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An Analysis of Minorities in the Workplace

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Abstract

This research stems from questions regarding people's relationships in the workplace, especially questions from the perspectives of minorities, such as cultural, visual, religious, and sexual minorities. The motive in pursuing this topic is illustrated by a few episodes about people whom I encountered in my life. They had difficulties being a minority in the workplaces, still the difficulties seemed trivial for the majority of people. I wanted to know the reason why my minority encounters provoke unhappiness, and how we can account for such responses normatively. A number of questions are addressed including the following: 1) How do both minorities and the majority act and feel in a workplace? 2) How do differences influence their performance and outcome? and 3) What suggestions can be made to normalize the status of minorities in workplaces?

The research method consists of one semi-structured individual interview and five semi-structured Skype interviews to four business people in Japan and Sweden. These interviews were used as case studies. Several studies are referred to, such as sociological and social psychology, human resources management, ethnography focusing on the study of institution, and gender studies, to account for my motive and to ground my questions. However, the main theories incorporated are derived from the studies of Erving Goffman, a "sociologist well-known for his analyses of human interaction" ("Erving Goffman", 2003). His works, especially *dramaturgy* as a theoretical framework, and *stigma* as an important concept, are examined because their organic and delicate approach seemed to be suitable for the research topic.

I describe how people are influenced by normative and assumed roles in the society where they belong, which are supported by the past, as well as what people declare and try to practice today, and how they are different and discrepant from them. It is found that not enough has been done to improve the quality of work life for minorities, and that further studies with various perspectives are needed.

Keywords: dramaturgy, stigma, micro sociology, interaction, workplace, Goffman

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Flashbacks: motive episodes

This research stems from questions regarding people's relationships in the workplace, especially questions from the perspectives of minorities, such as cultural, visual, religious, and sexual minorities.

The motive for addressing this topic is naïve in the sense of a susceptible adolescent's feelings. I hesitate to study this topic more deeply because of this naïveté. This feeling is derived from what I have experienced, read or heard in my short life and would be forgotten, put in a folder somewhere in my brain, if I do not use this opportunity to investigate it. The related episodes in which I was directly involved are, in fact, becoming more faint in my recollection year by year. However, I persist with this project because the related problems appear to rise from a larger problem in our society, even though the motivation for studying them is derived from peripheral and ubiquitous phenomena. I am attempting to make the most of this intuition now. As time passes, questions I regard as important and the motive for investigating them will both disappear. I believe I should embrace this motive before it is forgotten.

Thus, what exactly is my motive in pursuing this topic? I would like to introduce a few episodes to illustrate it. The episodes appear to be unrelated at first glance, but I hope to underline the commonalities.

In retrospect, my motive seems to originate in an episode when I was a child of nine or ten. There was a chef from a famous hotel in the Philippines who worked in a restaurant that my uncle managed. The chef occasionally visited my grandparents' house for family events, such as the New Year's celebration¹ and other Japanese cultural events. I used to believe that the chef was trying to be inconspicuous and polite; he looked a little sad, unlike the tipsy adults around me who pestered me with difficult questions. I wondered why this chef had a different atmosphere around him, but I was too young to recognize the clues to understanding his situation. Why was he trying to be less conspicuous, and why did he look unhappy?

The second episode is from my time in high school and involves an English teacher from the United States. She was extremely polite and was the most humble teacher in the school. She displayed the most typical Japanese female virtue in a way: supportive, modest, moderate, and humble. She was my favorite teacher, but I remember the sense of incongruousness in her because she behaved in ways exceeding the edict to "Do as the Romans do." Instead, she seemed to embody the attitude of "Try becoming a real Roman." Why did she acquire a perfect traditional Japanese manner, and again, why did she look a bit unhappy?

Additionally, there is my own experience, which gave me flashbacks to my memories regarding these matters. One night after work, we had a gathering with six female managerial staff in the headquarters of a company in Japan for which I worked. When female staff gathered, the main topics of conversation were often how we could stabilize and increase the number of female managerial staff in the company; how we should locate our role in the company and demonstrate that we had skills and equivalent power to the male staff; and how men would always be men and how we should handle their joking.² One of two middle-aged female managers at the gathering argued that the company would eventually change, even if it took 50 more years; thus, we should continue to try. This woman was slender, composed and somewhat feminine with perfect nails, hair, and skin, whereas another female manager was tall, muscular, and rather like a man. However, both appeared to be (and were indeed) extremely magnanimous, intelligent peo-

ple. The managers provided us with inspiration, always accompanied by quantities of hot sake (consuming four or five sake decanters each). I had never observed a woman drinking sake of that amount before. On the way back to the company residence on the day's last train, I was with another member of the managerial staff who had entered the company a few years before me. She asked me what I thought about the meeting. I answered her, half jokingly, that we needed to be tall and masculine or be able to drink like there is no tomorrow on weekdays. She said something such as, "We have to be tough," half repeating my words and yet speaking of her own philosophies. It was a typical pattern after the regular gatherings. We spent nights similar to this from time to time. The iron ladies behaved in a tough manner to avoid being slighted. These ladies did not actually look sad, but they looked as if they were enduring something for their careers by clenching their teeth and maintaining poker faces.

The common perspective I would like to focus on is something that minorities in workplaces have in common. Furthermore, these people are not conspicuous minorities, and generally, they are not actually marginal members of their society; their lives are stable, and their social status is middle to upper middle class. They are not weak and, in fact, can be rather competitive in labor markets, unlike refugees and ex-convicts (see picture 1.1 for social positioning). These people are likely not perceived by others as experiencing major problems in their lives. For example, the above-mentioned people were doing fine in their workplaces but somehow accommodated themselves to their environment in a repressed or unnatural manner. Their strategies were marked by keeping a low profile, imitating the majority's behavior and attempting to be much tougher than anyone else. Some people might say that they should not place themselves in such a situation if they do not like it or that they should not mind what others think and should do whatever they want in the way they want. However, I suppose "it's easier said than done." I think it is important that people positively confront such situations because it is the only way to change something that has become stale. Positive behavior implies a brave frontier spirit. I also think that it is important for us to continue to examine a better way of being for people in contem-

porary times, questioning what should be changed, suggesting new ideas for doing whatever you want to do in a way you want in society. This research will help implement such actions.

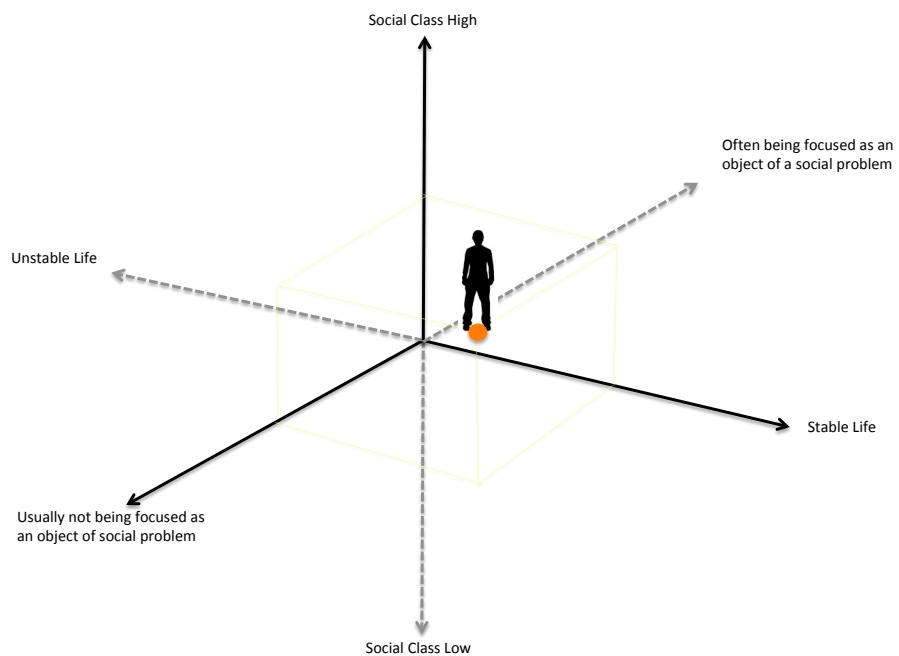


Figure 1.1: Image of the social location of people who are the focus of this research. (Author's illustration)

1.2 The formation: research questions

Some people leap into a new environment seeking a broader outlook, an exciting experience, and betterment of themselves. That opportunity arises when people choose a new society or a new workplace. Other people leap into a new environment in an attempt to escape from the hardships that exist in their societies, to renounce undesirable customs in their societies, and to

pose questions regarding peculiar social norms and roles in their societies. This opportunity can also be found in a new society or a new workplace.

When I read *Grundfragen der Soziologie* (Simmel, 1917/1979), I remember that I was happy to obtain a new perspective on the social explanation, which was that society consists of interaction among individuals. I did not previously know any synonyms to describe society,³ but then the word society became demonstrable. Simmel argues that interactions are formed of impulses for physical gain, religion, defense and attack, fun, aid, enlightenment, and innumerable other purposes. He also maintains that interactions cause mutual support, mutual cooperation, and mutual competition; in other words, society is where people exert influence on others and have influence exerted on them by others (cf. p. 67). In the case of a society called a workplace, interaction is formed of purposes called the company mission or objectives. On a daily basis, the interaction would be formed of casual purposes, such as strengthening companion consciousness and befriending others. Additionally, conflicts or tensions are occasionally caused because of diverse interpretations of company missions or task sharing or diverse ways of operating to achieve such aims among the diverse people who are interacting. Such conflicts and tensions are likely to be unavoidable insofar as people act and attempt to cultivate something in cooperation with strangers.

This research takes the view that society is interaction, and it narrows the focus down to a form of smaller society, the workplace. Furthermore, I focus on the viewpoints regarding and of minorities because my intention is ultimately to develop a way to offset their disadvantages.

I refer to several studies to account for my motive and to ground my questions, which are the following: Why do my minority encounters provoke unhappiness? How do we account for such responses normatively? Problems in the workplace are often discussed from the perspective of gender studies (Goodman-Draper, 2010; Kanter, 1993), sociological and social psychology, human resources management (Price, 2004), ethnography focusing on the study of institution (Jordan & Dalal, 2006; Neyland, 2008; Cefkin, 2009; D. E. Smith, 2005), and organizational studies (Vergunst, 2004; Manning, 2008). These fields of study increased my understanding and enriched my

research perspectives. News and magazine articles, podcast news and related website stories also provided me vivid pictures of the current state of affairs.

However, the main approaches and concepts incorporated in this paper are derived from the studies of Erving Goffman, a “sociologist well-known for his analyses of human interaction” (“Erving Goffman”, 2003). His successors have, of course, also been important in their attempts to apply Goffman’s body of work. Goffman’s “theories have been tested and his concepts have been more thoroughly developed later on by his interpreters” (Johansson, 2007). I chose Goffman’s work as my theoretical framework because I believe that he is one of the best theorists to have captured individual social phenomena. I was impressed by his unique method, which holds tenaciously to his concepts regardless of what other people say. His body of work explains why irrational events happen in everyday life by focusing on people’s mutual actions or dramaturgical perspectives. At a glance, these irrational events are often too trivial to be concerned with individually. In fact, “the most basic truth of his work is that it captures what ‘we all know’ in a literary and perspective fashion” (Manning, 2008, p. 679). However, an important aspect of Goffman’s study is that he brought “a sophisticated awareness of the problems society has in protecting itself, and hence the pressures individuals undergo (and make for each other) in order to keep up the society that makes them what they are” (Collins, 1986, pp. 182–183).

