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DIVERSITIES OF DIVERSITY-
FLUCTUATING TALK, MEANING AND PRACTICE OF
DIVERSITY

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Instructors:

Mats Alvesson

Susanne Lundholm

Authors:

Björt Ólafsdóttir

Clarissa Sia Choon Yen

Abstract:

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Authors: Björt Ólafsdóttir & Clarissa Sia Choon Yen

Advisors: Mats Alvesson & Susanne Lundholm

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Purpose: To identify and compare discourses around diversity within two companies operating in two distinct national contexts. One originated from and still situated in Iceland, while the other is a subsidiary for Asia-Pacific market in Singapore from an American company. We wish to explore what are the meanings and implications of diversity for the employees of each company, how their discourses on diversity reflect hypocrisy in the organizations and if and how national context has an impact on discourse on diversity.

Methodology: Interviews were conducted, transcribed and codified. Comparison and evaluation of the different discourses were examined around diversity and in the talk of interviewees within the two companies.

Theoretical perspectives: Discourses of diversity are being analysed and the model of organizational hypocrisy is being used to reveal how this is being use as a solution for the modern organization.

Empirical foundation: Transcripts of interviews with 8 employees from the first company and 5 employees from the second company

Conclusions: We found that the two companies both acted in hypocrisy, when examining the relation between talk, decision and the actions

of diversity within the firms. This appeared in the same way with the two companies on some dimensions and differently on others. We conclude that companies' claims around diversity should be continued to be challenged and laid under critique, and that this would help to raise awareness of how companies are using positive and politically-correct term like diversity for justifying and maintaining status quo.

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1 Introduction and Research Background

In the forward of the book 'Discourse as Cultural Struggle', Shi-xu observed the western-dominated literature on discourse studies and listed 'creating new discourses of solidarity and prosperity' as one of the research aim of the publication. One thing we agreed with him on was drawing upon discourses which can reveal culturally different ways of knowing. The opportunity thus presented itself when we decided to work on the thesis together to present our findings based on two companies, from two different national contexts.

Growth has been cited to be the reason behind the search for change in many organizations. When external resource pools are exhausted, organizations begin to place emphasis once again on the valuable resources they hold within themselves – the employees. Diversity can be seen as a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system (Nkomo & Stewart, 1996). Where scientific management techniques in the past places emphasis on workers with universal characteristics, the educated and knowledge workers today place emphasis on differentiating themselves as unique individualities and sometimes even use it as an indicator of their value to the organization.

Diversity, in the viewpoint of the human resource manager can also be viewed as demographic varieties such as age, gender, race, education, personality, and ethnicity or by group or categories and may emphasize on individual ingenuity to achieve organizational objectives. This ideology of diversity, however, can be pursued by organizations with different agendas, such as a legal-conscious human resource management department in the organizations, rather than for the 'requisite variety necessary for organizational success' (Krefting et al, 1997: 377).

Organizational culture can be seen as shared meanings and symbols or it can also be viewed as cultural discourses, where the language and how it relates to the context comes under scrutiny by academic researchers. This reflects the frequent confusion or attempt to refer to organizational culture and discourse as the same things. However, accordingly to Alvesson (2004), there should be a clear division existing between the two. In this thesis, we are interested to examine the amount of variation at the local

production of culture. Culture, in this case is seen as creating chaos, disorder and ambiguity, instead of robustness and stability.

‘Language is normally seen as part of organizational culture, with equal footing with other cultural expressions such as actions, settings and material objects’ (Alvesson, 2004:320). Organizational discourse, instead of being viewed as a re-labelling of organizational culture, serves as an insight into the language and the use of language in the organization. This view sees the construction of meaning through the operation of language use, and in the process observing power exertion, construction of multiple social realities. Discourse of diversity in the organization, in this macro sense can be seen to be informing people of the language surrounding diversity in organization.

As Alvesson sums up, ‘the same discourse (language use) in different cultures (meaning contexts) may lead to different reception and thus meanings. Discourses also represent (perhaps even the most important) medium, in which cultures are constructed, reproduced, contested and changed. In discourse, ideologies and other cultural elements are developed, modified and expressed. It is at this level that the subject is ‘hit’ by linguistic acts carrying and applying cultural themes and more or less elaborated or fragmented ideologies’ (Alvesson, 2004: 331). Hence, when we examine deeper into the Discourse of diversity within the local offices of the two case studies we are embarking on, we attempt to break away from the long range Discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000:1133) and display the phenomenon of discourses being locally translated in which it is loosely connected, fragmented and even shows contradiction. In our case, we will attempt to show the loosely connected fragments of discourse around diversity which gives rise to the phenomenon of hypocrisy as proposed by Brunsson (2003).

1.1 Research Question

Diversity studies have been conducted in many approaches, such as statistical data analysis (Jin, 2007) or identity work in organizations (Garcia-Prieto et al, 2003). In this instance, we are approaching diversity studies through the study of discourses on diversity in two different national contexts.

In relating discourses to organization, one may view the organization as a reflection of the complexity of organization-discourse relationship (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). We propose to also examine hypocrisy (Brunsson, 2003) amidst this organization discourse relationship where the tension between ideology and practice is often a manifestation of hypocrisy.

In this paper, we will attempt to analyze on the discourses of talk on diversity in two companies, one based on Europe and the other in Asia. We will strive to understand how these discourses have effects on meaning making mechanisms existing in the two national contexts and the hypocrisy effects observed in the operation of these discourses.

Booth and Williams (1995) proposed three guidelines for a good topic to be sets out: 1) What am I interested in discovering? 2) What might my readers be interested in? 3) How can I get them to realize or ask questions beyond what they already know? With this in mind we propose the following research questions:

- a) What are the meanings and implications of diversity for the employees of each company?
- b) How do their discourses on diversity reflect hypocrisy in organizations?
- c) Does national context have any impact on discourse on diversity?

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Diversity

According to Nkomo and Stewart (1996), the evolution of the interest in diversity began in the early stages of organizational studies. Researchers had treated subjects of organizational studies to be homogenous, 'void of race, ethnic, gender, age, sexuality and other social identities (Martin 1992; Burrell 1994).' However, the deliberate ignorance of individuality/characteristics of the groups did not signify that diversity did not exist, it simply did not draw much interest as long as scientific management style prevails and organizations was looked upon as machines with its social relations 'depersonalized' to have every component appear uniform and homogenous, much like a synchronized factory production, for smooth and efficient operation.

In the review of literature on the study of diversity, Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Ashforth and Mael (1989) is one of the more prominent inter-group theories that have been used to examine diversity in organizations. This, however, according to Nkomo and Stewart (1996) presents a problem of 'losing' individual identities to collective identities and hence, the loss of 'diversity in perspective that is theorized to be the primary value added aspect of group and organizational diversity.'

Other researchers suggested looking at diversity in terms of relational identities such as Brickson (2000) especially in cases 'where personal and/or group boundaries persist and elicit competitive or in-group/out-group conceptualizations and behaviour', bringing a macro view of SIT (Nkaomo & Stewart, 1996: 524). Embedded Intergroup Relations theory proposed by Alderfer and Smith (1982) integrates two groups existing within organizations: identity groups whose members share some common biological characteristics and organization groups, whose members share common organization positions and equivalent work experiences. In this, members may feel more or less identified (psychologically attached) with their various identity groups. 'Certain organization groups tend to be populated by members of particular identity groups, for example, executive management in organizations in the US and other industrialized countries tend to be concentrated with older, white males' (Nkomo & Stewart, 1996:525). Embedded intergroup relations theory suggested by Alderfer (1987) describes the constant struggle individuals and organizations have when trying to manage conflicts between identity groups and organizational group membership.

Postmodernism and critical theory approaches have questioned and perceived management of diversity with 'scepticism that it will produce real change in organizations' (Nkomo & Stewart, 1996). Litvin (2000) places the focus on the discourse of diversity with emphasis that such discourses are used to maintain status quo rather than celebrate diverse identities. Cavanaugh (1997), on the other hand argues 'that diversity management ends up maintaining white male superiority and control of organizations. Instead diversity discourse proposes a happy solution to resolving the messy problem of 'otherness' and heterogeneity in the labour force.' (Nkomo & Stewart, 1996)

Practitioner's text emphasizes on economic benefits of a diverse workforce and present best practices that help organizations to realize them. Having different perspectives in a workforce is thought to bring innovation and creative problem solving. The research community explored diversity in forms of identity and that has advanced our understanding of identity work. Based on this idea that individuals are constantly shaping their identities in organization and that these are also affected and constructed by discursive resources, we feel that an area worth further examining in which these two thoughts can meet lies in looking at diversity through the viewing glass of discourses.

2.2 Discourse of diversity

'Language (and language use) is increasingly being understood as the most important phenomenon, accessible for empirical investigation, in social and organizational research. Interviews, for example, are obviously rich in linguistic interaction and most observations concern people engaged in conversation' (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). Nonetheless, 'people's capacities for describing their interior realities or external conditions cannot be taken for granted, something which Wittgenstein (1953) pointed out half a century ago.' (As cited in Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000: 202) and as Alvesson and Karreman (2000) also pointed out, the interest in discourse corresponded with the growth in the significance of language. In most researches utilising interviews as the main source of empirical studies, such as this thesis, thus we do need to be sceptical and reflexive in what the subjects are actually saying (or not saying) beyond what they think they hold as concepts, attitudes and values. The acknowledgement that there is no direct relationship between language use

and that the phenomenon it is supposed to say something gives rise to discourse analysis.

