer powerful affirmation. Through this, collaboration becomes a site where meaning is produced, not just output.

However, struggles for recognition are inevitable and legitimate within collaborative processes, especially when some voices are consistently marginalized or when contributions are unequally visible. These moments of tension must be seen not as threats but as opportunities—calls for dialogical repair and ethical recalibration. Conflict becomes a sign of life in a collaborative system, a marker that recognition is demanded where it may have faltered. When addressed openly and respectfully, these struggles enhance rather than weaken collective commitment.

Importantly, recognition cannot be reduced to superficial inclusion or formal politeness. For Honneth, recognition is a dynamic and existential practice, always in motion, always vulnerable to breakdown and renewal. This demands that collaboration be approached not as a fixed model but as an ongoing ethical project—an intersubjective process where trust, care, and justice are continually negotiated and

reaffirmed. In such a framework, collaboration is no longer a technical arrangement but a moral and existential response to alienation.

In resisting alienation, collaboration must also resist the logic of instrumentality that pervades modern work. When collaboration is reduced to a means to increase efficiency or achieve synergy, it loses its moral force and collapses into managerial control. However, when collaboration is understood as a form of social freedom—a mode of being with others where individuals co-construct meaning and affirm one another—it becomes a path toward overcoming alienation. It is here that we see its most radical promise: the possibility of transforming the workplace into a space of solidarity, resonance, and mutual becoming.

Ultimately, moving beyond alienation requires a shift from a work culture of exploitation and isolation to one of recognition and relation. Collaboration, rooted in collective commitment and nourished by recognition, becomes the vehicle for this shift. It reclaims the workplace as a moral commons, where individuals not only produce together but also exist together, affirming each other's humanity in the process. In doing so, collaboration offers more than a solution to workplace inefficiencies—it offers a vision of work as a site of shared life.

True collaboration transcends the act of participation when individuals move from passive involvement to an active collective vision and trajectory. In this state, workers no longer relate to their labor as something externally imposed or dictated by alien-like utilitarian logic systems of control but as something they help shape, define, and refine. Collaboration represents the culmination of intersubjective recognition—it reflects a structure where mutual acknowledgment is operationalized through shared control and accountability.

Practically, collaboration can take the form of a co-existent space where employees recognize the task of others in their place. In such models, profit and power are not extracted to alienate each other but to be the community of laborers themselves. This structure creates a feedback loop of recognition: each contribution directly influences not just operational outcomes but the very shape of the organization's values and practices.

Beyond structural forms, co-existent space cultivated a collective goal-setting orientation. When individuals are invited to contribute to the formulation of the organization's aims rather than having goals handed down to them, they internalize those aims as expressions of shared purpose. These goals cease to be arbitrary targets and become living commitments. This process affirms their rational and moral capacities, aligning with Honneth's vision of recognition as a condition for self-realization.

Moreover, shared evaluation metrics reinforce collaboration by ensuring that performance is not assessed through top-down, dehumanizing standards but through collectively constructed criteria that reflect what the group values: process as much as a result and relationships as much as efficiency. Evaluation becomes dialogical, not punitive. It becomes a moment of reflection, learning, and reaffirmation of common goals.

In such an environment, alienation gives way to appropriation in Jaeggi's terms—the world of work is no longer something alien to be endured but something one can "own" both emotionally and existentially. A logic of shared meaning, mutual responsibility, and human-centered intentionality displaces the alien logic of mere instrumentalism. This is the shift from being "used" by systems to "using" systems together to build something worth belonging to.

6. Conclusions

This research has argued that the pervasive alienation in contemporary work environments, driven by a utilitarian orientation, cannot be resolved merely through material improvements or managerial adjustments. Instead, overcoming alienation requires a fundamental rethinking of work as a social and relational activity grounded in mutual recognition and collective commitment. Drawing on Honneth's theory of recognition and the concept of intersubjectivity, collaboration emerges not as a mere functional strategy but as an ethical praxis that restores the moral and existential dimensions of work. Genuine collaboration fosters pro-social resonance, enabling workers to experience their roles as meaningful and interconnected rather than fragmented and instrumentalized. However, realizing such collaboration faces significant challenges in environments dominated by speed, competition, and technocratic rationality, which undermine the temporal and emotional conditions necessary for mutual recognition and collective commitment.

7. Limitations, Implications, and Further Directions of Research

Future research should explore practical frameworks and organizational designs that cultivate these conditions of recognition and resonance in diverse workplace contexts. Empirical studies could investigate how specific interventions—such as reflective practices, participatory decision-making, or relational leadership—can foster collective commitment and mitigate alienation. Additionally, further philosophical inquiry might deepen the understanding of how intersubjectivity and recognition operate dynamically within complex organizational systems, especially under pressures of market instrumentalism. This research agenda aims to bridge theory and practice, contributing to the creation of work environments that are not only productive but also ethically and existentially fulfilling.

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