With the approach of Goffman in collaboration with the means and attitude of applied cultural analysis, a number of questions are addressed given the motives explained in section 1.1, including the following:

- (1) How do both minorities and the majority act and feel in a workplace?
- (2) How do differences influence their performance and outcome?
- (3) What suggestions can be made to normalize the status of minorities in workplaces?

I believe it would be interesting to study this topic with nothing more than a mindset focused on applied cultural analysis. As a social sciences studies-based business consultant notes, such an approach cracks the cultural

code and reveals hidden patterns and structures. It explores the gap between what people say they are doing and what they actually do; it renders the familiar strange and the strange familiar in the context of our daily lives (Ehn & Löfgren, 2009, p. 33). This insight will illuminate new perspectives for understanding people's mutual relationships in workplaces, where strangers meet, cooperate, and try to achieve a common mission.

Chapter 2

Method

2.1 Semi-structured interviews

The research method used in this study consists of one semi-structured individual interview and five semi-structured Skype interviews. The reason that other methods, such as participant observation, shadowing, and diaries, were not used (Czarniawska, 2007), or rather, the explanation for why I could not use them, will be explained later. The advantages and disadvantages of the method are discussed in section 2.2.

The total time required for the recorded interviews was approximately ten hours. These interviews were used as case studies in this research. The details of the interviews are as listed in table 2.1. Many other short interviews and informal email exchanges are also used.⁴

Table 2.1: Interviews

Interviewee ⁵	Date	Country	Sex	Post	Industry
Setsuko Hara	2009 Aug &	Japan	Female	Site & production management	Iron manufacturing
	2011 Mar				
Chishū Ryū	2011 Mar	Japan	Male	Estate development	Sōgō shōsha
Victor Sjöström	2011 June	Sweden	Male	Investment banker	Investment banking
Sven Nykvist	2011 June	Sweden	Male	Consultant	Consulting

The common questions prepared were: 1. What industry are you in? 2. What is your job assignment? 3. What types of people do you work with regularly? 4. What do your colleagues do? 5. What do your stakeholders do? 6. What do you enjoy and not enjoy about the job? 7. What is the

demography of the office and the industry? 8. What is the best aspect of your job? 9. How do you assess problems in the office or industry? I posed the same questions several times using different approaches.

As my master program, Master of Applied Cultural Analysis (MACA), taught me, my internship experience was supposed to be used as the source of empirical data. However, I had to entirely change the research topic after my internship; therefore, I have to admit that in the generation of these data, some orthodox MACA methods are lacking. I used interviews and my own motive derived from my experience as my primary data resource; these data are richer than the research and analysis based on my internship experience and the internship topic, which are not associated with any personal motivation and particular awareness of the issues at hand. I believe the face-to-face interviews and the Skype interviews were reasonable methods for gathering data for this project because my existence was indirect and passive toward the phenomena I investigated and my interviewees. My premise is that minority members in a workplace are put at a disadvantage. There was a strong likelihood that I would have highlighted the thoughtlessness and discriminatory actions of the majority of people in the office, who were my temporary colleagues, if I had implemented a participant observation method to generate results for this project. To accomplish my research mission through a participant observation method, I would have had to become either a care-free optimist or an officious hypocritical observer, neither of which I was able to do. Although there would be no malice, it would be important to maintain a faultfinding, critical attitude. Participant observation is not to blame, reproach or accuse subjects of the observation; nevertheless, it was possible that my project would be viewed as doing so. To conduct in-depth, participant observation and analysis of this research objective would have been to be thought of in this way, and it would have been difficult to reveal the results to the public.

One could also question whether it was appropriate to interview participants from two different countries with different social and cultural backgrounds. I argue that the origins of my interviewees and where they worked do not matter because my research questions were inspired by the perspec-

tives of minority people per se, and the perspectives could be applied in any workplace in the world. One element I emphasized was choosing interviewees from large global companies. The reasons are that large global companies often stipulate their corporate cultures and work publicly on issues regarding minority human resources, given the trend of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) regarding information disclosure; hence, information regarding these issues, and the gaps between what the companies stated and what my interviewees expressed, was much easier to discover.

2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the method

Berg (2001) argues that the semi-structured interview can probe far beyond answers to prepared and standardized questions. Participants' responses can reflect the fact that individuals understand the world in varying ways; thus, researchers can approach the world through the subject's perspective. Researchers can achieve this goal through unscheduled probes that arise during the interview process (pp. 69–70).

However, several problems may arise when conducting a semi-structured interview. In my case, problems occurred when I was constructing the unscheduled questions for the interviewees. Serious problems that were mentioned in Berg's book and that could be applied to the interviews in this research project were those of affectively worded questions and overly complex questions (cf. Berg, 2001, p. 78). Affectively worded questions might "close down or inhibit interview subjects" (p. 78), even though they might not be intended to be offensive. Berg mentions as an example that the question "Why?" can often make a hostile impression on interviewees because the word has a punitive connotation, and the interviewee therefore may not respond accurately or completely in a relaxed manner. It is easy to be content to respond to every answer by asking "Why?", but that strategy might signify that the interviewer did not construct the question in a way that the interviewee could answer easily. Complex questions were created as a result of being overwhelmed by my concerns. Berg says that when the interviewer asks a long, involved question, the interviewee may not actually hear the

question in its entirety. Moreover, the response may address only a small portion of the larger issue woven into the complex question (cf. p. 79).

I attempted to avoid these problems by taking human measures: attempting to keep questions clear and concise; bearing in mind the need to chime in and respond as appropriately as possible to the narratives interviewees provided such that they could speak naturally and honestly; paying attention to each word and asking questions repeatedly if something unfamiliar arose when interviewees spoke of something indefinite or when they seemed to speak in an exaggerated manner or untruthfully. I also attempted to make the questions both as detailed and as simple as possible. For instance, when asking an interviewee about his or her boss or team leader, I would not say, “Do you dislike the way your boss directs?” Rather, I would ask, “When do you feel it’s difficult to follow what your boss asks you to do?” Thus, the interviewee could focus not on expressing his or her feelings about the boss but rather could explain the actions that he or she thought of as problematic.

Furthermore, conducting semi-structured interviews via Skype had its own advantages and disadvantages. It was sometimes inconvenient, in that I could not sense the interviewees’ intentions (by the atmosphere they generated, their respiration, and the movement of their eyes) from the picture I received through a camera lens in the same way I was able to grasp these elements in the face-to-face interview. However, this approach was an advantage because I was able to conduct interviews when it was convenient for the interviewees. I could conduct the interviews when the participants were most relaxed during the day or the week, such as on Friday night after they came home from work and were having a beer or two, or on Saturday morning when they were completely free from their duties and could focus on the interview without thinking about the next appointments. I also felt good in thinking that my nervousness would not be perceived by the interviewees on the camera. I felt as if I could understand what they thought in this way. There was also a major advantage in terms of logging records. It was easy to record good voice quality because the interviews could be conducted in a quiet room. It was also easy to obtain additional (digital) information using the Skype chat function; for example, the interviewees could send me URLs

when they wanted to show me something on the Internet, and they could show me the correct spelling of unfamiliar terms by Skype IM. The chat log was easy to track through the “Command + F” action of my computer.

Except for the concerns on a personal level that cannot cover all of the fundamental problems associated with the validity and the credibility of the method, the measures I took to overcome the method’s shortcomings included gaining knowledge about the industries and the companies the interviewees worked for, broadening my knowledge of relevant precedent studies, and paying attention to the latest news from relevant fields.

2.3 Analysis

The analysis procedures involved three processes.

The first process required transcribing interviews and cleaning up the notes of the interviews (see figure 2.1). This was an essential step to completing the analysis. The purposes were 1) to prepare the working environment for later analytical processes and 2) to allow me to access or return to the raw materials during the analysis as necessary. The recorded interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word, and the notes of the interviews were attached to the printed transcriptions where the related passages were recorded such that I could correlate the voice with my thoughts.

The second process required reading the transcriptions, commenting further on them, and sorting out and abstracting keywords from them. These keywords will be discussed in the paper as findings. This process entailed collating what I identified as interesting keywords and theories rather than discovering new facts about society. This process must be one of the most controversial processes traditionally because it is the process of abstracting “figurative” aspects from “literal” things, and it is likely that certain textual aspects of the original text could be lost.

The third process was the application of the theories to the keywords abstracted during the former process. I also returned to the second process and repeated it several times.

After the findings and theories were collated, the process of writing was

performed. I attempted to make the text entertaining to read because “to tell a good story and focus on meaning over measurement” (Holloway & Biley, 2011, p. 3) is an important aspect of qualitative research. However, the story should be both credible and accountable (p. 3).

M: mm 難しいなあ。Ok,V... you think over a kind of "semi-structured product" provided by the banks in London with the team members in Sweden. Then customize it, then distribute it. Something like that?

V: Yeah,... I can show you this... (he sent me a link via skype message)
[http://\[REDACTED\]](http://[REDACTED])

V: (On skype message) ① Investment banks (in London) create and sell products to us, [REDACTED] sells it to our clients (through brokers). ~② the brokers sell again to the customers.

M: Is the brokers in bank? Are they bankers?

V: あああ、nooo この場合は...Banker じゃなくて、何、investment advisor みたいな感じ。

M: うん。Ahhh so they are third parties...?

V: そうそう。で、その brokers が commission をもらう。
M: うん。わかった。

V: So, both we the [REDACTED] and the investment banks, talk on the all the time. Like can we do something for Japan... We did a Japan product. (in London) phone

M: to... Japanese market?

V: No, no for swedish people, that who want to expose to (explore?) Japanese stocks.

M: aha OK

V: That was my idea. (Topr warped)

M: ほんと?
V: yeah (笑)。But it didn't go very well.

Figure 2.1: A transcription. It is necessary to dispose and to keep interviews fresh and vivid. It is also necessary to code and abstract keywords or key concepts. It is convenient to add comments on the transcription later on.

Chapter 3

Theoretical framework and the related studies

3.1 Dramaturgy

Dramaturgy, a sociological perspective, is applied as a theoretical framework when depicting and analyzing interactions between interviewees and their colleagues. This perspective views the world as a theater in which people play multiple roles to make sense of their identity and to construct a “self.”

When I first read about *dramaturgy* from the works of Ervin Goffman, I thought it was a unique – no, strange – theory for analyzing the real world. I even thought, “What nonsense! The world is much more complicated than dramatic story-telling can ever describe!” However, *dramaturgy* is not, of course, simply dramatic story telling. What I have read correctly analyzed the world in detail from the perspective of the people involved. Whereas other works of theorists I encountered through liberal arts courses in Japan and the MACA program have proved useful, *dramaturgy* appeared to be the best fit tool to study this research topic because I wanted to examine society from the perspectives of the people involved. Upon using *dramaturgy*, what I regard as important in particular was “peoples’ roles in a work place,” and that people have a role to perform, as I will explain in this chapter. The roles may be definitely decided or they may be implicitly assumed. When I took

this into consideration, I thought that the society could be analyzed from an interesting perspective. I also felt, for example, that Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) was somewhat inorganic for the research topic. I also thought I could not fully digest the works of Heidegger and Foucault and apply them adequately to this project. I would, instead, simply use their works as "keywords" to explain some phenomena in my objects and would not use them as comprehensive theoretical frameworks.