Discourse, hence, in this thesis is being focused on how language creates or modifies meanings, instead of just looking at behaviour, emotions or other cognitive elements. Discourse represents the schema in which words, power and relations are formed and are interacting and can often be unconscious, which makes them rather interesting to observe and subsequently, to read into.

In Zanoni and Janssens' (2003) study of the discourses of HR managers, they pointed out critical discourse analysis's usefulness in understanding the way language operates in relations in organizations. Three types of texts; namely practitioners' articles and books on diversity management, chapters on diversity in organizational behaviour handbooks and academic articles researching the effects of diversity in organizations were cited as empirical materials which discourses can be performed upon (Zanoni & Janssens, 2003:56). Zanoni and Janssens' study claimed to differ from the rest in that they assume that 'diversity is a discourse, socially constructed through language and embedded in power relations.' (Zanoni & Janssens, 2004: 57)

Zanoni and Janssen (2003:58) examine three interrelated perspectives on how discourses create meaning. The first looks at the power within the concepts of objects and subjects. By talking about diversity, the subjects are examined in how they formed representation of 'diverse' employees and explore upon the implications of such representations. The second perspective views discourses as reflection of structure and practices that underlies text produced and how it is understood through their social context. In understanding how diversity discourse is constructed by the management of the companies from the viewpoints of the employees, power relations are explored in how it is reflected in the discourses of diversity. Discourses are not just social products but they also act as producer of practices. In the last perspective, discourses on diversity affirm or challenge management practices in these companies. (Zanoni & Janssen, 2003:58)

'Cultural diversity can also be understood as a discourse ongoingly used and continuously reproduced by actors in their daily practices.' (Barinaga, 2007: 317) It is with this perspective that we examine the language used in diversity discourse of these two organizations. 'Ely and Thomas (2001) tell us that there is no such a thing as cultural diversity that influences group behaviour; but rather discourses on and

attitudes towards cultural diversity and hence towards those members who represent the discourse.’ (Barinaga, 2007: 317)

Diversity in our thesis is looked upon as a discourse of its own, in particular, the way how diversity is being talked about in these organizations. As such, we seek to position hypocrisy as a way to manage diversity discourse, or as how diversity discourse is producing management practices in these organizations.

2.3 Hypocrisy

In our attempt to take a close and reflexive look upon what goes on in the two case studies, the framework of Organizational Hypocrisy will be used as a tool to break down the processes that are involved with the discourses of diversity in the two organizations. Brunsson (1985) pointed out that studies of managers’ behaviour or task in reality often shows they are less involved in problem-solving or decision making than most would ascribe to their everyday duties, portraying ‘irrationality’ or as in his later works, ‘hypocrisy’. He argued that irrationality is not only ‘a common feature in organizational life but highly functional’ (Brunsson, 1985:3). The key point about this argument is that when an organization is designed to deal with one set of objectives (in this case, the ideology of diversity), problems may easily arise when it has to handle other objectives (to be an equal opportunity employer), tasks (promoting cohesiveness in organization) and situations (maintain ideology with globalization strategies). Thus, hypocrisy/irrationality is a way in how an organization stays flexible.

Through examining the discourses of diversity in the two case studies in this thesis, we wish to make evident how the connections around talk, decisions and actions are constructed within these organizations. As defined by Brunsson (2002) the term Organizational Hypocrisy signifies ‘a difference between words and deeds, the eventuality that organizations may talk in one way, decide in another and act in a third’ (Brunsson, 2002:xii). Traditional decisions theories on the other hand, have assumed the opposite; that in fact there is a causal link between the talk, decisions and actions of organizations, and that there exist an invisible rational line between these three elements. In that sense, talk and decision is taken to be indicative of a subsequent action that will occur in the future, or at least the decision is believed to increase the probability of such an action (Brunsson, 2003). However, as Brunsson (2002, 2003) argues, when the linkage between these three elements (talk, decisions and actions) in

the organization are looked upon more closely, it becomes more apparent that in real life, they do not always go so neatly together as traditional decision theory suggests. Brunsson claims that in reality, there are not always connections (either causal or linear) among talk, decisions and actions, neither for the individual nor for the organization. 'To talk is one thing, to decide is a second; to act is yet a third' (Brunsson, 2003: 202). Thus it is very much possible to act without making a decision or talking about it and it is also possible to talk and decide without in fact acting on it. Therefore there are strong reasons to suspect that there will often be incongruence among what is said, what is decided, and what is done (Brunsson, 2003). Furthermore, 'it is also possible to act in contrary to what one has said or decided. People may talk or decide about a certain action but act in the opposite way. The result is hypocrisy' (Brunsson, 2003: 202).

2.3.1 Hypocrisy as a problem

The Oxford Dictionary defines hypocrisy as 'the assumption or postulation of moral standards to which one's own behaviour does not conform' (Brunsson, 2003: 202). Brunsson agrees with this definition as far as it applies to what is said and what is done, but he broadens the definition by encompassing talks, decisions, and action related to things outside the 'moral' realm. Inevitably, it is not that the case of what is said is better than what is done. Instead 'it may be true that some people believe that what is said is right, others believe that what is decided is right, and still others believe that what is actually done is right. Thereby, hypocrisy can satisfy a variety of different interests' (Brunsson, 2003: 202).

To take things further, hypocrisy can thus be represented as a kind of inconsistency within an actor. Inconsistencies *among* actors in society are usually seen as routine and are not necessarily perceived to be problematic. 'Inconsistency *within* actors, however seem less ordinary and more problematic. The general norm is that actors should be consistent in what they say, decide, and do' (Brunsson, 2003:202).

Hypocrisy may arise without anyone having intended it and should (at least sometimes) perhaps be looked upon as reaction to conflicts of different demands inside or outside the organization. 'The organization meets some demands by way of talk, others by decisions, and yet others by actions- thus to some extent satisfying three conflicting demands. Or controversially, in situations of conflicts it becomes difficult to act consistently with what is said and what is decided. To do so would mean satisfying one interest, while doing nothing to satisfy the others' (Brunsson, 2002: xiv).

2.3.2 Hypocrisy as a solution

Modern organizations like the two companies in this study are prone to present themselves as organizations that can satisfy a series of conflicting demands. In the first case study for example, one of the core values of the company; frugality (practicality) conflicts with other highly valued goal of the firm; the need for client orientation that normally entails organizations to ‘splurge’ in order to give their clients the best product. Likewise in the second case study, we saw contradictions in the claims of openness in an innovative culture that went against a bureaucratic nature of the Asian culture.

Due to the nature of hypocrisy, it is usually deemed to be a problem as it is not consistent with social ethical norms to talk in one way and then act in another. Brunsson’s discussion on hypocrisy though reveals another way of looking upon the phenomenon. Hypocrisy is seen as offering a solution for inconsistencies in organizational talk, decisions and actions. In that sense, hypocrisy can be seen as a response to a world in which values, ideas or individuals are in conflict and a way in which people and organization deal with such conflicts (Brunsson, 2003).

Hypocrisy can only be meaningful if talk and decisions have intrinsic value for stakeholders. Traditional decision theory implies that action is the main point of interest, and that talk and decisions have no value or interest per se; their single value is in paving the road to a predicated action (Brunsson, 2003). However, this assumption does not seem to fit the normal modern organization. Here factors like organizations output on visions and strategy, as well as governmental talk and present decisions play a role. In this sense, organizations are valued not only for what they actually do, but just as much for what they say and for the decisions they make (Brunsson. 2003). If we therefore say that talk and decisions are valued outputs of organizations and that organizations are also subjected to contradicting demands, we have the ingredients for a model in which the connections between what is said, decided, and done are not the same from what is expected. ‘If people who place demands on an organization attach importance not only on the organization actions but also to what is said and decided, the organization can meet some demands through talk, others through decisions, and yet others through action - and thus to some extent satisfy three conflicting demands’ (Brunsson, 2003: 205).

Contrariwise, to act consistently with what is said and what is decided is difficult to do for in doing so will often mean satisfying one interest and leaving other

completely unsatisfied. It will thus be easier to act in one direction if either the talk or the decision would indicate the opposite. 'In this model, that likelihood of an action decreases the more it is talked about and the more clear decisions are made about it. Its likelihood increases if what is said and decided is in opposition to it. Talk and decisions in one direction *compensate* for actions in the opposite direction and vice versa. Hypocrisy is a way of handling conflicts by reflecting them in inconsistencies among talk, decisions and actions' (Brunsson, 2003: 205). To clarify how this could take place, we take the example of how talk within an organization about the benefits of workforce diversity, can actually decrease the likelihood of decisions and actions towards having diversity within the organizational workforce. In this way the hypocrisy model suggests that talk about diversity could in fact substitute for the actual action on diversity, and thus decreases the likelihood of actions being taken regarding increasing diversity. Here, talk will thus compensate for action and within this model, hypocrisy attains a functional meaning. The differences among what is said, what is decided and what is done does not constitute the problems that traditional decision theory suggests. 'There is still lack of implementation, but no implementation *problem*. Instead, hypocrisy is a solution- a solution to several problems. Hypocrisy makes it easier to act forcefully in one direction, even with a number of opponents. It also becomes easier to say controversial things and to make controversial decisions' (Brunsson, 2003: 221).

3 Methodology

3.1 Companies and background

We will be drawing our case studies from interviews with employees from two firms for the purposes of this thesis. The first case study is from an Icelandic R&D firm while the second case study is from the Asia-Pacific office based in Singapore of an American Multi-National Company (MNC) who provides information resources to the legal and business industries.

Why these two firms? Besides pragmatic reasons which allow us ready access to these companies for empirical materials for this thesis, the more important criteria that these companies are chosen is because of the nature of their business lies in the knowledge intensive industries, with a high concentration of knowledge workers. This allows us to examine the discourses that govern their behaviour rather than the rules or regulations in the company that dictates their compliance. Furthermore, because of the emphasis both companies places on diversity in conducting their business, this provides us with strong interests, and similar parameters to compare these two companies on.

With the two companies situated in different national contexts also intrigued us to explore the discourses of diversity and meanings of diversity in Europe and Asia. Though we have limited number of interviewees, we feel that this is not a limitation as we are aiming for qualitative results with deep insights into issues around diversity. Quantitative data may on the other hand provide generalization with numbers, but that kind of generalization which might only skim on the surface of these issues, are not the factors that we wish to study.

3.1.1 Joints Venture

The first case study was conducted on a research and development (R&D) company 'Joints Venture'. It was founded in Iceland but operates now all over the world. Joints Venture presents itself as a leading company in the global health sphere and is in the 'business of improving people's mobility'. Joints Venture's aim are to raise the bar in the production within their industry through a powerful combination of innovation, superior product design and service excellence.

Joints Venture presents itself as a client-orientated company with its business relying strongly on their clients who know best about their own needs and wants. The

company claims that their ability to develop highly innovative products with great clinical outcomes has been derived from its consistent partnership approach, its attention to the needs of its customers and its proactive collaborations with the best minds in its field.

The company employs a staff of 1600 in 14 locations around the world. Headquartered in Iceland, the company has extensive operations in North America, Europe and the Nordic region, complemented by a far-reaching international service network and an Asia-Pacific facility located in Australia.

3.1.1.1 Core values:

Joints Venture's corporate culture is said (based on their homepage) to be characterized by initiative, ambition, drive and cooperation, and emphasise is laid on the importance for all employees to make every effort to preserve the current culture. Furthermore in order to promote the working environment that they wish to maintain, they claim to have set their sights on three core values: **Courage, Frugality and Honesty**

The following is what Joints Venture asserts about their core values:

Honesty –

We show respect by adhering to facts and reality, fulfilling promises and claims, and admitting failures. We nurture honest communication throughout the company by sharing information and respecting each other's time and workload.

Frugality -

We use resources wisely. We aim to minimize cost across all areas of our business through effective communication, preparedness, planning and optimized processes.

Courage -

We are open to change and constantly strive for improvement. We challenge unwritten rules, show initiative and take risks, while, at the same time, taking responsibility for our ideas, decisions, and actions.

These core values of the company are said to be the grounds for the employees day- to day work, and they are said to come forward in the workers attitude towards

clients and fellow employers. Honesty, Frugality (practicality) and Courage are thus said to be values that all the employees honour and these are said to make way for higher success.

3.1.1.2 Employment values and goals -Human Resources Policy

The scope of Joints Venture's activities has broadened in the last years, and this has led to an *'increased need for employees with diverse expertise'* (as said on Joints Venture's homepage). The company claims to employ people with different experience and backgrounds, which Joints Venture claims makes their working environment more exciting and fruitful. Around 60% of Joints Venture employees have university degrees or vocational or technical training.

Joints Venture puts great emphasis on the importance of their employees and they claim to be aware of the fact that one of the most important resources of any high tech company is the knowledge possessed by its employees. Joints Venture's activities cover a wide field, and they claim that management is highly aware of the importance for the company *'to attract a wide range of talented individuals who contribute their efforts and skills to the achievement of the company's objectives'*

Their human resources policy, as described on Joints Ventures' homepage takes very much into account the need for the company to provide their employees with an environment that is both stimulating and challenging. This they say is looked after for the company takes pride in creating challenging working conditions in which employees can achieve optimum results. They back up their claims regarding this by citing a workplace audit that was conducted at Joints Venture in 2004 where employees were asked to respond to various questions relating to their workplace. *'The overall result was extremely good. The statement 'On the whole I am happy in my work at Joints Venture' elicited a positive response of 4.41 on a scale of 5.'*

The expertise and technical capabilities of the growing Research and Development teams at Joints Venture is given the honour of being the driving force in allowing the company to successfully introduce pioneering products that have and continue to make a dramatic impact on the R&D community. *'Our R&D specialists recognize that providing winning solutions requires a deep understanding of the needs of our product users. That is why we consult extensively with medical professionals and patients during product development, always striving to develop products that exceed expectations.'*

The sample of interviewees in this case study of Joints Venture consists of a cross-section of those employees in the company who work within the field of development of new products and/or development of changes on an already made product. Those eight employees and their job titles are:

- 1) **Frank** – Consultant. Has an extensive knowledge and experience in the field.
- 2) **Steve** - Head of the mechanical design platform
- 3) **Olive** – Head of project management
- 4) **George** – Product manager– Linking project management to the market.
- 5) **Anne** – Clinical testing on products being developed.
- 6) **Kurt** – Specialist in supportive equipments– has an input in the project development with the client’s needs in mind
- 7) **Thelma** (not a native Icelander.) – Intellectual Property Manager – Supervises the control for the patents, demarcates and sets up market strategy etc.
- 8) **Bob** – Takes part in the productions process – involved in the innovation and changes on products already designed.

3.1.1.3 Icelandic culture and its relation to Joints Venture

Similar to other countries of Scandinavia, Iceland and its culture can be described as a very liberal and open minded, where the economy prosperous and social issues as human rights and concerns for the environment have high awareness in most of its population. The country though in at least one way differs quite a bit from the other Scandinavian countries, which is in the low rate of immigrants that have moved from other countries and now live in Iceland. Thus the nation and its culture can be said to be very homogeneous. Icelanders though, remain very much in touch with the global economy and it can be safe to say that values and politically right thinking is endorsed in the same way in Iceland as it is done in the outside world.

As a firm growing globally, the way Joints Venture promotes itself both in the line of talk of managers and in official outputs is quite unique for an Icelandic firm in the aspects of diversity. Information on the firm’s webpage specifically addresses these issues as vital goals that is embraced by and acted upon by the firm. This is most likely due to the international status the firm has gained over the years. However it is not immediately self-evident that theses politically-correct values are what the company embraces, considering the homogeneous culture of the land the company grew up from.

We hope to explore how exactly this firm pursues to do their work and what role diversity plays in that process. Therefore we hope to seek information about the meanings of diversity within these employees, as well as how they think diversity is defined in general in the firm. We also hope to gain insights on how the employees actually do their work. What it is they feel are important factors that facilitate best performances? What policies do they have from their company as guidelines to do their work, and how, in their mindset do these policies fit for best practise of their work? Questions about the fit of the culture to the core values within the company will also be addressed.

3.1.2 Info P

The American-based company, Info P, started off as a publishing company. In the present era, they have ridden along the wings of technology and made available news, business and legal information online via a subscription model. Beyond organic growth, the main company also pursue a merger and acquisition strategy and has acquired products which complement the existing information database offerings and ventured into risk and practice management software. The Singapore office takes charge of markets in the region including Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia.

Five interviewees were invited to participate in this study from the Singapore firm.

- 1) **Irene** - Senior Account manager was first based in the Singapore office as an expatriate for 1.5 years before being invited the sales manager position in Hong Kong. In the midst of the writing of this thesis, she has since resigned.
- 2) **Edward** - Marketing Manger who has been with the company for more than nine years and is currently still based in Singapore.
- 3) **Larry** - Customer Service Executive who was with the company for only six months and has since moved on to another international company, based in San Francisco, conducting regional training.
- 4) **Abbey** - Senior Account Manager, who has been with the company for six years and is currently still based in Singapore
- 5) **Nancy** - An HR assistance who has been with the company five years and is currently still based in Singapore, supporting the majority of expatriates management staff.

3.1.2.1 Singapore culture and its relation to Info P

Singapore being in a geographical centred location within Asia boasts of good infrastructure and a safe government. These are attractive reasons for overseas companies to base their headquarters in Singapore. As a country, Singapore provides attractive incentives and conditions for foreign companies to base their Asia headquarters, such as '*strong innovative spirit, connectivity, skilled workforce, business networking & linkages, solid supply chain network, superior infrastructure and*

impressive pool of resource' (Economic Development Board of Singapore (EDB)'s website).

Further quoted from EDB's website:

'At the heart of Singapore's thriving business ecosystem is a unique blend of competitive strengths that makes Singapore the location of choice for global enterprises. This distinctive combination of CORE competencies, coupled with Singapore's physical and metaphorical location between Western sophistication and Eastern growth potential, confers a host of benefits to the businesses that invest and reside here. A cosmopolitan society, Singapore is an ideal platform for the meeting of global talents, ideas, funds and businesses.'

Singapore is claimed to be 'a choice HQ location in Asia where American, European, and Japanese companies engage Asia.' (EDB's website) With about 60% of 7000 foreign Multi-national Company (MNCs) having regional activities in Singapore, Info P as an MNC is looked upon as a prestigious employee with international connections. MNCs are also thought to be looked upon as having better employees' benefits than local Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the addition of work experience in MNCs always aids in one's resume. Nonetheless, we find that this may not always be true for every MNC in Singapore.

Singapore is touted to be a multicultural cosmopolitan city, with harmonious relationships among its four major groups of people: Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians. With a history of immigrants, Singaporeans are no strangers to diversity and foreigners on its soil. Nonetheless, drawing from a recent local newspaper article of views from people on the street, the comments on foreigners 'sharing' the economic pie falls on both extremes, with some viewing 'foreign workers' as 'blue-collar workers', filling in jobs such as cleaners, construction workers and labourers, which do not find much Singaporeans applying for. In such a case, they are not looked upon as threat, but that they are helping to 'do the dirty jobs that Singaporeans do not want to do'. Another perspective looked at 'highly paid foreign executives who are here to steal our jobs', while a more pragmatic Singaporean view says that 'no country can run on its own. Besides, Singaporeans are also going overseas, as foreigners, to compete with the locals for their jobs.' (Quotes from 'Street View', Straits Times Singapore, May 11).