Roberts (2006, p. 65) states that *dramaturgy* contains three principal metaphors: *ritual* (order and morality), *game* (manipulation and advantages), and *drama*. People understand that there are natural orders of things and morality in the society to which they belong; they use these elements when they try to manipulate or gain advantage over others, and it can be observed that there is a drama occurring among people. The drama has "ki shō ten ketsu" (起承転結), which means the basic four-part structure of a story: introduction, development, turn and conclusion, like a drama in theater. Interpreting it, one might say that *dramaturgy* shines when we assume that people are highly heteronomous. Czarniawska (2007) states that we can use this theory by "framing snippets from the field in various narrative forms" (p. 212). The unique theoretical perspective in this research is sourced from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* by Goffman (1959) in which he argues that the purpose of the book is "to serve as a sort of handbook detailing one sociological perspective from which social life can be studied, especially the kind of social life that is organized within the physical confines of building or plant" (p. 1). It was a reasonable framework for this project because the object of study is the modern workplace, which is a physically narrow and closed sphere. Other studies were used, depending on the situation, to explain intangible cultural matters, such as stereotypes, manners, customs, decorum, and taste, which could not be derived from the theory itself. Those intangible cultural matters were, rather, preconditioned information that had to be filtered and interpreted by theories. What Goffman concretely attempted in this book was to more closely examine

...the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others, the way in which he

guides and controls the impression they form of him, and the kinds of things he may and may not do while sustaining his performance before them... (p. 1)

thinking that “any social establishment may be studied profitably from the point of view of impression management” (p. 231).



Figure 3.1: Dramaturgy sees the world as a theater. People play multiple roles to make sense of their identity and construct a self. (Photograph by GanMed64, 2010)

In explaining his method, Goffman (1959) uses four basic terms as listed below:

- (1) *Interaction* or *face-to-face interaction*: An *interaction* means the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another’s actions when in one another’s immediate physical presence. It can also be replaced with the term *encounter*.⁶
- (2) *Performance*: A *performance* is all of the activity of a given participant on a given occasion that serves to influence in any way any of the other

participants.

- (3) *Audience, observers* and *co-participants*: Taking a particular participant and his or her performance as a basic point of reference, those who contribute the other performances are defined as the *audience, observers*, and *co-participants*.
- (4) *Part or routine*: The pre-established pattern of action that is unfolded during a performance and that is presented or played through on other occasions is called a *part* or *routine*.

Below, I discuss several additional essential terms in Goffman's *dramaturgy* theory. Furthermore, I include information about characters and actions that do not follow the rule of *dramaturgy* that Goffman presents.

- (5) *Front*: This is a “part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. . . . [It is] the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwillingly employed by the individual during his performance” (p. 32). There are two types of front. The first is called a *setting* or *front region* (p. 110), which involves “furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it” (p. 32). The second type is called a *personal front*, which is “the other items of expressive equipment, the items that we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he goes” (p. 34). This includes *appearance* such as insignia of office, clothing, gender, racial characteristics, size, appearance, and *manner*, such as posture, facial expressions, and bodily gestures. Naturally, there is a *back region* as a shadow of the front region.

It is a matter of course that we expect a confirmatory consistency between *setting* and *personal front*. Such coherence implies we possess an ideal type “that provides us with a means of stimulating our attention to and interest in exceptions” (Goffman, 1959, p. 36).

- (6) *Performance team*: Goffman expands the perspective of analysis of mutual social actions from the perspective of an individual's performance to a team performance. *Performance team* (in short, *team*) means "any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine" (p. 85). It is important when using *dramaturgy* as a tool since we know that "the definition of the situation projected by a particular participant is an integral part of a projection that is fostered and sustained by intimate cooperation of more than one participant" (p. 83).

Performing with *team* members is indispensable in many situations, and they will find themselves important to each other. Goffman (1959) notes two basic components in this relationship. First, it appears that "while a team-performance is in progress, any member of the team has the power to give the show away or to disrupt it by inappropriate conduct" (p. 88). This means that teammates will be forced to rely on mutual good conduct and behavior. Second, "if members of a team must cooperate to maintain a given definition of the situation before their audience, they will hardly be in a position to maintain that particular impression before one another" (p. 97). Goffman calls this "familiarity" or, ironically, "intimacy without warmth" (p. 97).

- (7) *Discrepant roles/communication out of character*: One of the most important objectives while a team is performing, in the *dramaturgy*, is to sustain the definition of the situation. The definition must be expressively coherent but it is fragile and "destructive information" (p. 141) is possibly exposed all of a sudden, which discredits the performance. Goffman claims, then, a basic problem for many performances is information control. He introduces some *discrepant roles* and *communication out of character* that tweak the fragile performance, which is always treading on thin ice, so that they can maintain the performance.

As a premise, Goffman (1959) also mentions some types of secrets that can threaten a performance. They are *dark* secrets, *strategic* secrets, *inside* secrets, *entrusted* secrets, and *free* secrets. He states that "different types of secrets can threaten a performance in different ways" (p. 141). "Tweakers" may also be present who control the secrets, the *discrepant roles*. They are

defined as *informer*, a.k.a. traitor, turncoat and quitter; *shill*, a.k.a. claque and stick; *impostor* a.k.a. spotter; and *go-between* or *mediator*, a.k.a. a double-shill. These are interesting characters in society, but in this research, there was, unfortunately, no one who filled these roles.

In the case in which a performer placed himself or herself in a position where no performed character can be sustained, the performer will express a form of *communication out of character*. Goffman illustrates this with examples such as exclaiming, “My God!” or “God Lord!” He gives us four types that convey information that is incompatible with the impression officially maintained during interaction: *treatment of absent*, *staging talk*, *team collusion* and *temporary realignment*.

- (8) *Impression management*: Goffman says people have to have certain attributes to make a character stage successfully in real life. In everyday life, performers' or audiences' *unmeant gesture*, *inopportune intrusion*, *faux pas*, and those kind of things happen all the time. Or there might be someone *on purposely creating a scene* and all the participants in the interaction must posses the attributes and be able to express those attributes in practice for saving the play. These are 1) *Dramaturgical loyalty* (pp. 207–210), 2) *Dramaturgical discipline* (pp. 210–212) and 3) *Dramaturgical circumspection* (pp. 212–214). And we shouldn't forget that most of these “defensive techniques of impression management have a counterpart in the tactful tendency of the audience and outsiders to act in a protective way in order to help the performers save their own show” (p. 222) and they will provide etiquette like a tactful inattention, a willingness to hold in check one's own performance so as not to introduce too many contradictions and interruptions.

“Truth is stranger than fiction” is a popular saying from the British poet Lord Byron. Goffman literally illustrated this saying in the form of academic investigations. Because his works are academic and are supposed to be legitimate, we can directly apply them, unlike poetry, to a study of the sarcastic and unfair realities in society. However, his works are not absolutely perfect and have been widely criticized. I reflect on these thoughts in the next

chapter.

3.2 Stigma

Stigma is a term that especially appealed to me when I was thinking about the research questions. Goffman introduced several unique terms, such as *civil inattention* and *non-person*, but *stigma* was the term that I felt naturally fit the people who populated my episodes and this project. Therefore, I decided to go deeper. It would not be important to know the etymology of the term *stigma*, which may be easily found on the Internet, but it would be necessary to understand Goffman's notion of stigma to apply the concept to this project.

Goffman (1963/1986, p. 2) states that the term stigma is “widely used in something like the original literal sense, but is applied more to the disgrace itself than the bodily evidence of it.” With regard to disgrace, he provides us with the general assumptions and definitions. We encounter strangers in various social settings and deal with total strangers without problems by anticipating their “social identity,” such as appearance, category, and attributes. We initially depend on such anticipations and transform them into normative expectations, which are justifiably presented demands. We may realize that we possess certain assumptions regarding what people ought to be, which will be called the person’s *virtual social identity*. However, the category and the attribute that people prove to possess are called the person’s *actual social identity*. When people show that their actual social identity is of a less desirable type than their virtual social identity, they are reduced in our minds from ordinary people to people who are tainted or discounted. This is “disgrace,” which is an attribute of stigma (pp. 2–3).

Goffman (1963/1986) decomposes the term stigma and its synonyms into two perspectives. One is the *discredited*, and the other is the *discreditable*. The former category is that of a stigmatized person who is already known by others as stigmatized or who supposes that the stigma will be immediately evident. The latter assumes that the stigma will not immediately be perceived by others. In general, three types of stigma are given to us: 1)

abominations of body, such as physical deformities; 2) blemishes of individual character, such as weak, unnatural passions or treacherous and rigid beliefs; and 3) tribal stigma, such as race, nationality and region of origin. Naturally, people who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue are called normals. Goffman says the normals, which are often referred to as “we,” discriminate against stigmatized people effectively and unthinkingly, reducing their life chances (p. 4).

Goffman (1963/1986) presents diverse examples of the stigmatization of people, for example, poliomyelitis patients, call girls, illiterates, and sterile women. Further, he writes that one who has a habitual solecism, for example, someone affecting middle-class manners and dress who repeatedly uses a word incorrectly or repeatedly mispronounces it, also possesses a (sign of) stigma. Some readers might disapprove of these examples, whereas others might be startled by them. Goffman concludes that

...stigmatized persons have enough of their situation in life in common to warrant classifying all these persons together for purposes of analysis. An extraction has been made from traditional fields of social problems, race, and ethnic relations, social disorganization ... and deviancy an extraction of something all these fields have in common. These commonalities can be organized on the basis of very few assumptions regarding human nature.
(p. 147)

The concealed factors that lead people to be stigmatized evoke an Italian film, *Ladri di biciclette* (The Bicycle Thief) (Amato & De Sica, 1948). A father is discreditable by being poor and, hence, commits a theft. The story is as follows:

An unemployed father, Antonio, in the depressed post-WWII economy of Italy, finally gets a job hanging posters around the city of Rome. “No bicycle, no job,” he is told, but his bicycle is stolen his first day on the job. He and his son look for the bicycle everywhere in Rome and manage to find the thief, but without proof, Antonio must give up his cause. The thief fakes a seizure in front of the police, and in a rage, the thief’s neighbor

blames Antonio. Desperate, Antonio attempts to steal a bicycle outside an apartment. However, he is caught by a crowd. He is hit, hissed at and humiliated in front of his son. Seeing the son upset and crying, the bicycle owner lets Antonio go. Antonio and his son walk away completely dejected.

Antonio is placed in several circumstances in which he is stigmatized, but he likely will not be stigmatized when he has a job and becomes one of the normal individuals. This abstract concept of stigma has commonality in many fields, not only in film.

The cases of and works about stigmatization are found for example in Lundberg, Hansson, Wentz, and Björkman (2008) and Lundberg, Hansson, Wentz, and Björkman (2009). They investigated beliefs of stigma, related to social network, empowerment, rejection experiences and quality of life among people with mental illness. studied about stigma of lesbian and gay couples combining issues in adoption and their children's stigmatization, and studied about stigma communication.

Examples of stigmatization are found in Lundberg et al. (2008, 2009). These authors investigated beliefs regarding stigma related to social networks, empowerment, rejection, experiences, and quality of life among people with mental illnesses. Boyer (2007) studied stigma associated with lesbian and gay couples, combining issues related to adoption and children's stigmatization, whereas R. A. Smith (2009) studied stigma communication.

3.3 Comments on Goffman's theories and methodologies

Although Goffman's theories and methodologies make it possible to analyze certain aspects of society and interrelationships among members of an establishment and provide us with explanations, they can hardly be said to be the only perfect analytical tools. Certain factors may be appropriately and usefully analyzed by recourse to Goffman's theories and methodologies, but other factors might not be. I would like to study the validity and the reliability of Goffman's contributions and comment on their usefulness. What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Social psychology is another major scholarly field that explores people's relationships in the workplace. This field is categorized as a natural science in which research subjects are tested scientifically (Argyle, n.d.); the research method is based on how scientific research is generally conducted; for example, the research is performed in a strictly controlled laboratory where the participants are dealt with as variables. Interactions between the variables are quantitatively recorded and analyzed. Reexamination is possible by following the same procedures. This method satisfies the conditions of scientific procedures to a point. Goffman (1971) criticizes this methodology as follows:

The work begins with the sentence "We hypothesize that . . .", goes on from there to a full discussion of the biases and limits of the proposed design, reasons why they aren't nullifying, and culminates in an appreciable number of satisfyingly significant correlations tending to confirm some of the hypotheses: as though the uncovering of pattern in social life were that simple. A sort of sympathetic magic seems to be involved, the assumption being that if you go through the motions attributable to science then science will result. But it hasn't. (p. 21)

However, Goffman's criticism has also been criticized. His methodology and theories cannot deny their limitations, and the limitations appear to be close to those that are also apparent in ethnography and applied cultural analysis. Goffman (1971) admits in *Relations in Public* that the same criticism can be leveled at his own work, in that

...unsubstantiated assertions are made regarding the occurrence of certain social practices in certain times and among peoples of various kinds. This description by pronouncement is claimed to be a necessary evil. I assume that if a broad attempt is to be made to tie together bits and pieces of contemporary social life in exploratory analysis, then a great number of assertions must be made without solid quantitative evidence.

This excuse, nevertheless, cannot dismiss the need to amend his method, regardless of Goffman's assertion that it is a necessary evil.

Goffman's work in general is criticized by many scholars in a variety of fields. For example, one scholar comments that his works "used novels for illustrations almost as if they carried the same empirical authority as field notes" (Menand, 2009, p. 296); the "method, to generate new concepts from rather unsystematic observations have been questioned" (Johansson, 2007); he "gave the impression of always wanting to race on to the next issue or topic rather than consolidate what he had achieved" (Johansson, 2007). He also seems to be known for being difficult to understand. For example, in *The View from Goffman*, edited by Ditton, Gonos (1980) presents Goffman as a structuralist, and Collins (1980) describes him as a follower of Durkheim. A comprehensive understanding of research subjects would have to draw on other fields of study in addition to Goffman's work. However, Goffman's framework appears creative enough and otherwise sufficient to address the research questions in this study. His work investigates how social interaction is possible, how social encounters are possible, and how they can be sustained. These go to the heart of this paper. Collins (1980) interprets Goffman as follows:

Ultimately, then, we have a functional model, not a moral cultural one.... Goffman does not find social order to be founded on *internalisation* of moral obligations; the obligations, rather, come because of the way we encounter pressure from each other in specific situations to help each other construct a consistent definition of reality. In order to live up to this *external* morality, one is forced to have a non-moral, manipulative self as well. (p. 182)

He continues

Goffman is no iconoclast. He doesn't take the side of the beleaguered individual against falsities of society, but condemns this outlook sarcastically as an effort "to keep a part of the world safe from sociology" (1961c, p. 152). Goffman rather takes the standpoint of society as fundamental, for without it nothing else would exist. He brings a sophisticated awareness of the problems

society has in protecting itself, and hence the pressures individuals undergo (and make for each other) in order to keep up society that makes what they are. (pp. 182–183)

In the end, Goffman has been interpreted in a wide variety of ways. However, I believe the core of his work rests on the analysis of performance and the underlife of society. As Hepworth (1980) notes, Goffman's sociology “take[s] us to the heart of the fluid interchange between deviance and normality” (p. 83). His actor is an emotional being, whereas our society demands administration, trustworthy formality, and the stability that preserves normality. Although we need to study the administrative being equally, I chose to examine the emotional being because the former appears to already be well studied. I also chose to use Goffman because his work is more immediately applicable than the methods found in social psychology, which are unreasonably fundamental and static when put into practice, and the methods of organizational theory, which focus on generalizations and desensitize us to small signs. There has been concern that research into individual phenomena results in a limited scope, unpersuasive results and a focus on impermanent trends. There are overwhelmingly more problems in the world than the number of people who can study them. That is why there are several fields of study, and the existence of different ways of framing research has led to my own conflicts. However, I agree with those who conceptualize social problems as composed of “snippets” of trivial problems that become complex when numerous snippets interact. Therefore, I am persuaded that this research, which studies highly individual objects, can contribute to solving large problems and is thus meaningful.

Chapter 4

Findings and analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I return to empirical cases (see section 2.1), in the form of discussions with interviewees, for the research analysis. Finally, I selected three interviewees as the basis for analysis. Because they wanted their real names withheld, these interviewees are anonymously called Chishū, Setsuko, and Victor in this paper. I had to create two additional actors for the analysis. One is Xiang Yu, a colleague of Chishū, and the other is a female colleague of Victor's, who will not be named.

4.2 How is your performance in the show?

✓ Xiang Yu

Xiang Yu, from China, was Chishū's colleague. After graduating from a Japanese university with a financial engineering degree, he received a ticket to enter this Japanese company. He was one of three foreign freshmen – the other two were from the U.S. and India – and was among approximately one hundred freshmen in the company. Xiang Yu and Chishū were assigned to the real estate business division as budding developers and became a team.⁷ Their primary tasks for the next few years were, first, to conduct investigations regarding the purchase of small lots and land for several urban

renewal projects; these investigations varied from in-office research, such as collection of data or checking legal matters, to sweaty, on-the-spot surveys. The second task was research and preparation of their material for their boss so that he could use their work at in-house briefing sessions. The third task was to provide hospitality to stakeholders, such as employees of construction firms, government officials, and local landowners. Ultimately, without a name or title, their job was to do whatever was necessary, to lay a foundation on which their boss and the company could push forward their projects. These two were collectively responsible for their tasks and duties because of the company's custom that freshmen work together in pairs for the first few years.

Chishū spoke of Xiang Yu as an unimpeachable man – clean, upright, and polite. At any rate, Chishū respected Xiang because he says “he knew everything. He knew anything I didn’t know.” In contrast, Chishū’s self-esteem appeared to be low because he says:

I’m sure my merit was my vigor when I was employed. Actually it turned out to be positive [laugh]. But thinking of what I regard as a “real competence” as a businessman, I’m not good. Yet.... I can actually live with that, and it’s a problem. But without Xiang Yu, I would never be able to get that comment from our boss, “it’s adequate”.... He knew which numbers they needed, how the numbers should be analyzed and how they were to be decorated and displayed on documents and so on...

Xiang Yu seems to have protected Chishū from humiliation in the office. However, Xiang Yu left the company after three years, to his supervisor’s surprise, although Chishū suspected he would. Chishū guessed the reason he left was that entertaining customers through drinking, karaoke parties, and playing golf drove him into a corner. It was an important task because it would lead to future business with the customers and also influence their reputation in the office.



✓ Unmeant gestures

The “performer must act with expressive responsibility, since many minor inadvertent acts happen to be well designed to convey impressions inappropriate at the time” (Goffman, 1959, p. 203), and these events are called *unmeant gestures*.

Chishū reminded me of this concept when he mentioned the following:

Xiang Yu especially didn’t like karaoke I felt. He clearly studied a lot in advance. . . . He anticipated, put their favorite songs in the machine beforehand and sort, while I’m dancing like an idiot for them. . . But he didn’t really know in which timing he should have interjects chants and sort. . . . You know, should be in time. . . . I know the songs from my father but you wouldn’t know foreign songs from 50’s, 60’s or Whenever, right? Maybe American songs, but Japanese? . . . Managers in construction companies. . . become kids having middle-aged look when drunk. . . . I’m good at handling them. They can be naughty sometimes though.

In Japan, karaoke is a typical activity for a social gathering. After dining with business partners, people go to another bar and often end up in a karaoke place. As a blog article explains, there are rules to follow in the karaoke room.



Karaoke is fun, but it is still an extension of the social gathering of business partners; that is, it is a *front region* for many business people. The article introduces three rules to follow: 1) Secure the seat closest to the entrance if you are the youngest; 2) Do not sing songs others do not know; and 3) Listen carefully when someone is singing (Lifehacknote, n.d.). Why do the youngest have to sit closer to the entrance? This is because a phone, which is used when ordering drinks and food, is located and a karaoke machine is also located close to the entrance. The youngest orders drinks and food using the phone and controls the sound. Why can you not sing whatever songs you want? Because nobody wants to listen to unfamiliar songs. Why do you have to listen to other people's songs? Because doing so indicates your interest in and respect for the person who is singing. The article concludes, "In a karaoke room, your spirit of hospitality is openly witnessed, even though you might wonder, 'Isn't it too much?' Even if a karaoke bar is a place to have fun, it is better not to relax because the difference between the one

who thinks of others and the one who does not in a karaoke establishment is apparent” (Lifehacknote, n.d., author’s translation).

Xiang Yu obviously tried to please the stakeholders in karaoke sessions, but it appears he created strained moments because of his *unmeant gestures*. The karaoke room is, in *dramaturgical* terms, a *front region* for Chishū and Xiang Yu, the place where a show is held in this context. Moreover, there is a plot to follow. Xiang Yu knew that participating in karaoke sessions was an important task (a show that must go on and be a box office success) to obtain the customers’ business. He might have felt responsible for his poor performance there – or at least not felt comfortable about it all the time. An “individual held responsible for contributing an unmeant gesture may chiefly discredit his own performance by this, a teammate’s performance, or the performance being staged by his audience” (Goffman, 1959, p. 203). Xiang Yu had also been failing in his *impression management* (cf. p. 19 in this paper). His karaoke nights did not work, he was discredited, and he might have lost “face.” To lose one’s face is called “mei mian zi” (没面子) in Chinese, and it must be avoided in the Chinese culture, as I was informed by my former Chinese classmate after the interview. Chishū had to support Xiang Yu to keep his face, “gei mian zi” (给面子), as a member of the *performance team*, in the same way that Xiang Yu always did for him in many other situations. However, Chishū probably did not realize, or did not think that it was so important to Xiang Yu, because it was something he himself did not mind. Saving face is critical in the Chinese cultural context (Purdum, 2005, p. 25). Was it Xiang Yu’s fault that he failed the “when in Rome, do as the Romans do” activity in Japan, or was it the management’s fault to have lost a competent human resource? Both may be true, and the only clear thing is that the *dramaturgy* of karaoke nights was problematic because of cultural differences.

It may be speculative and hardly the only reason, but repeated experiences involving karaoke, drinking, and golf sessions in which he did not excel in performing could be one of the causes of Xiang Yu’s departure. Whether it is appropriate and relevant to mention here is arguable, but another colleague from India had also left the company a few months previously.

It is also interesting to explore the contrast between Chishū's own low esteem regarding his competence and the reputation he acquired from the karaoke sessions. If the purpose of the job of entertaining customers is to generate euphoria among the performers, Chishū was a good team performer. Sennett (1998) mentions a unique insight about teamwork in our time. "The modern work ethic focuses on teamwork. It celebrates sensitivity to others; it requires such 'soft skills' as being a good listener and being cooperative; and most of all, teamwork emphasizes team adaptability to circumstances." (p. 99) Chishū appeared to be totally adaptable to the circumstances, performing roles as an emcee, chorus, and occasionally a background dancer. It sounds ridiculous, but it is not. He had a virtually efficient character.