3.2 Collection of data

Interviews are the main technique utilized in this study. We have also taken advantage of technology – in this case, instant messaging or chat program to speak with the interviewees in the Singapore firm. For the Icelandic firm face-to-face interviews were conducted in the home office of the company in Iceland.

3.2.1 Joints Venture

The interviews were conducted by the first author with eight interviewees. This took place at the interviewees' workplace, lasting from 20 minutes up to an hour each. The interviews were tape-recorded and later on codified with matters of interests fully transcribed. The interview was guided by a questionnaire of 20 wide-ranging, open questions that were intended as guidelines for relaxed chat among researcher and interviewee, rather than as 'nailed down' questions. Topics of these guidelines included (1) the definition of 'diversity' (What do you understand by diversity?) (2) Practices of diversity (Which activities regarding diversity are in place? Who initiated them?); (3) the goals of the diversity policy (What are the objectives? How do you evaluate the policy?) and (4) the link between diversity and organizational goals (Does your diversity policy address a particular organizational need?).

3.2.2 Info P

The interviews were conducted over instant messaging and took place on separate occasions, which lasted about one to two hours. Transcribing was not required as messaging logs can be saved. The interviews were guided by a prepared interview guide of wide ranging, open questions, similar to that use in interviews with Joints Venture. There is no sequence that was strictly adhered to but the topics of discussion included same matters as with Joints Venture, which are definitions of diversity, the views about diversity policies, the activities between diverse groups and the link between diversity and organizational goals.

The texts were then codified and parts that contained argumentation of diversity or hypocrisy were selected and worked from. No translation was required as interviews were conducted in English.

3.2.3 Codification

The texts were first coded in terms of content, identifying diversity dimensions such as gender, age, ethnicity (where applicable). This step was done separately by each co-author for each case. We then jointly selected excerpts that contained a developed argumentation of diversity. In a third step, we identified the rhetorical schemes and the grand Discourses. In order to be as 'faithful' as possible to the original texts, the analysis was carried out on the original Icelandic version. The excerpts presented in the result section were translated so that the rhetorical schemes could remain as intact as possible.

3.3 Validity

Interviews have been held and continue to hold a prominent place among research methods. Mishler (1986) propose to view interviews as a form of discourse, shaped and organized by asking and answering questions. The researcher's analysis and interpretation of the interviews, however is very much dependent on our own assumptions, theories and pre-understandings.

The conduct of interviews, whether it is through direct channels or indirect ones is commonly regarded as interplay of stimuli and responses. It seems to be taken for granted that questions should necessary elicit the response required, but can also be viewed as 'scripts' that pre-exist either consciously or subconsciously in the minds of the interviewees, or even the interviewee. Mishler viewed 'the suppression of discourse is accompanied by an equally pervasive disregard of respondents' social and personal contexts of meanings' (Mishler, 1986).

We believe that these can be addressed by not treating interview text in a neopositivists, romantics or localists (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2001) manner but in a reflexive manner, being aware of the context and relationships under which the interviews are being conducted. As proposed by Mishler (1986) interviews can be looked upon as '(1) speech events (2) being aware that the discourse of interview is jointly constructed by interviewees and respondents (3) analysis and interpretation are based on a theory of discourse and meaning and (4) the meanings of questions and answers are contextually grounded' (Mishler, 1986).

The quality of instant chat may be called challenged as a poor substitute for face-to-face interview. However, with the proliferation of instant chat and it being an established channel of communication between the interviewee and one of the authors, who is an ex-employee of the company, it can be said to be almost ‘second nature’. In some ways, this method of interviewing might be more suited in this particular case study rather than direct interviews in due to the ‘openness’ the interviewees might feel at not being ‘pressurized’ to formulate in speech, but in writing, which can allow the English-educated interviewees have more descriptive terms in formulating their views. We believe the close relationships of the parties involved also ensured the honesty to share easily and openly about the discussion topics.

As the aim of this study is not to gain a deep understanding of culture (either national or group), one would find our aims focusing more on the means on how these two companies are ‘organized’ as a single entity on their ideology of diversity. We do not pretend or aim to make generalization, but instead emphasize on the role played by discourses on diversity in these companies, i.e. the actors’ (or interviewees) construction of ‘diversity’ and their consequences.

As a point of reflection as one of the author of this thesis, past experiences from working in the company Info P has created a double role for one of the author – being a researcher and also an ex-employee of the company. Hence, there was a need to both keep a distance (as a researcher) but also immerse in what Alvesson (2008) refers to as ‘home-base ethnography’ ‘A home base-ethnography is a study and a text in which the researcher-author describes a cultural setting to which he/she has a ‘natural access’ and in which he/she is an active participant, more or less on equal terms with other participants’ (Alvesson, 2008: Working paper). Although we can safely admit that the methodology used in this study does not adhere strictly to the definition of home-ethnography, we still hold hopes that the aim to distance from the ‘flow of interaction’ as a researcher, rather than as an ex-employee is successful in reaping from the ‘deeper and more profound knowledge of the settings’ in Info P.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptions of findings-Joints Venture

Joints Venture cannot be described as diverse at first glance. The company originates from Iceland, which geographically and perhaps also socially has been more isolated than the other Scandinavian countries. Thus, the number of immigrants in the country is very low and the national culture has not had much influence from other national cultures. However, although the country has a rather homogenous culture, the business environment is very dependent on the outside global world, and it is safe to say that Icelandic companies have done well in identifying and contributing to the global economy. As with other Scandinavian countries, much emphasis is placed on welfare and equal rights in the Icelandic society. The culture that Joints Venture hails from has thus had its impact on how goals and strategies are laid out with the company. Previously, we have detailed the background and the official objectives of the company. Here we aim for a deeper and a more reflexive look on how these objectives are really being handled, with a particular emphasis on diversity within the company, seen from the viewpoint of the eight interviewees at Joints Venture.

4.1.1 Discourses

4.1.1.1 Two lines of talk

The three core values of Joints Venture, that is Courage, Frugality and Honesty, are not the sole guidelines that Joints Venture officially has for guiding their way of doing business. As was described before, Joints Venture also has substantial text on their official webpage about how diversity in their workforce helps them, and is crucial for their work to find out the different needs of their diverse client group. This point was consistent and very evident in the talk of those managers and higher ranked employees that took part in this study. When asked if diversity was a beneficial variable for the company, the response we got from all our interviewees was that a demographic diversity within the employees group was a very positive thing, and that it was absolutely crucial for the company to strive for diversity within their group of employees, for this would facilitate for the innovation work done within the company.

As will be discussed more thoroughly, these official ideas about diversity do not always go in line with how things actually worked in Joints Venture. Employees that had long tenure with the company discussed matters of diversity differently than new employees. It thus seems that there were two ongoing discourses about diversity within the employees at Joints Venture. These two discourses are also laid out in different manners. When we ask the interviewees to comment if and how Joints Venture embraces and promotes diversity in its workforce, a running thread in all of the (at least in the initial) responses of the interviewees was that the company truly does follow through diversity as it claims. All the interviewees of Joints Venture were made aware of the demographic definition of the term diversity, and they all talked very favourably towards its correlation to the work that is done within the company. However when the interviewees were asked to describe more thoroughly in terms of how and in what ways diversity of the workforce was affecting the innovation work, the responses we received seem to follow two different lines of talk. This depended on if we were interviewing managers or higher ranked people that had worked at Joints Venture for a long time or people that were relatively new at Joints Venture but were also taking part of the innovation process as members of the developmental teams. We begin with the higher ranked people and some comments that they laid out about the diversity that can be found within the employees at Joints Venture.

4.1.1.2 Management talk about diversity

Olive – Head of project management. Comes into different work groups and lays down the structure for a project for the developmental groups to follow:

(Q) Do you think that Joints Venture strives for diversity within their workforce?

(O) Yes... yes I think so... there are though very many engineers here, like in the developmental department there are very many that have engineering education, and that is...it has just proven to have had the best result for the company, to hire engineers. It is a good educational background for what we are doing in the developmental department.

(Q) Because of the nature of your job, having the overview of many different work groups, do you think that the diversity that Joints Venture promotes itself to have within those groups plays any role in the innovation process?

(O) Yes I think that it is very positive, to have within them people from all over. You have the engineers thinking about the technical stuff and its very important to have

within them also the people that are more marked orientated, those bring a whole other input into the project, and then we have those who have the money sense... so its very important to have a diverse group compositions.

(Q) Do you think that Joints Venture's HR policy promotes hiring a diverse workforce?

(O) Yes there is great emphasis laid on the character of the people, if it fits with the culture here. I think that is the most important factor. And then comes of course the education,

Following the talk of this manager, there are two evident main discourses or lines of talk. First of all there is the discourse that diversity is important. As with all other interviewees, this employee was made aware of the demographical definition of diversity that the researches were interested in studying. However, during her talk, this interviewee seemed to change the meaning of the term diversity from a demographical understanding to one that refers to diverse individual characteristics. From this, the second discourse emerged, which emphasised the importance of different education and characteristics as being the two most important factors for the company to have within their workgroups, and thus these two variables were recognized as the definition of diversity that took place in Joints Venture.