Simultaneously, we perceive company managers (or government officials) who do not always play the role that should be played during unofficial official business gatherings, such as karaoke. For them, it is completely a *back region*, in contrast to Chishū and Xiang Yu. Drunken, middle-aged managers weakened their minds to keep their role as manager in the back region, and their natural instincts prevailed. It is stated that "executives often project an air of competency and general grasp of the situation, blinding themselves and others to the fact that they hold their jobs partly because they look like executives, not because they can work like executives" (Goffman, 1959).

Professional managers in general are expected to follow principles such as practicing good discipline, having specific detailed job descriptions, promoting people based on merit, and enforcing personal responsibility and accountability (Price, 2004, p. 9). However, while the principle may be retained in the *front regions*, it can be paralyzed in the *back regions* represented by activities, such as karaoke, where people's feral instincts emerge and is still connected to continued business relationships in the *front region*. (To be sure, it was actually a *front region* from the beginning for Chishū and Xiang Yu.) The karaoke room as both a back region and a front region of the workplace is an anomaly. It is the place where people are required to play different roles from their "daily" *front regions* but still a place where power in the *front region* remains operative.

Incidentally, it must be added that Xiang Yu was still a competent busi-

nessperson in the company; many of the other tasks assigned the team were performed by Xiang Yu. No customers would decide which project they would take and no government officials would approve their projects only because of the impression of Xiang Yu they gained from the karaoke sessions. The task of providing hospitality to the customer is mere lubrication. Xiang Yu was still an able man who was clean, upright, and polite in the front regions. I wanted to know more about Xiang Yu and attempted to reach him and his former boss but was unsuccessful. Therefore, I speculated instead regarding the reasons he left the company, even though there is no way of being sure. I sent emails to my Chinese friends asking what was important to be a good employee in a Chinese company; the answer was that success entailed acquainting oneself with public opinion or stereotypes held in China. One friend described this clearly as follows (also see appendix C):

Recently I've heard three measures to assess whether the work you are doing suits you best. 1) Do you enjoy doing it? 2) Are you good at it? 3) Can you make a living doing it? For me, no matter what job you're doing, you feel you're born to do it.... Historically, realism is the dominant atmosphere in China. In reality, people go to companies that pay better rather than stay in one company to which they are obliged to show loyalty. In conclusion, it's more like the Western style, I should say. You work really hard for at least three years. That's the golden rule.
(Shibuta, email, August 15, 2011)

Another friend wrote

People at my age, I think they'll change their jobs some times in the future.... In China, if you want to do business, first you should sell yourself well to others, and then your business.
(Shibuta, email, August 16, 2011)

Xiang Yu would never know when to shout, for example, "Let me go!" during Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Mercury, 1975) in the karaoke room. He would have thought, "I'm not good at this karaoke task. Two out of three

measures say no to me. I won't sell myself well to them. And yes, I won't be able to keep my face in this business culture." In accordance with the culture of realism in China, he moved to an alternate stage where he could play his role better without feeling uncomfortable. As a competent man in many front regions of the business world where compliance and fairness are important, and where proper behavior draws others' respect, he might not have expected to face the existence of a back region, such as karaoke sessions for officials from the construction industry, when he applied for the job.

We are also given a similar term, *informal organization*, from the field of business administration. Price (2004) explains that "informal organization is a more elusive concept, describing the complex network of psychological and social relationships between its people" (p. 693). This back region or informal organization appears to be the cause of a gap between perceptions and the real state of affairs.

Finally, I would like to add a possible defense plan from *unmeant gestures*. Conducting what Goffman (1959) calls *dramaturgical discipline* appears to prevent such gestures. The performer should "offer a show of intellectual and emotional involvement in the activity he is presenting, must keep himself from actually being carried away by his own show lest this destroy his involvement in task of putting on a successful performance" (p. 210). If this is one type of competence required to be a businessperson today, it will be one that is not included on an application form, and one that some people are more likely to fail to meet because of a lack of "soft skills."

✓ Possibly overlooked

The following two examples are episodes of awkwardness that arose from a situation where one female and several males worked in the same workplace. It is not specifically associated with a gender issue but represents an inconvenience that occurs when people with different attributes act and when one of the actors is in the minority in Goodman-Draper's (2010) terms. Goodman-Draper writes that three variables influence people's behavior in an organization; here, Goodman-Draper attempts to show that some prob-

lems are not gender based but stem from other sources:

[T]hree structural variables – the opportunity structure, the power structure, and the sex ratio – shape the behavior of women in organization, just as they shape the behavior of men. If women are sometimes have lower aspirations, lesser involvement with work, and greater concern with peer group relations – so do men in positions of limited or blocked mobility. If women are sometimes less preferred as leaders, generate lower moral subordinates, and use directive-interfering leadership styles – so are men with relatively little organizational or system-wide power. If women in managerial or professional positions are sometimes isolated, stereotyped, overly visible, and cope by trying to limit their visibility – so are men who are “tokens” and therefore rare among a majority of another social type. (Goodman-Draper, 2010, p. 164)

This situation followed the basic pattern of one woman working among many men in a workplace. The opposite – a situation involving a Swedish person in a tourist bus with many Japanese people or a Japanese businessman with many Sumo wrestlers – would cause similar awkwardness. The point is how a person reacts when he or she is a token person, in other words, when he or she finds himself or herself different from the dominant groups in a situation.

Setsuko works in a heavy industry, in an iron mill in Nagoya. The city is a part of an enormous industrial area in Japan. She works as a production controller for car license plates and, naturally or not, there are no other female prospective managers in the workplace.

It seems the human resource division clearly had no idea about the difference between discrimination [“sabetsu”, 差別] and distinguishing [“kubetsu”, 区別].... I totally agree that gender equality is important but it was cruel of them to put me in the division of no female career staff. That's what I feel.... They said I was equally treated as the male career staff. But...I feel I'm left out in cold.... In a few years, I hope to be transferred to



the headquarter... but then I know the hierarchy between male career staff and female clericals in the headquarter... I hope I won't be in between again...

The glance from a group of her colleagues when passing by the smoking room, painful small talk during lunchtime, and factory workers' masculine behavior make her feel clumsy in performing any collaborative activities in the workplace. It was assumed that expressive equipment also makes her noticeable; the workplace was for men, and women did not enter a factory until two decades ago. The atmosphere of the mill on the whole is symbolized by the dark, stained smoking room installed long ago and the work clothes. It makes her heterogeneity in the workplace conspicuous.

Let us consider Victor's case. Victor works in an investment bank in Stockholm. The group to which he belongs is a structured product retail group in an investment banking division. He mentioned an episode of an awkward situation involving a colleague, a woman with whom he has worked since he entered the company. He thought she was not fun to work with. One of the reasons was that when chat started during break time, the conversation spontaneously became "boys' talk" because there are not many female staff



in the office; he said the investment bank division in particular has few female staff. Females who study finance or relevant fields go to work for consultant companies or similar corporations. Naturally, she becomes clumsy when male colleagues are around. At least, she does not enjoy interaction as much as they do, or they become awkward when she is around.

Kanter (1993) provides us with a simple generalization regarding such behavioral and perceptual phenomena associated with a token employee and the people around him or her:

If one sees some X's and 0:

X X x x X X 0 X x X

The 0 will stand out. Or it may be overlooked, but if it's seen at all, it will get more notice than any X. Further, the X's may seem more alike than different because of their contrast with the 0. (p. 210)

Kanter says the consequences are that 0 will be noticed because individuals of their type a) represent a smaller number in proportion to the overall group, and therefore each potentially captures a larger share of the awareness given to that group; b) have their differences exaggerated; there is a tendency to exaggerate the extent of the differences between tokens and dominants because, by definition, too few numbers defeat any attempts of generalization;

and c) are easily assimilated; the characteristics of a token tend to be distorted to fit the generalization or stereotype. In addition, “the same person may be perceived differently depending on whether he or she is a token in a skewed group or one in many in a balanced group” (Kanter, 1993, p. 211).

Several aspects of the mental phenomena “awkwardness” and “uncomfortableness” can be observed from the perspective of a focused gathering (a.k.a. *encounter* and *situated activity system*) in Goffman’s (1961) essay *Fun in Games*, in which he argues that the

... participant's two possible worlds – the one in which he is obliged to dwell and one his spontaneous involvement actually does or could bring alive to him – may not coincide, so that he finds himself spontaneously engrossed in matters declared irrelevant and unreal... a person who finds himself in this conflict will feel uneasy, bored, or unnatural in the situation.... Under such circumstances, we can say that a state of tension exists for him in the encounter; he feels uneasy. Note that two main situations are possible for the uneasy participant: he can find himself strongly drawn to matters officially excluded... or he can find himself strongly repelled by the official focus of attention, causing him to feel self-conscious, over involved, and acutely uncomfortable. (p. 42)

The women who stood out in the workplace may have been given stereotypical attributions “as a woman” by their colleagues, and dysphoria could have resulted because of such attributions. Imagining the world they live in, I see heavy burdens on their shoulders – or stigmas. However, those burdens may be overlooked, although someone playing a dominant role in the workplace might occasionally notice them. Someone from the dominant side could assume ignorance. Reverse discrimination, discrimination against the dominant group or discrimination against men at times, is drawing attention these days. I was asked by a Swedish student in a Japanese language course at Lund University, where I was a volunteer, why there were women-only train cars in Japan and if it did not constitute discrimination against

men. Many trains do have women-only cars in Japan, and the cars are in the best locations (close to the ticket gates and stairways). I thought the student's point was interesting and pertinent because I used to think that such segregation was a good idea and I had never questioned it. At that time, I simply answered that the segregation was necessary because certain Japanese men often touch, photograph, and stealthily engage in other inappropriate actions toward young women and girls on the train, although such behavior is unlikely to occur in Sweden. However, the women-only car can be an example of reverse discrimination because most men on a train do not engage in such behaviors, and it might not be fair to those 99% of the men. Thus, it is not a simple case, and reverse discrimination is no less important than discrimination against women and other minority groups. This paper does not make light of these types of discrimination. The cases in this paper focus on the idea that balance in the workplace is important.

✓ Normal Deviant

It is possible to analyze the three cases together using the concept of *stigma*. Among the varieties of stigma, I would like to focus on what is called *normal deviant*. The actors in this chapter were sometimes treated as deviants, such as the Chinese person within a group of Japanese people or the woman within a group of men in an organization. They were not common deviants from the ordinary, but they were observed as ordinary deviants from the commons, defined as their colleagues or "us." For example, one person avoided participating in particular conversations because she is a woman, and another did not follow a custom in a timely fashion because he was not familiar with it. These actions could lead such individuals to be assigned a deviation stigma label.

The most of the fortunate of normals is likely to have his half-hidden failing, and for every little failing there is a social occasion when it will loom large, creating a shameful gap between virtual and actual social identity. (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 127)

However, one learns

...that he is beyond the pale, or not beyond the pale after having been beyond, is not, then, a complicated thing, merely a new alignment within an old frame of reference, and a taking to himself in detail what he had known about before as residing in others. The painfulness, then, of sudden stigmatization can come not from individual's confusion about his identity, but from his knowing too well what he has become. (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 133)

Such people are liable to be put in the situations described above because of their gender and foreignness. They are normals but have identities that are stigmatized as normal deviants, which is a troublesome identity. Goffman mentions that the

...stigma involves not so much a set of concrete individuals who can be separated into two piles, the stigmatized and the normal, as a pervasive two-role social process in which every individual participates in both roles, at least in some connections and in some phases of life. The normal and the stigmatized are not persons but rather perspectives. (Goffman, 1963/1986, pp. 137–138)

People who are stigmatized as such do not need to worry because the stigma is a mere perspective; nevertheless, if a person is in a situation in which the stigma is easily exposed, we will want to improve the situation. As we can guess, the pressure and the stress of being stigmatized are not pleasant.