Steve - Head of Mechanical design:

(Q) Do you see the workforce in Joints Venture as diverse?

(S) Yes.. I think we try to make sure that we have employees that are not all the same

(Q) So it is a deliberate thing to hire a diverse workforce?

(S) Yes.. as much as can be done. When we have like, people here from Iceland that maybe just graduated from school... then those group of people might not be that diverse, but then we are well aware of the fact that those who have gone and gotten there education from abroad and come back, bring with them a fairly good diversity into the group. If you don't take everyone from the same school, then this happens automatically in a sense.

(Q) But why do you want to have a diverse workforce?

(S) Because we don't all think the same, and that is the variable we seek. And it is also very important to have different kinds of individuals. We have to ensure that, to have someone who really gets into things while others rush on along. So here in the developmental department we intentionally go and get these kinds of people that fit into our team. In that way diversity is very useful for us.

(Q) Who are the ones that work there in your department (mechanical design)?

(S) We have solely engineers working there

(Q) So would you say that you have a lot of diversity within these engineers?

(S)...ehhh. yes in a way.....our group consists of about four people that work here in Iceland, and there we might maybe not see that much of diversity. But in a way we have also in our group, although they are not in it officially, two technicians in Britain and two in USA. So all in all the group consists of 8- 10 people that have very diverse background

(Q) And how would you describe that diversity?

(S) Well unfortunately we are at the moment only men in this group but the age distribution now is very satisfactory with a range of about 20 years. We also have diversity in education. Some have manufactory education, others have that and on top some kind of technical education, and still others are the one who are hardcore, 'male theorist' . So we have in this sense quite a broad ground.

Here we can see a similar line of talk as with the interviewee from before. The discourse on diversity is that it consists of differences in characteristics and education. When we examine on this definition of diversity, it is evident that what this manager is describing is in fact not that diverse, at least not in a demographic sense, but rather limited. When he talks about extending diversity by having people from other schools than Icelandic one, he is talking about recruiting more of *Icelandic* students that have educational background from other countries. He does not mention for example to have people from different nationalities and thus often simultaneously from other schools than the Icelandic ones. Furthermore the decision and action of this manager is not in line with his talk. He talks favourably towards having a diverse team, but when his own department is looked up on, it is revealed that not only does he have solely engineers in his team, but they are also all males mostly coming from Iceland.

4.1.1.3 Changes in meanings

Some of the above comments that came from both examples of interviews show how the interviewees started to change their focus from demographic diversity to an individual characteristic diversity that were based on traits and skills. This most probably occurred when interviewees were asked to look more thoroughly into the links of the claimed diversity in Joints Venture and on its significance for the work. When the interviewees had a closer look upon the developmental work- teams, they realized that in fact the teams in Joints Venture can not be described as specifically diverse, but rather as homogenous. Then it was as if their understanding of diversity switched from demographic parameters to parameters based on characteristics. The employees' sense-making of diversity therefore 'transformed' to one that looked at the different traits and merits of the people working together in teams.

Some of the interviewees realized this but justified their arguments by addressing that because of the nature of the company and the structured business it was into, there was in fact much need for the company to have these homogenous groups- that is groups that consisted mostly of engineers. In that sense, they argued; to have a diverse flock of engineers (meaning with different traits) was something that was very good for the work of the developmental teams, for different characteristics was a variable that would help for the innovation work of the company to come forward. In that sense then; to have mostly engineers meant that everyone in the work teams would have the same understanding and could understand different ideas coming from people. However, this idea- brainstorming and ability to have creativity within these engineers was largely based on the different characteristics of them.

Notably then, the interviewees with this line of reasoning not only changed the definition of diversity to something that sounded more like homogeneity, they also put forward arguments that supported the need for a rather homogenous workforce rather than a diverse one.

4.1.1.4 Employees talk about diversity

As touched on before, we also witnessed another line of talk with the interviewees, which is different from the above claims of the importance of diversity with employees for the work being produced at Joints Venture. This other way of looking upon how diversity was appearing in Joints Venture came from younger

employees that had been with the company for 1-2 years. Following are two clear examples of this.

Anne – Works on clinical testing for products being developed.

(Q) Do you think that Joints Venture has a diverse workforce?

(A) Yes.. like for example in the R&D there is a certain amount of diversity. We have for example a few foreigners working here. So there is some diversity here but very many have a similar background.

(Q) In what way?

(A) Well... very many engineers and... ahhh... you know..... I wouldn't say that there was some tremendous amount of diversity here in R&D, there is a certain amount, but in these groups we have mostly engineers and people with other science educational background... So in our biggest units- the engineering units and the product management... I would say that we don't have an enormous diversity.

(Q) So the diversity you can find here lies maybe more in the characteristic of employees? (as managers had already talked about)

(A) Yes well of course we have certain diversity there, but isn't it always like that?

(A) These work groups are not from 'all over' It's my opinion that they are in fact not that diverse. There are mostly engineers from HÍ (The University of Iceland) I don't experience some enormous amount of diversity here at Joints Venture.

As can be seen clearly, a different discourse about diversity in Joints Venture manifested during this talk with the young employee, which differs from the higher ranked employees that had been with Joints Venture for a long time. Here the interviewee starts off by claiming that Joints Venture has in fact very diverse workforce, but unlike the managers, she does not gradually change the meaning of diversity to fit with what can be seen in Joints Venture, but rather she realizes along the way that diversity within the employees at Joints Venture is not very evident (or enormous as she puts it). Furthermore this interviewee points out a very good point, and one that may have slipped the minds of her managers, namely that different characteristics can be seen anywhere, and is perhaps not best understood as the basic elements of diversity within workforce.

Bob – Takes part in the productions and is involved in the innovation process and changes on products already designed.

(Q) Do you feel that the company tries to hire demographically diverse employees?

(B) Well it's a bit funny, I think that my boss thinks he is hiring very diverse people but if you take a look at that people, the whole group is very homogeneous, very many engineers and such. So I think that his impression is that these employees are very diverse, like a diverse group of engineers, but from an outsider's perspective I don't think that you could see much of diversity.

(Q) But what about a demographic diversity within this group of engineers, like are there many women in your department?

(B) No there is not a 50/50% rate of men and women, but I think that might be because we have in general more men than females that are engineers, so the sample of engineers isn't even.

(Q) So what is this diversity that your boss sees in his employees?

(B) Different characteristics of these engineers, but regarding gender issues in hiring, I don't think that the management would prefer to hire men than females, like when hiring for summer positions there are a lot of girls hired in to my department. I haven't seen any discrimination here.

Again it is confirmed by a younger employee at Joints Venture that demographic diversity is in fact lacking in Joints Venture. Interestingly, he notes that his manager's beliefs about diversity is probably different from the demographic one, and thus this managers can claim that he hires a diverse workforce.

4.1.1.5 Following the company's moral - the power of the ruling discourse

In Joints Venture the official output, heard in the management talk of the understanding on diversity, places emphasis based on demographic diversity, like gender, age and ethnicity. It is also claimed that Joints Venture follows this understanding when the company seeks to hire diverse employees. As noted above, two discourse were most evident in the talk of the employees about diversity, on the one hand, that there were not much diversity within Joints Venture (the recently hired staff) and then on the other hand a discourse around diversity that had other meaning than the demographic one, found in the talk of employees that had been working longer for

Joints Venture. Interestingly though, we could see within the talk of both these parties several indications that this latter characteristic meaning of diversity creates the real meaning for the employees, around the value Joints Venture puts into the merits of its workforce; that being that is that the individual diversity such as traits are more treasured than the demographic ones (Zainoini & Janssen, 2003). The interviews clearly demonstrated the existence of the two discourses about diversity, and the changes in these discourses from the official demographic one, into the characteristic one, when they were asked to elaborate on how diversity was being beneficial for the company.

One possible effect of this might lie in how young female engineers looked upon themselves and their status within the company as was described by one of our interviewees Thelma when talking about Joints Venture and gender issues:

'The company is very aware of having men and women as employees, and in this regard the company is very even'. Then as she thinks along she laughs and says: 'Well all of the upper management are men, that is just the way it is and should not be mentioned, but many of the middle managers are females' Thelma says she doesn't know if women are seeking the higher positions, but women seem to not be able to get through the glass house of upper management. 'This is not an issue here' (question;) 'why is that? Is it because people do not talk about these things in the company?' (T) 'no I talk about these things a lot with Andrew, (The CEO of the company) I'm always 'bugging' him with these issues, but on a nice terms. And the management wants to have these issues in order. Now they have just recently for example put women in the board of the company, highly clever and qualified women. This I think they did because of a pressure to take care of these issues.' Regarding gender issues with other staff Thelma says that especially younger women in the company (engineers in their thirties) are extremely aware of claiming not to be a feminist, putting their individuality and hard work as the opposite of that; that they came into the company because of their own merits, not because they were women. This attitude against feminism is much more within the female talk than males (T) 'I have never heard a male talk in this fashion'. Thelma's explanation for this is a lack of knowledge on feminism and that this reflects the community in Iceland right now. However the upper management of Joints Venture

wants according to Thelma to pursue gender diversity, and therefore a lot of these younger women were hired.

When looking at this sense-making discourse on diversity and Thelma's comments on young female engineers wanting to disengage themselves from being females, a question of the power of the management discourses on sense making arises. Could it be that these young female engineers realize that characteristic diversity in the company is looked upon more favourably than demographic one, and further that their disclaim from being females is because demographic diversity is looked upon as only politically correct but in fact not a variable that helps the company to do business in the best way?

4.1.2 Hypocrisy

As has been described before the company Joints Venture has laid down three core values to help steer the work of their employees. To refresh, those are; Honesty, Courage and Frugality. Based on the interviews done on the eight employees in the company, coming mostly from the R&D department, it seems that as a whole, these core values are looked upon as true guidelines in how things should work at Joints Venture. When asked to describe the work processes in the company, that is, how people and teams got their work done, almost all of our interviewees mentioned two of the three core values of the company as being essential in fostering an environment for their work, that being Honesty and Courage. In our way to link these meaning making values to our point of interest: diversity, let's take a better look at a typical answer we got when we asked about the importance of Joints Venture's values in steering the work of the employees:

George - Product manager. Works in portfolio management handling changes in already made products.

(G) 'These values are very important, people can't really get the function in here and function with the company if they do not have the characteristics to get these values. If you are like, well, how to put this... like dishonest, or are in some way that collides with these values then... those kinds of people normally don't have any success within our culture... Yeah, it just don't work in here....'

In this, the emphasis in the discourse of managers can also be seen in the talk of other interviewees; namely the stress that is placed on the core values of the company as being the main guidelines in steering people's ethics and work.

In the interviewees' talk, discourse around individual characteristics is made apparent by how it defines diversity for many employees, and is evidently a highly treasured variable within the company's culture. When previous discourses on employee's diversity within the company and the core values of the company are studied together, an interesting point is revealed. The first being the hypocrisy and contradictions that manifests around the claim of diversity within the company and the second being the linkage of hypocrisy to one of the company's' core value: Honesty. However, seeing that the term diversity has multiple meanings for the employees, one can perhaps not make the demand that everyone act according to the understanding that we (the researcher) have placed on the term, and thus we come to our next, perhaps more relevant point of hypocrisy with Joint venture.

As has been described there are different discourses and meanings around diversity within Joints Venture. The official one is that the company embraces and strives for diversity in its employees. This is thus the official talk of the organization. However, as has been described the meaning of diversity changed within the senior staff and they ended up by talking in favour of a homogenous workforce. Also it was evident that the decisions and actions around the initial demographic claim of diversity do not follow the talk. As came to light in the interviews, the most common group of employees at Joints Venture are white, Icelandic, male engineers. This is probably no secret with the company, but the notable thing is that they preach otherwise, that is according to demographic diversity. Clearly then the company's decisions and actions in hiring does not follow the official talk, leaving us with hypocrisy. And the true meanings of diversity within the organization do not go in line with the official one, leaving us once again with contradictions and hypocrisy.

Brunsson's (2003) claim of how hypocrisy can be seen as a solution could be applied here, where the case seems to be that the management talk about all the benefits and the richness of the (claimed) diversity in Joints Venture is in a sense compensating for the little diversity within the organization and thus solving a problem of conflicts.

This would be all nice and easy if it were not once again for one of the core values of Joints Venture, that being Honesty. Joints Venture has put itself in quite a dilemma by promoting honesty as being one of their guiding lights, when they in fact say one thing and then do another, as will shown in our findings. The fact of the continuous and ongoing changed meanings around diversity within the interviewees can not prove the talk of being free of hypocrisy, Quite on the contrary; by jumping back and fourth from a demographic and characteristic sense making of the term diversity and all the benefits it brings, (as can be seen in the talk of the management as it goes along) reveals nothing but great contradictions, that are met with the solution of hypocrisy.

4.2 Descriptions of findings – Info P

Info P's Asia Pacific headquarters is situated in multi-cultural Singapore, though it hailed from United States, which has strong emphasis on diversity, for both ethical and legislation purposes. Singapore's beginnings has a history of migrants from Asian countries, and in more recent decades, expatriates from around the world due to the government's work in attracting foreign investments. The emphasis on the Singaporean culture rests both on harmony among all races and economic focus. However, Info P, with its American beginning has its values being 'imported' into an Asian society. As we have previously shared about the background and objectives of the company. In this section hence, we aim for a deeper and reflexive look at talk about diversity in the company from the viewpoints of five interviewees at Info P.

4.2.1 Discourses

4.2.1.1 Favourable talk on diversity

We will first look into the convergence of diversity talk that exists between the American headquarters and Singapore office. Being an Asia-Pacific subsidiary, the Singapore office's website carries the link to its US website on workplace diversity:

'Info P is committed to equal employment opportunity and fostering business relationships with minority- and women-owned businesses. Info P is committed to providing a work environment where employees and applicants for Info P Careers are treated with respect and dignity, and without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, disability, national origin, ancestry, marital status, medical condition (including cancer-related illnesses), sexual orientation, citizenship status, age, disabled veteran status, Vietnam-era veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Consistent with this policy, Info P prohibits discrimination or harassment of any kind based on any of these protected characteristics.'

Info P maintains written Affirmative Action programs to ensure that all employees are employed and treated during their employment, from recruitment and selection for hire through compensation, promotions, and terminations, in accordance with its commitment to equal employment opportunity.'

If we look at Singapore, at which Info P is located, the multi-racial society is heavily promoted by its government for benefits of its harmonious status between the major races. The distinctiveness of any race is given its own space but not encouraged to be dominant. In economic pursuits for the prosperity of the country, Singapore's policies are also to woo talent, and most of them hailed from overseas countries, as most companies are MNC and headquartered in Singapore. Cited in the country's national newspaper 'Street Views' on May 11, 2008, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong commented on the influx of foreign workers in the workforce, 'They are not here to steal our jobs, but to help us enlarge the economic pie'. In this sense, we can see that the talk on diversity for Info P as an American subsidiary and Singapore as a country both acknowledge on diversity and look upon it favourably.

4.2.1.2 The meaning of diversity for local employees

Next, we will examine the meanings held by employees at Info P. In this, we can see that while their initial definition seems to be consistent with the official statement of the company, the meaning of diversity was subsequently translated into one of segregated diversity.

The interviewees usually start defining diversity by listing socio-demographic characteristics (such as ethnic, gender). They all agree that diversity is important (despite the parameters they used) and beneficial, and in some cases, necessary for creativity in a group. However, as the discussion progressed, when they start to think about the meaning of diversity and their experience with it in the company, they no longer talk in favour of it nor viewed themselves as demographically diverse as a whole organization, but started to adjust their local definition of diversity by observing the segregation between the 'local employee' and 'elite expatriate employees'.

The division of diversity along the lines of local employees and expatriate employees is continued when Edward remarked about diversity in the local office:

'In Singapore, diversity means white leaders and local workers. White leaders meaning agents from US, UK, Australia and workers from Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, India. I am inclined to assume so (regarding if it was a deliberate hiring policy) based on evidence and history. History in the sense that it is an American/British organization, so it may seem appropriate that an American or British

would be put in a leadership position, as compared to a local. More importantly, the strategy is US driven, so deployment may be best in the hands of an American. I don't think the US trust nor believe in capabilities of locals, especially ethnic locals. The new leadership, they're all from the dot.com era, faster, younger, more open, more contemporary, savvier, more ideas driven - change, change, change.'

Other interviewees also reinforce this second discourse of diversity through a constant reference of the expatriate-dominated team with terms hinting at superiority such as 'the management', 'the leadership', 'white men', 'westerners' or 'they'. As shared by Irene, Senior Account Manager:

'I see a lot of white men sitting in the decision making seats while Asian women doing the line work...in Hong Kong, Chinese men plus white men are the decision makers'

As we can see, both current and ex-employees of Info P express the same local translation of diversity. It serves to underline the shared sentiments of the 'segregated diversity' that has been ongoing for at least the past nine years (judging by the tenure of the oldest employee). In this manner, talk on diversity has painted a picture of the 'great divide', or segregated diversity.

4.2.1.3 Acting along with management talk

In this section, we explore how employees in the company maintain the 'harmonious' climate or cope with the inconsistencies between the official discourse and local translation of the definition of diversity. Some did it, like Edward, by adopting it as an 'I-can-do-nothing-about-it' attitude, attributing it that as it is an American based company and expatriate workers are preferred in top management. Others, as we see in the following excerpt, altered their behaviour and acted along with management talk.

Abbey, when we first asked her about diversity, agreed with the definitions of diversity in terms of demographic parameters, and also provided some light hearted banter about how the local employees are providing some 'nicknames' for the new management team to assist in remembering their names. In this, she showed the affiliation to her local colleagues in the segregated diversity we discussed previously, however she then provided an alternate definition to it:

'(Diversity is) a variety of something, opinion, goods, of making sense. It is present in Info P because everyone wants to be Indian chef, diversity is like competition, and everyone wants to look good in front of the boss.'

She then goes on and shared about how the new CEO put together a team to brainstorm to make Info P office more visible in Singapore and the Asia Pacific markets:

'He (CEO) believes that Singapore is the hub for business and there will be a lot of potential here in terms of being a legal hub. He felt a little frustrated that the Singapore office being the AP regional office does not leverage very much on its strength to penetrate into the market. He put together a group of people to brainstorm how we can make Info P AP office visible in Singapore.'

Abbey works closely with the management due to her leverage into the legal market in Singapore as a Senior Account Manager. She is often required to invite along the CEO or Managing Director to help seal major deals with top law firms to display commitment from the company. She was also part of the brain-storming team which is formed by a majority of white male management including the CEO(white male), General Manager (white male), Strategy Director (white male), Sales Director (white male), editorial manager (Asian male) and AO (Asian female). As a reflection, it can be pointed out the contradiction in the setup of this group, whose aim was to make Info P more apparent in the Asia Pacific, but was consist almost solely of white expatriates. Would they be the best candidates to strategize on what really works best for Info P's culture and market in Asia?