In both Sweden and Japan (as well as in China), people attempt to pursue their ideal careers by studying relevant subjects in academia. It is right, healthy, and definitely necessary to do so. Companies and organizations or other prospective employers are waiting for such motivated people. However, people must acquire skills other than those they have studied in academia before entering a company or an organization; this resembles a collateral qualification, a prerequisite of prerequisites, or a matter of course. These qualifications are often called teamwork skills, but they are more human properties than we think. They are influenced by habits, habitus, manner,

decorum, appearance, and heteronomous value. They are also influenced by scenic expressive equipment, location, time, aesthetic of the place, and everything we observe in front region, and they are influenced by encounters. Companies or organizations will test people using all of the above factors. Even then, certain employees will find themselves in more favorable conditions to perform expected roles than will others. Although companies and organizations must attempt to prepare fair conditions for everyone simultaneously, workers need to develop foresight and seek favorable conditions. Otherwise, they will perform unintended gestures and become discredited, overlooked, or stigmatized as deviants.

Companies today are seeking employees who are amenable to diversity and who have a global mindset and integrity. This attitude is necessary for the companies' further innovation and growth. The companies claim "We have the place for you" because the macro-level economy forces them to do so.

One reason why companies think this way is foreigners' competence and motivation. Many of the companies in developed nations will employ engineers from less developed countries (LDC) who have studied hard to escape their circumstances. We cannot ignore the words of the young Chinese graduate, although it might be outdated to call China a LDC, "You work really hard for at least three years. That's the golden rule" (p. 32 in this paper). This young man left his home and went to a boarding school when he was eleven years old because it was a better school than the one located in his hometown. People like him devote all their energy to the companies they work for, despite unexceptional wages, because the job offers an opportunity for workers to climb the ladders of social status and to stabilize their living arrangements.

Another reason might be the globalization of production locations with regard to marketplaces. Many of the companies in developed nations have expanded their markets globally to sell more of their products and services rather than being saddled with high-cost factories or mature and withered markets in their home countries. They need well-informed employees from targeted production locations and marketplaces. The situation is easy to

understand if a company is imagined selling consumer products. For example, Konica Minolta Holdings, Inc., a Japanese manufacturing and technology company that sells office equipment, print on demand (POD) services, etc., purchased a Swedish company that operated a similar business in the Swedish market, Koneo AB, in 2011. The purpose was to utilize Koneo AB's group sharing links, know-how, and sales network and to advance Konica's position in the Swedish market (Konica Minolta, 2011). To create and maintain a successful purchasing plan, many interactions between Japanese and Swedish businesspeople will take place. In the case of a more familiar company, the Swedish retail-clothing company, H&M AB, may be a good example. The company operates more than 2,000 boutiques in 41 countries (11 boutiques in Japan at present in 2011), and there are more than 800 production bases in 20 countries. H&M is a global company that employs diverse people.

Companies today are spontaneously becoming more global. While keeping up with that trend, roles at the micro level of interactions in companies also follow the traditions, habits, and preconceived notions determined by the long cultural histories of the dominant cultures of the companies or the countries where the companies are located. This phenomenon was described in this chapter. These are not transient attributes of the companies. Some of them might better be kept because they may be important elements of the company's identity, charm, and strength. It seems only natural that the changing pace of such attributes does not necessarily match the speed of globalization.

Thus, it is essential for employees to work together to think through and act to offset problems affecting employee performance if the problems originate from such intangible matters.

4.3 Discrepancy between vision of the times and the real state of affairs

✓ Watchword

Visions of what a workplace, an employee, and people's relationships in the workplace ought to be reflect the ideals of the times. There is no single ideal but rather varied and possibly heteronomous ideas. Today, in this society, such ideals appear to be divided. Both Swedish and Japanese interviewees were asked the same questions in the same manner in this research, and a question could arise regarding whether it was appropriate to treat people differently from different countries with different social backgrounds. However, focusing on the interviewees' work in global companies and considering the statements on their companies' websites, it appeared to be accurate to say that the countries share several opinions, stances, values, and visions regarding what a company should be today. The statements were similar, almost as if they were worldwide standard watchwords.

Illustrating the concrete examples, the statements can be summarized as follows (cf. appendix A and B):

- A workplace should have diverse human resources, and the diversity should include differences in race, age, disability, gender, belief, and religion. Diversity will bring about unexpected and unplanned positive effects and discoveries. (This was often called a synergy effect or innovation in business administration.)
- Human resources staff must have good communication skills; these are essential for teamwork. Conflict in the workplace or in a team is not a problem, but how such conflict is managed determines whether it will bring people together or tear them apart.
- Having a global mindset and integrity is important for employees because they indicate an ability to communicate with diverse people.
- Detectability is important. Finding one's own assignments, and having autonomy and vitality to accomplish the assignments, is essential.

There may be more of these types of personnel and workplaces now compared to a century ago. The quotation below is a description of factory work from a report by the *Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in Japan* in 1904 (Inumaru, 1998). I cite it to describe work experienced by the general public because a large majority of people at that time were either engaged in the primary sector of industry or workers in the secondary sector of industry; many employees in developed countries are now office workers in the secondary sector of industry or are engaged in the service portion of the tertiary sector of the economy.⁸ The description is as follows:

By means of two-shift work program in the spinning mill, working hours are stipulated for either eleven hours or eleven and half hours (excluding intermission). The day shift starts at 6am and ends at 6pm. The night shift starts at 6pm and ends at 6am the following day.... When work is particularly busy, the night-shift group should be kept six more hours and the day-shift group should start working six hours earlier. That is to say, they are labored successively for eighteen hours a day.... The cycle of the two-shift work program is for either a week or ten days. (Inumaru, 1998, author's translation)

Required competences for personnel were different from those of today and likely required neither a global mindset nor the spirit of teamwork. There would not be much communication while people worked, and a balance between work life and private life would not be counted as contributing to good work. It is assumed that companies at that time had no vision regarding which types of personnel they should employ and how the workplace should be structured. Companies simply needed laborers who could work hard without using higher level skills.

In contrast, most companies today clearly state their opinions, values, and visions regarding their preferences for employees and how their workplaces should be structured. I use as examples several typical enterprises that are annually listed in company rankings in Japan; these rankings indicate where university students in Japan want to work. Sony Ericsson Mobile Com-

munications Japan, Inc., for instance, states that people with *flexibility* are desirable. Their website says that they work with diverse people from various countries, cultures, and beliefs inside and outside the company; employees will encounter unexpected problems stemming from different environments and will have to confront problems flexibly. The keyword *flexibility* suggests a person who is good at dealing with small daily conflicts and misunderstandings in the workplace, who is good at handling a change of plans and compensating for a lack of preparation, and who has communication skills. Borbye (2008) states in her chapter about flexibility that employees should not be “disgruntled with changes with which they do not agree and they risk ending up on the ‘short-list.’ It is advisable to display compliance with change” because “it is easier to secure a new job while employed than when unemployed” (p. 109). Shiseido Co., Ltd., a cosmetics company, adopts a position of adjusting their internal environment to the external environment, believing that the external environment worldwide is standardizing gender equality in the workplace. In 2004, the company established a practical project, entitled “Gender Equal Project,” that sets such goals as “Promoting female employees to be appointed to the higher position to expand the organizational potential. Drafting and promoting a human resource education plan under the target figure that aims to make the percentage of female leaders 30% by 2013 (it was 19% in 2009)” (Shiseido Co., Ltd., n.d., author’s translation). As a part of the project, Shiseido created career forums for businesswomen to stimulate their motivation toward higher level careers. The company also introduced a telecommuting system for employees who wanted to provide childcare and nursing for older family members. Three other action plans are also ongoing (Shiseido Co., Ltd., n.d.). Regarding awards organized by third parties, the *Catalyst Award* is organized by Catalyst Inc. Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. received this award in 2008. This award recognizes initiatives and organizations that have “evolved from discrete programs to recruit, retain, and advance women to culture-changing efforts that recognize the business imperative for diversity and inclusion” (Catalyst Inc., n.d.). Evaluation by third parties is a handy index for understanding objectively the actual conditions within companies and companies’ efforts in

encouraging such diversity; this approach may also be a good source of publicity for the companies (cf. appendix C).

It was even easier to find such understandings of personnel and workplaces in Swedish companies because Sweden has a longer history of citizens participating in dialog and actions aimed at creating an equal and balanced society. Such activities are often said to be the result of the Social Democrats log-rolling with agrarians that began in 1933 (Lewin, 1998; Vergunst, 2004). It is also stated that people in Sweden are simply accustomed to working with diverse people and cultures because Sweden has needed to collaborate with other countries because of the size of its domestic markets, population, and industries. Sweden's attitude toward diversity may also have developed because Swedes have advertised and been branding the country in such terms. In *The Global Competitiveness Report 2010–2011*, for example, Sweden is ranked 4 of 139 countries in “Cooperation in labor-employer relations,” and there are many other measures that demonstrate Sweden’s higher capability and quality of working environment (The World Economic Forum, n.d.). The keyword teamwork can be traced from this measure. The Swedish Institute also openly states that with regard to Swedish business culture, “Swedish workers rely on a broad sense of teamwork and individual responsibility to get things done. In Swedish culture, it’s also very important to remain humble, show mutual respect and always be on time” (The Swedish Institute, n.d.). This is a simple and clear description of what characteristics people in the workplace should have, which may not be only a reflection of reality but also of their stance, beliefs, values, and vision. Focusing on keywords found on OMX Stockholm 30 (OMXS 30) companies’ websites, thirteen companies mention diversity, internationality, and multicultural character as their nature. Svenska Cellusosa AB SCA, for example, has since 2003 conducted an actual “Diversity Survey” of the top 1,000 managers. Three OMXS 30 companies call for “Diversity and Inclusion.” Volvo Group’s statement was typical for a Swedish company that recognizes itself as a “multi-cultural employer” that is “Swedish at heart.”⁹ Now, there is no need to explain what being Swedish at heart is.

The opinions, values, stances, beliefs, or visions mentioned above regard-

ing human resources and workplaces appear to be associated with two movements. One is that global boundaries are now gradually disappearing and curious, energetic people with a global mindset are finding more opportunities to cross boundaries and become a new type of civilian, a world citizen. At the same time, emotional bonds based on conventional values within countries are becoming drastically simplified and flattened, and formerly powerless people such as the disabled, females, and foreigners are finding more positions in businesses in new countries. However, it should not be forgotten that companies' visions must be put on display because reality may often be different.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research stems from questions regarding people's relationships in the workplaces, especially questions from the perspectives of minorities, regardless of whether they are based on cultural, visual, religious, or gender differences.

Interviews were conducted with businesspeople in Sweden and Japan, and signs of problems were analyzed using the framework presented in Goffman's *dramaturgy* and the concept of *stigma*. The purpose was to turn the spotlight on small conflicts in modern workplaces and to suggest ways to surmount these conflicts and thereby improve the working relationships among employees to cultivate a better-quality working life.