In this excerpt, we can see a positive construction of the role of expatriate management. This can be interpreted as an affinity to 'organization group' instead of 'identity group' as explained by Alderfer and Smith (1982). The former refers to identification through positions and work experience; in this case, being in the same group which the CEO picked to brainstorm draws stronger identification for AO than identifying herself with the local employees. This may also be an unconscious manifestation of the discourse of 'trying to look good in front of the boss'.

4.2.1.4 Meaning and actions

As stated in the official text of Info P, the meaning of diversity places emphasis on demographic traits, as one might expect from an American company. When we look at Info P as a whole globally, it is consistent with its diversity policy in that the company employs people of different gender, ethnic, racial and national backgrounds. In fact, looking at the workforce in Singapore, one would come to the same conclusion, especially if we take the definition of diversity as having different types of people. However, if we were to take the definition of diversity deeper into the context of having different types of people and treating them as equal, there appears to be inconsistencies in Info P's actions as people of different gender, ethnic and racial background are employed into different layers of hierarchy. This is illustrated by the fact that 100% of the top management team in Singapore are white males, with local employees taking only middle management and frontline positions. In this, we can argue that Info P changes their meaning of diversity by their actions.

Taking a look into the meaning of diversity for the local employees, we also find the official definition of diversity which is 'imported' to the Asia Pacific office in Singapore is acknowledged only in the context of official representations (in its websites, brochures) and that there is an alternate sense-meaning of diversity at work for the local workforce. In this sense, the local employees created one of segregated diversity between the local and expatriate employees. The implication of this alternate meaning indicates a tension or 'elitism' at work which seems to have an underlying dissension beneath the friendly bantering about nicknames for the management team. This may work against the 'good' one may assign to the original intentions of diversity.

4.2.1.5 The power of the ruling discourse

We can see how employees in Info P work with inconsistencies in the discourses of diversity in their everyday action to comply with the ruling official discourse. Both employees and managers attempt to mask the inconsistency in meanings by their actions, which we will illustrate with examples from organizational activities.

Managers mask the inconsistency by acting as if there was no conflict present. In workshops, they 'talk the talk' and mingled with their employees as if they were equal. As an illustration, we share about a Culture Change workshop conducted by American colleagues for the Singapore office in late 2006. This was supposed to be designed to inculcate the values of the company for the Singapore workers, in line with the new

strategy as a solutions provider globally. However, materials used were not localised and still carried American text, references, terminology and scenarios. Despite that, an apparent success in understanding and applying the values in the classroom situation was shown by the local participants, including the management team, as attendance was made compulsory and also seen as a commitment to the local office. We can point out here that as attendance was made compulsory, 'commitment' that is shown is actually contradictory to its purpose. However, the behaviour exhibited in the 'classroom' environment was not exercised or observed in the daily operations after the workshop. Much of the bureaucratic practices that are evident in most companies in Asia where management are looked upon as authority and seldom challenged openly were almost immediately reverted. In this, we can perhaps observe the contradiction between what is being said and adopted in the classroom environment and what happens in reality in daily operations, or with the rest of the organization who did not attend such leadership experience workshops. The change in the climate felt in the classroom situation did remain among the local workers, however, the bridge between management and local employees remained an elusive concept to many. In this, we can also see a kind of reversal of hypocrisy, instead of the organization utilizing hypocrisy talk and action to manage employees and compensate for action, employees are also using it to create meaning and make sense of their role in the Singapore office. Thus the employees are involved in the 'action' of diversity (as the home office understandings of diversity is laid out), but their talk around this diversity is not concurrent with it. In annual reviews of performance, they also use terms or emphasised on values of the organization which is normally not uttered in daily operations. We feel that this has to do with the need to comply with the ruling discourse of diversity and project the right image at such official events. In this, we can also see clues of hypocrisy being used as a solution to manage such contradictions.

Local employees also act in hypocrisy by being nice and doing all the work for the customer meetings or internal meetings (without claiming credit for it). We can illustrate with the example of Abbey, the Senior Account Manager interacting harmoniously with her bosses. When she shared about her experience when attending sales calls with top management staff, it can be felt that she started to adopt a 'more superior' attitude/position when relating the experience, when a few sentences ago, she was providing trivia about how the local employees are labelling the new management

team with nicknames. We can see the contradiction that occurs within her as she tries to switch how she views herself as an employee – as a local employee when she is relating about trivia and as an employee who is able to work at equal ranks with the more elite management team. One can see her as someone who is good at relating to people of different ranks or we can also see her as acting in hypocrisy in the different identities she adopts, depending on the ‘audience groups’ she is speaking with. When sales staff brings along management team members to visit their customers, the purpose of the presence of a white management is to portray the image of a stable company (with global background and diversified workforce), in which the management team works closely with their sales force. Nonetheless, as shared by the interviewees, in many instances, they were the one who did the real work in preparing for such meetings. During the meeting itself with the customers, they ‘played along’ to portray a united front and this hopefully help instil confidence in the company from the customers. In this illustration, we can see how hypocrisy is used as a solution to manage the talk, action and decisions in the organization when dealing with customers. As we can observe with this example, these actions are as much for her as it is for the benefits of the customers to clinch deals.

Info P as a local subsidiary can be seen as acting in contradiction with the global Info P network. In the hiring policy, although one sees a diverse workforce, there was no equal treatment to talk about when management positions are dominated by expatriates with no local employees in sight in the line for promotions.

4.2.2 Hypocrisy

We first look at the examples of hypocrisy in the official text of Info P. We find that while the corporate website carries a detailed description of what diversity is, there seems to be a lack of such practice in the Singapore office, as seen from our interview text. The pursuit of diversity seems to be a vigorous exercise to abide by stringent American employment laws, creating what they call an ‘equal opportunity’ environment, though only in American context, and not in the Singapore office. With the recent hiring policy, there seems to be no indication of abiding by the American employment law in the Asian culture as management positions are dominated by expatriates from US offices. Hence hypocrisy in the official meaning of diversity is unintentionally reinforced by the import of not just the values, but of management staff too.

In the succinct Singaporean culture which is being made up of multi-nationals, this move seems to have rallied into one of local employees versus expatriates, though we cannot judge if this was intentional or not. The infuse of US talents is probably to implement successful models for sales and marketing in Asia, however, we felt that this was not perceived as an opportunity for cross cultural exchange but as a threat for the local employees instead. Hence, diversity in this sense is viewed as ‘an oppressive’ move by the local employees, perhaps offering an explanation of why some Singaporeans may view foreign workers as ‘here to steal’ their jobs.

Next, we review the concept of diversity as understood by the local employees. We find that while the concept of diversity has multiple dimensions when interviewees created different meanings of it according to what makes sense for them, they also acted hypocritically to their own definitions. The example of senior Account Manager Abbey using hypocrisy as a solution for the satisfaction of multiple audiences when conducting her sales processes underlines what Brunsson (2003) shared on the manifestation of hypocrisy in talk, actions and decisions. We also observe hypocrisy at work when sales staff brought along management team members to visit their customers for the portrayal of an ‘image’ that does not stand true in reality.

We can argue that the misalignment of values of the organization with the inherent values carried by the local employees created an absence of psychological safety as proposed in Schneider (1990). In the light that the expatriates occupies management position, this lead to even more difficulties for the local employees to subscribed to the values as proposed and instead, viewed them with cynicism and dismissal as image-building tools. Hence, hypocrisy is being used as a solution by both managers and employees to mask and cope with inconsistencies in the discourses around diversity.

5 Comparison & Critique

5.1 Relation between national context and diversity

When comparing and looking at how diversity is represented and reflected within the two companies, one of the variable that need to be considered is the differences in the national backgrounds of the two companies, that is, where the firms originated from, and what effects that might have on the take on diversity within the two firms. To start our comparison and critique on the two cases, we look at the relationship between national context and diversity of the two companies.

As was described earlier, the Singaporean context is a very diverse one having people from different ethnic groups and races working together. Iceland, on the other hand is a very homogenous community that in many ways, lacks the diverse pool of people to draw from. The differences between the national contexts of the two companies do not stop here, when comparing the two companies, we also take into consideration the fact that one of them (Joints Venture) originates and operate from the same culture/ national context where the business is conducted while the other one (Info P) has two national contexts, one being the Singaporean context and the other, the American values that have been set up for the company by its headquarters.

In our research, these differences between the two firms became quite evident when we looked at the meanings of the companies' core values and its relations to diversity. In Joints Venture, values were treated seriously and 'holy' and people respect them and try to live up to it. Thus, there was strong identification to the values and in a way we can see why that is, as the values are developed in-house (or locally) by Icelandic employers, for their Icelandic employees. As a consequence the values that were set up by the company were aligned with the national culture of the employees.

In Info P, being a MNC headquartered in Asia, the values of the company is 'imported' from US head office to maintain a sense on congruency. However, it clashes or it does not create strong meaning for the local employees, therefore, we do not see strong subscription to these values and instead, cynicism is created in the undertones of the company. Ironically, because of the respect for authority in the tradition Asian culture, the employees have chosen not to speak out against it, but try to manage it in their own way, presenting a 'hypocritical' phenomenon where they may be seen as

supporting the values in front of their expatriates' bosses but not practicing it in their daily work.

5.2 Discourses around talk of diversity

The two companies clearly showed different discourses about diversity within their organization. In their ruling discourses of the meaning of diversity, neither companies refer to the demographic diversity, although they were aware that we (the researchers) were referring and studying this kind of diversity. Thus both companies (at least the senior staff in Joints Venture) ended up changing meanings and talking about diversity in how they applied it to themselves.

Management talk about diversity in Joints Venture changed meaning in the course of the interviews from a demographic understanding of the term to one based on characteristics. Senior employees talked very favourably towards the need for diversity within the firm and proudly claimed that there was much diversity to be found within the employees at Joints Venture. They then further identified that this diversity was based on different individual characteristics and education. The junior staff however recognised that in fact there was not much diversity to be found within the workforce of the company, and rather, the firm should be identified as a very homogenous one. These junior staff of Joints Venture further noted that they knew that the senior staff saw things differently. The two parties have thus totally different meanings of diversity, with the new recruits holding demographic diversity definitions, and the older employees holding on to the psychological group's definition that they have belonged to for a longer time in the company.

Info P employees also changed the meaning of diversity from demographic parameters to be as a division between expatriate workers and local workers. In this firm, the socialization network and the national context probably contributed to the definition of diversity for the employees; that is, to see themselves as belonging to different camps – the expatriates versus the local workers. Both junior and senior local employees exhibit similar sentiments on this meaning of diversity in the way they talk and act, which differs from the official meaning of diversity in the company.

5.3 What are the effects of diversity?

When the ideologies of diversity and the actual following through of diversity in both companies was examined in a reflexive manner, it was clear that the real effects of diversity in both companies was different than what had emerged in the initial ideological discourse talk around diversity and was found in the first response of employees within both companies.

Firstly, in Joints Venture, we claim that the effects of ‘real’ diversity for the business of the company was non-existent, for in fact there was no substantial demographic diversity to be found within the employees of the company. However the claims that the company laid out about diversity will without much doubt play a beneficial role for the image making of the company

Secondly, in Info P we did in fact find some amount of diversity within the firm but this diversity was seen as segregating rather than unifying the workforce. Thus this real segregation diversity that was found in that company can hardly be described as a beneficial one, neither for the company nor for its employees. However, as with Joints Venture the claim for diversity at Info P is most likely helping the company’s image that they want to reflect to the global world.

Lastly as was touched on initially, it is worth noting that in the discourses around diversity within the two companies the end talk of the employees was rather in favour of homogeneity than diversity, where employees of Joints Venture and Info P made it evident that a homogenous culture would work in the best way for them. This will be addressed more thoroughly in next chapter where we compare and discuss the hypocrisy and inconsistencies that was found with the two companies.

5.4 Hypocrisy

We found hypocrisy within the coherence of the talk, decision and actions at both companies. Thus with the companies, we claim that what is being preached is not the same as what is being practised. At Joints Venture, we simply did not find there are any real demographic diversity among the employees, and at Info P, segregated diversity that is being practised there is not one that the organization claims it strives for and acts upon. Organizational hypocrisy, which we have identified, is seen as being used as a solution to fulfil some aspects of the image management of the two organizations, and meeting other contradicting demands, both for the public and the employees. This ties

in with Brunsson (2002, 2003), who observed that this is common for all companies, in one form or another. In a way, the hypocrisy can be seen an outcome that transcend national context. Both companies take advantage of the solution that hypocrisy offers when having to meet contradictory demands. Thus the need to be seen as acting in the politically correct manner of diversity that have risen from global demands, is something that both companies have to consider.

However as we have seen, this ideological diversity is not to be found with either company. In Joints Venture we have an example of a clear and cut model of hypocrisy as Brunsson has put forward, where the talk, decisions and actions of the company does not go in line, and further; where the talk is compensating for actions toward a diverse workforce. Also with Info P, we see hypocrisy when it comes to the official talk around diversity (that involves for example affirmative actions talk) and then the actual decisions and actions towards that kind of diversity, leaving Info P with nothing but a diversity that is about segregation between local and expatriate workers. Furthermore, within the talk of the employees that we interviewed in Info P we see in some way a different course of hypocrisy than what we have described. This course or a form can perhaps be looked up on as a reverse hypocrisy; where some of the employees' talk around diversity does not go in line with how they act. They act according to diversity but do not talk according to it, or in favour of it. Thus the talk of the employees are not in favour of diversity, however, there are decisions made to strive for it and actions are taken for diversity, leaving us with no talk, some decisions and all actions.

When we examine this reflexively, what we note was also lacking with both companies was the actual concurrence of the benefits of having a diverse workforce to do the work within the two companies. This could be seen in the talk of both of the companies' employees for as was revealed, the interviewees talked more in favour of a homogenous workforce than for a diverse one. This was found within the discourses of senior staff at Joints Venture when they explained how their alleged diversity (being in fact described as homogeneity) was helping for their innovation work. And in Info P when the local workers expressed their frustrations with the company's segregation diversity that was restricting/hindering and 'setting' locals employees toward management positions.

When all these cases of hypocrisy with the two companies are compared we see some differences in the level and in the role that hypocrisy plays in the two companies.

In a way we can say that Joints Venture's claim for diversity is of a more 'innocent' nature than what we have seen in Info P. Their claims of diversity and the benefits of it are more evident in the politically correct talk of management than as a highly clear and cut core value of Joints Venture, although diversity is noted as highly beneficial for the firm on the company's web page.

On the other hand, in Info P diversity among workers is talked about as a crucial factor for the company and a variable that is very evidently stated in the company's official objectives: '*Info P is committed to equal employment opportunity... ..Careers are treated with respect and dignity and without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, disability, national origin, ancestry, marital status, medical conditions, (and so on further)*'. One can perhaps point at the discrepancies among talk (here direct goals) and action with Info P than with Joints Venture, for the only real diversity that could be found with the Info P was as been stated, the one that evolved around segregation of the workforce rather than contributing to its unity. Therefore, the concern in Info P would be that a positive term like diversity is being used to contribute to and make positive the fact that they act on a segregation management

5.5 Discourse as the ruling power

Although we can see very much discrimination between Asian males and white males regarding management positions in Info P, we find it more evident and revealing on a discriminating trend of power distribution when it comes to females. In their case both expatriate and local females are in "line work" and normally do not get through the glass ceiling to upper management. This does not apply equally for white men and white females.

Although we found talk of "*no discrimination here*" in Joints Venture regarding gender issues, it is a fact that women in Joints Venture are not amongst the higher ranked in the company. And although the management is not looked upon as discriminating in the discourses of the employees, we feel that the power of the ruling discourse is once again letting talk compensate for action. As has been described we also found clear talk about young women in the company wanting to disengage themselves from their femininity and feminism 'which stresses the importance of sensitivity to gender' (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2007:218), when they put their individuality and characteristics as opposed to the former. As we have suggested in the

findings, this might very well be for the effect of the ruling discourse in the organization, where, when a closer look is taken, the most treasured diversity within the organization is in fact not demographic diversity that includes gender differences, but rather the characteristics kind of ‘diversity’ that in fact has nothing to do with the concept of diversity, but is rather opposing it.

In the case of Info P, we can attempt to map traits of Post-Colonial Theory to the situation in the organization. Post-Colonial theory deals with the cultural legacy after colonial rule and may include ‘cultural forms as reactions to colonialism/imperialism’ (Westwood, 2006). Essentially, this positions the argument that the effects of colonialism do not cease after independence is gained and that cultural discourses continue to influence the talk, actions and decisions of people. As a former colony, one can say that Singapore has continued to take advantage of her geographic location as a convenient port-of-call set up by the British for economic pursuits. In many ways, leaders from their former colonial rule continued to honour in their institution and even landmarks. ‘Sir Stamford Raffles’ or any product or service that has ‘Raffles’ as part of its branding immediately brings to mind one of highest quality, including schools such as Raffles Institution, viewed as an elite secondary school where only the smartest (and richest) can qualify.

The increasing penetration of corporations into overseas markets is one factor that the Singapore government viewed not as an intrusion but as a way which she can increase in economic gains. This continues to show even till today when favourable conditions are provided for foreign companies to set up offices in Singapore. Hence, we can safely say that this mindset has penetrated to the minds of Singaporeans whom, for the majority continue to be influenced by post-colonial discourses. Of course, critics against postcolonial theory will see these developments as continuation of colonial rule, but in different ways. If we can apply this to Info P, the all-white management team can be seen as ‘colonial administration’ through the marginalisation of the knowledge of the local employees, creating an ‘oppressive’ environment.

6 Conclusion

What does diversity really address in organizations? ‘Research demonstrating continued inequality and problems of racism, sexism, heterosexism and ageism in organizations raises the issue of whether diversity management is achieving its stated aim of valuing difference. Ironically, under the rubric of celebrating or valuing differences, diversity management often reproduces the very discourse that guarantees the status quo’ (Nkomo & Stewart, 1996: 532).

In our two case studies, the need and use of hypocrisy arose during the use of the concept of diversity when promoting companies’ interests. This was because the idealistic way of talking about diversity did not go together with how things really worked in the two organizations. Hypocrisy was a solution for meeting contradictory demands, and a way of compensating for the actions towards actual demographic diversity within the workforce of the two companies. Although the official and initial statements of our interviewees were all in the direction of the positive effects of diversity, interestingly; when we delve deeper into their meanings of diversity, we found that homogeneity in workforce was actually perceived better than demographic and segregated diversity.

Our findings and discussions are not in any way intended to talk against the necessity and the benefits of a diverse workforce, but are put forward as an attempt to reveal that it is not enough to make claims about diversity; how diversity talk, actions and decision of companies are managed is crucial for the people, who are the companies’ valuable resources. The perfunctory manner companies use the claims of having a diverse workforce for the justification of power related management should be challenged to reduce segregation among employees within the workforce.

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