With *dramaturgy*, Goffman explained how people are inevitably influenced by habitual and transmitted norms and anticipated roles that are derived from a society or a culture and how people unconsciously behave accordingly (i.e., play their roles). As an example of failing to play a role successfully, I examined a case of a qualified businessman who had difficulties closing deals because of his lack of awareness of the cultural habits of his customers and stakeholders. He could not avoid performing *unmeant gestures* because of the cultural differences he experienced. He failed to conduct good *impression management* and eventually left the company.

The concept of *stigma* explains how a person is discredited if he or she does not satisfy the norms and roles of a particular society and culture. I

found that *stigmatized*, *discredited* or *normals* are not actual categorizations of people. They are terms to describe a temporal social relationship that occurs in a particular situation. This discovery implies that human affairs are mutable because anyone can be *normal* or *stigmatized* depending on the situation.¹⁰ We found that those who are *discredited* end the role themselves or decide to live with the label as long as it is bearable. Another possibility is that people around discredited people might observe silence concerning them. It is sad.

We observed that global companies raise flags proclaiming that diversity and inclusion are the keys for survival and encourage people who approve to join the company. “We are the place for you,” the company states or implies (refer to appendix A and appendix B). One reason for such behavior on the part of companies was that they are exposed to the strong current of globalization. Many actually embrace the trend in their public statements. Contemporary manifestations of globalization cover all of the processes of a business, beginning with the purchasing process and continuing all the way to the sales process. One company that was investigated in this study had its headquarters in Tokyo, purchased materials from Brazil and Australia, and sold products all over the world. These companies believe that diverse personnel are needed in their workplace to take advantage of globalization (of the market) and to spur further innovation and growth.

For employees, the ability to get along well with or to share an identity with diverse colleagues is indispensable for career development. Such abilities are not easy to cultivate because if an employee has not been sufficiently exposed to different people and cultures, confusion might result, leading to a loss of competence caused by the realization that previously digested, tacit knowledge and norms used in everyday work in one’s native culture are no longer appropriate and functional. Additionally, we observed that attempts to offset gender differences in the workplace are ongoing.

At one time, the metaphors for the problems encountered by minorities were those of “one step behindness,” “the glass ceiling,” or “the sticky ladder.” Or such problems were simply labeled discrimination. However, what is discussed in this research is different in nature. The degree of discrimination

may be more familiar to us and less serious than the word “discrimination” implies; I call it “casual discrimination.” Manifestations were actually trivial, and many people may think that those who experience such discrimination should reconcile themselves to it without complaint. However, my view is that such incidences and environments must influence the quality of work life negatively, and therefore, such environments should be improved at any cost. In fact, the condition described by such metaphors as “glass ceiling” is a consequence of these types of trivial events.

To conclude, the following is put forward as a suggestion for resolving such problems. It will be difficult for a company to persist in merely stating that diversity is good, useful, and essential. Previously, such slogans were adopted reluctantly as a way to catch up with globalization trends. However, acting on such beliefs is now something that companies must utilize to their advantage. One solution to improving the workplace is to think of diversity as a given condition and to move quickly to the process of fostering a better quality of diversification. Several companies have already begun this process, but improvement is slow. Employees’ thoughts and ideologies must also be considered at this point. Thoughts and ideologies are difficult to bring together in a consensus regarding how diversity is best encouraged. If a corporate culture is homogeneous, leaders may need to allow some time for that culture to change to one that is compatible with “diversity.” Even if the human resource department makes this issue a priority, other people in the company, such as employees in the marketing section, the legal section, or engineers, might think that the issue is a bother. They may believe that it is boring to discuss, alongside their own tasks, how to achieve the inclusion of all colleagues or how to achieve a diverse culture in the office. Certain workers might think that diversity sounds like a stupid idea and is embarrassing to address, and they might feel childish speaking of it. A famous Japanese writer and smart political theorist, Yukichi Fukuzawa (the person depicted on the ¥ 10,000 note), wrote an interesting item in his autobiography. He said that even if he felt angry, he never let it show on his face and rather pushed it away in accordance with his favorite precept: “[To be successful] do not show your joy or anger” (喜怒色に顯さず). I think many people cleverly

act exactly the same way. It actually sounds less tiring and peaceful than if everyone would openly be making scenes showing their anger, joy or sadness. However, the idea might be too cold hearted sometimes. It might slow the process that changes traditional social norms and roles, and the involvement of diverse people. As I wrote, a process of systematic changes has started. I would like to advocate here that everyone should also start the process at a personal level. This research paper depicted noises of minorities' uneasiness, as well as the cause and effect of them. My hope is that it contributes to improve someone's quality of working life no matter what form it takes.

Notes

1. The New Year's celebration is for family in Japan unlike Swedish New Year's events.
2. It sounds like we were feminist, but I think most of us did not recognize ourselves as feminist, but probably equalitarian.
3. The word society to me was something more inorganic with a universal definition.
4. They are addressed in the reference list.
5. The names of the interviewees are fictitious for privacy's sake.
6. See also his book *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction* (1961).
7. Incidentally, it often happens that one's choice of job field and educational background are not always related in Japan. The analysis and discussion of this way of being is well described in Nakane's books, especially in Chapter 2, the internal structure of the group in *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society: A Theory of Homogeneous Society* (literal translation of the book title), *Tateshakai no Ningen Kankei: Tanitsu shakai no Riron* (Japanese title) (1967).
8. To check the occupational composition of employment, see *LABORSTA Internet* (<http://laborsta.ilo.org/default.html>) operated by International Labour Organization (ILO).
9. Refer to appendix A for detailed citations about the company's vision of human resources, workplaces and corporate culture.
10. inspired by *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens.

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Appendix A

OMX Stockholm 30 companies' statement: Expectations for the employee and the possible human resource & Their corporate culture

- OMXS 30 is the market value-weighted index that consists of the thirty most-tradedstock classes. This means they are not always purely Swedish companies; it can be founded in Sweden but moved the H.Q. to another country; sometimes, it's listed because the company's activity is highly global. However it would be no problem to discuss them in this research paper since they are the most active companies on the Swedish domestic market.
- Only clear statements are cited. Unclear messages are not cited even if they indicate something relevant.
- Keywords that are relevant to this paper are emphasized in *italic*.

① Their human resources. ② Their corporate culture.

ABB Ltd. ① - ② “We believe that the wide array of perspectives that results from a *diversity and inclusion* focus promotes innovation and

business success.” “At ABB, *diversity* means difference – differences that make each of us unique. This includes tangible differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, physical disability and appearance as well as underlying differences such as beliefs, ways of thinking and acting. . . . *Inclusion* means understanding, valuing and respecting workplace diversity, so that no employee is excluded from the workplace nor the opportunity to develop skills and talents consistent with our values and business objectives.” (ABB Ltd., n.d.)

Alfa Laval AB ① “When you communicate, you are straightforward and tell it like it is. Your style is *open, informal* and *friendly* – reinforced by a strong sense of integrity.” “You believe in *diversity* and *equal career opportunities*.” “We have four core values that characterize our work . . . Action! . . . Courage! . . . Teamwork! . . . Profit!” “We expect swift action, the courage to try and change, flexibility, *a spirit of teamwork* and cost-consciousness from our employees. They have to be committed to understanding our customers’ businesses. And we want them to adapt to our *open, informal* and *friendly corporate culture*.” ② - (Alfa Laval AB, n.d.)

Assa Abloy AB ① - ② -

AstraZeneca plc ① - ② “*Diversity and inclusion*: Our global workforce provides a diversity of skills, capabilities and creativity and we value the benefits that such diversity can bring to our business. We aim to foster a culture of respect and fairness where individual success depends solely on ability, behaviour, work performance and demonstrated potential.” “*Engagement and dialogue*: We use a variety of global leadership communications channels to engage our people in our business strategy. In addition, local leaders and managers hold regular meetings with their teams. We also use the intranet, video conferencing and Yammer (a social media tool) to encourage *dialogue*.” (AstraZeneca plc, n.d.)

Atlas Copco AB ① “We are looking for employees who are: Customer focused . . . Ready to take responsibility . . . *Collaborators* . . . Self-starters . . . *Open-minded*” ② “Our culture: We believe in equal opportunities, We have a family culture, *A mix of people* with different cultures, backgrounds and ages makes our organization dynamic” etc. (Atlas Copco AB, n.d.)

Boliden AB ① “Operating mines and smelters requires people with drive, cutting edge knowledge, and a creative mindset. If you’re interested

in rock, stability and perfect blasting, we need you. If you can drive heavy vehicles, service hi-tech equipment, work to prevent environmental damage, or sell raw materials, we need you, too.” “Boliden’s human resources policy is characterised by such principal values as confidence and trust, *frankness* and *dialogue*, personal engagement and personal responsibility. Simplicity and transparency, determination and firmness are in our focus when we build up and develop our organisation and methods of cooperation.” ② - (Boliden AB, n.d.)

AB Electrolux ① “Although the important skills and qualifications differ according to each position, there are some traits which are essential for a successful career at Electrolux. . . . Innovative mindset . . . *Diverse people and skills* . . . Outstanding talent . . . Ability to drive change . . . The drive to go beyond in delivering” “Respect and *diversity*, ethics and integrity, safety and sustainability are important elements of our corporate culture. They are the foundation.” ② - (AB Electrolux, n.d.)

Telefonaktiebolaget L. M. Ericsson ① “*Diversity*: we want new ideas and diverse points of view. We want people who can challenge the way we think. We are a global company, working across borders, finding competency at its best wherever it can be found around the world. A *diverse team* – where everyone contributes with their unique abilities, skills and experiences – can work wonders. Innovation is one of our key strengths and we believe diversity stimulates innovation.” ② - (Telefonaktiebolaget L. M. Ericsson, n.d.)

Götinge AB ① “The ten qualities and skills are: Action orientation, Leading, Managing people, *Building relationships*, Analysing, Thinking strategically, Planning, Managing change, Entrepreneurial drive, Results orientation” ② - (Götinge AB, n.d.)

H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB ① - ② -

Investor AB ① - ② “*Diversity* is a key priority for us, because it creates a dynamic and more creative workplace . . . we have built a team of employees with different nationalities, age, gender, expertise and backgrounds. For example, we continued our efforts to increase the representation of women in senior management positions within business in general, but also in our own organization and holdings.” (Investor AB, 2011)

Lundin Petroleum AB ① - ② -

Modern Times Group MTG AB ① - ② -

Nokia Corporation ① - ② “Nokia’s *diversity goal* is to enable men and women of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, skills and abilities, lifestyles, generations and perspectives to contribute their best to our success. We can better understand our customers and better identify their needs when we have a diverse workforce that truly understands our worldwide customer base.” (Nokia Corporation, n.d.)

Nordea Bank AB ① - ② “Being informal and straightforward is the cornerstone of our corporate culture. We consider *openness* and *dialogue* as essentials in our aim to nurture new ideas and improvements.” “As an employee at Nordea *you will be a part of a team*. We recognise your individual achievements, but no one can achieve our goals by themselves.” “We aim to organise your work in a way that secures *mutual flexibility*.” etc. (Nordea Bank AB, n.d.)

Sandvik AB ① - ② “Our Core Values: *Open Mind* … Fair Play … *Team Spirit*” (Sandvik AB, n.d.)

Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget SCA ① - ② “*Diversity*: SCA makes active efforts to increase diversity within the company.” (Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget SCA, n.d.)

Scania AB ① - ② “We are convinced that *diversity* is a success factor. An organisation characterised by its diversity provides all of Scania with access to differing perspectives, knowledge and experiences. By making use of the varied experiences and characteristics of our employees, we create the conditions needed for creativity and productivity.” (Scania AB, n.d.)

Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB ① - ② “Commitment to employees: Building a performance culture … A performance culture is characterised by our employees taking responsibility for both business progress and own individual development. . . . *Diverse and committed workforce* … Regardless of sex, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sexual inclination or faith, every SEB employee has the same opportunities to develop and make a career within the Bank.” etc. (Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB, n.d.)

Securitas AB ① - ② -

Skanska AB ① - ② “*Diversity & inclusiveness*: We believe that diversity and inclusiveness will help differentiate Skanska in the marketplace,

sharpen our competitive edge and reach even better results.” (Skanska AB, n.d.)

AB SKF ① - ② -

SSAB Svenskt Stål AB ① “We expect: Knowledge sharing and *team-work*, Performance and delivery, Contribution to continuous improvements, Loyalty and commitment” ② - (SSAB Svenskt Stål AB, n.d.)

Svenska Handelsbanken AB ① - ② -

Swebank AB ① - ② -

Swedish Match AB ① - ② “Swedish Match’s ambitions include offering all employees opportunities to achieve a balance between work and leisure time. We believe that a highly functional personal life and high standards of job performance go hand-in-hand, and we strive to provide opportunities for our employees to combine stimulating assignments with leisure time and family. We encourage and try to find flexible work arrangements whenever possible.” (Swedish Match AB, n.d.)

Tele2 AB ① - ②-

TeliaSonera AB ① - ② -

AB Volvo ① - ② “The Volvo Group values *diversity* as a key factor that underpins our current and future business success.” “We believe that diversity is a catalyst for innovation and a source of international competitiveness and profitability. By incorporating in Volvo high performance teams, the talents and ideas of a workforce of diverse gender, ages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, races, knowledge, nationalities, experiences etc.” “Our culture is how we work together with energy, passion and respect for the individual. It is about *involvement, open dialogue* and feedback. It is about *teamwork, diversity*, and leadership. It is how we build trust, focus on customers and drive change.” etc. (AB Volvo, n.d.)

Appendix B

Topix Core30 companies' statement: Expectations for the employee and the possible human resource & Their corporate culture

- TOPIX Core30 is a market index that consists of the thirty highest capital and liquidity stocks listed on the First Section of Japan's Tokyo Stock Exchange. (Tokyo Stock Exchange, 2011)
- Only clearly and precisely written statements that meet this research's concern are cited in this appendix. Unclear messages are not cited even if they indicate something relevant to the objectives.
- Keywords that are relevant to this paper are emphasized in *italic*.

① Their human resources. ② Their corporate culture.

Japan Tobacco Inc. ① - ② “JTI is a *global business* with markets in 120 countries worldwide.” “JTI has offices and factories *around the world*, and we’re close to the communities where we operate. Whatever your role and wherever you work, you’ll have *access to the international practices and diverse experiences of people from a truly global business*. . . . At locations across the world, we took on 1332 new recruits in 2010.” “Bringing together 25,000 people, representing 90 nationalities, in 63

countries, JTI is an international business in which *no one nationality takes precedence*. Our *diversity is one of our core strengths*, and you could follow in the footsteps of many employees who have taken advantage of *the chance to meet people of different cultures and nationalities and develop a career with an international dimension.*” “*Our diversity is reflected in our breadth of thinking*. We value enterprising minds. New ideas can come from anyone – anywhere – and everyone is encouraged to innovate and try new things. We run a Global Employee Engagement Survey to elicit the opinions of all our people on a regular basis.” “Diversity of experience, opinions and nationalities are characteristics of JTI that have been there since we were formed our people on a regular basis.” etc. (Japan Tobacco Inc., n.d.)

Seven & i Holdings Co., Ltd. ① - ② -

Shin-Etsu Chemical Co., Ltd. ① “We expect to have technical specialties for our engineers... specialities of course, and also *communication skills for our management staff*” ② - (Shin-Etsu Chemical Co., Ltd., n.d., author’s translation)

Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited ① - ② “We aspire to develop a high-performance, results-oriented culture within our organization with motivated employees who take pride in and find a sense of accomplishment from their work.” “Takeda is accelerating programs to develop human resources with *global perspectives* to realize its mission to ‘strive towards better health for patients worldwide through leading innovation in medicine.’ We are building a *sustainable organization* by providing work environments in which employees can thrive and grow while cultivating a corporate culture in which our people can resolutely tackle the challenges of discovering novel drugs.” “It is vital for us to create an open and active corporate culture to complete our transformation into a new Takeda by pursuing innovation as a strategic objective under the 2011–2013 Mid-Range Plan. *Urging diversity is thus a top management priority*. Takeda also considers good corporate citizenship to be of vital importance to a sustainable organization. While reinforcing governance and rigorous Group-wide compliance, we are committed to putting corporate social responsibility into action to meet the demands of a global society, passing on the legacies of our 230-year history as a company committed to improving people’s lives.” “*Promoting Diversity – An organization which leverages the diversity of its workforce is able to innovate new concepts and ideas by evaluating issues from wide-ranging perspectives*. Takeda recognizes that *diversity*

is extremely valuable in the rapidly changing global business climate. Our Board of Directors and the Management and Operations Committee therefore have both Japanese and non-Japanese members to reflect more diverse views in senior management decisions. Diversity has been one of the Takeda Values since fiscal 2010. By mutually understanding and respecting people of diverse age, gender, nationality, race, ability, and other backgrounds, we will foster a corporate culture that generates creative ideas, and reflect the values in our management.” (Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited, n.d.)

Astellas Pharma Inc. ① - ② -

Nippon Steel Corporation ① - ② -

Komatsu Limited ① “Employment Policy: 1. We don’t discriminate against candidates because of their age, gender or school backgrounds, 2. We don’t discriminate against candidates because of their country or area of origin, 3. We don’t discriminate against candidates because of their religion or creeds, 4. We don’t discriminate against candidates because of their physical handicaps, 5. We highly value candidates for their experiences in other companies or industries” ② - (Komatsu Limited, n.d., author’s translation)

Toshiba Corporation ① “Who We are Looking for: 1. Possess *effective communication skill with cross-cultural understanding*, 2. Set higher target and challenge difficulties with ardent passion and sense of commitment, 3. Action-oriented and proactive in accomplishing tasks, 4. *Flexible to accept different ideas and think from counterpart’s viewpoint*, 5. Set the highest priority to compliance and act with an integrity.” ② - (Toshiba Corporation, n.d.)

FANUC Corporation ① - ② -

Panasonic Corporation ① “‘Make people before products’: This core value shows Panasonic’s attitude towards its employees as its success is defined by their commitment. *We believe that energetic, creative and proactive talent who have a global mindset will support Panasonic in the future.... Panasonic is looking for flexible people that have the willingness to acquire new knowledge and skills and are able to cooperate across our different corporate divisions, countries and cultures.* If you are proactive, dynamic and creative and if you got the power and willingness to achieve excellent performance each day from anew, you are the right person for Panasonic. This company helps you to achieve your

career goals by offering you attractive and individual opportunities to develop your talent.” ② - (Panasonic Corporation, n.d.)

Sony Corporation ① - ② “Sony values the expertise and fresh perspective new employees bring into our organization. We recruit professionals from across a wide range of job functions, business areas, and regions. *Sony is based on the principle of global localization (think globally and act locally)*, which enables us to be competitive in the efficient running of its business and the recruit of its staff.” (Sony Corporation, n.d.)

Nissan Motor Company Ltd ① - ② “*Diversity creates new values: People constitute a mix of diverse backgrounds, from gender, nationality, cultural, geographic, age, education, lifestyle and preferences...*” “At Nissan, we believe that diversity is a source of strength. When our employees contribute with diverse ideas and perspectives, the results are better ideas that are more creative and add value. Nissan is committed to diversity to ensure that we meet with the diverse needs of our customers and achieve sustainable growth for all stakeholders. *Each and every employee will respect diversity and take full advantage of it.*” (Nissan Motor Company Ltd, n.d.)

Toyota Motor Corporation ① - ② -

Honda Motor Company, Ltd. ① - ② -

Canon Inc. ① - ② -

Nintendo Co., Ltd. ① - ② -

Mitsui & Co. ① - ② “Mitsui & Co’s Mission: Strive to contribute to the creation of a future where the aspirations of the people can be fulfilled. *Mitsui & Co’s Vision: Aim to become a global business enabler that can meet the needs of our customers throughout the world.* Mitsui & Co’s Values: 1) Build trust with fairness and humility. 2) Aspire to set high standards and contribute to society. 3) Embrace the challenge of continuous innovation. 4) *Foster a culture of open-mindedness.* 5) Strive to develop others and oneself to achieve full potential.” (Mitsui & Co., n.d.)

Mitsubishi Corporation ① “Mitsubishi Corporation has an instructor system for our new employees, and many other both OJT and OFF-JT programs, since we regard our employees as the most important asset of the company. We foster our human resources hoping them to acquire

the three core values; 1. 信 [shin]; 2. 知 [chi]; and 3. 力 [ryoku]. Shin [trust] stands for a personality that is trusted by people both inside and outside the company. Chi [intellect] stands for knowledge and wisdom to be able to overcome any problems. Ryoku [ability] stands for a tenacity to work on any assignments.... We take all possible measures to ensure the support for our human resources, but we expect you cultivate your initiative and independence before you join us too. We don't mind which means you use to elevate your own ability, but we expect you to elevate your ability, from which you establish your own identity – ‘Who am I?’ Mitsubishi Corporation runs businesses everywhere in the world. *Human Resources needed in our company are those who are global. Global human resources does't just mean those who want to go to foreign countries nor who are extrovert, but those who are proud of oneself and who can be considerate of others and other countries.*” ② - (Mitsubishi Corporation, n.d., author's translation)

Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc. ① - ② -

Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group ① - ② -

Mizuho Financial Group, Inc. ① - ② -

Nomura Holdings, Inc. ① - ② “Join Nomura and you can enjoy *a culture that is proud to be different*. Our business is dominated by courtesy, mutual respect and teamwork. Our people are smart and well-rounded, determined and approachable. When great opportunities present themselves *we're fluid and flexible*, able to act fast and then enjoy the benefits. Put simply, this is an entrepreneurial meritocracy, with all the opportunity that comes with it. Above all, our working culture is characterized by excitement, optimism and ambition – after all, we are perfectly positioned to become one of the leading global investment banks.” “At Nomura, *we're creating a new way of doing business: one in which diversity and inclusion is embedded into our core. Our aim for Diversity and Inclusion at Nomura is simple: we want it to be just how we do business – not an add-on, not a 'nice to have', but embedded into all our practices, policies and business activities.* We want our people to be valued for the work they do and respected for their contribution to our firm. By fostering an inclusive culture we are working to create an organisation where exceptional people can build their careers.” “Chaired by our EMEA CEO, John Phizackerley, our Diversity Steering Group is responsible for driving the diversity and inclusion agenda throughout the EMEA region in partnership with the Diversity

and Inclusion team. Diversity and Inclusion is seen as a key business priority which positively impacts the bottom line by ensuring we can attract, develop and retain the most talented people with the broadest and most valuable experience.” (Nomura Holdings, Inc., n.d.)

Tokio Marine Holdings, Inc. ① - ② “We value *diversity and inclusion* as we strive for global excellence, and we work hard to create a business environment where our people can achieve their full potential.” (Tokio Marine Holdings, Inc., n.d.)

Mitsubishi Estate Co., Ltd. ① - ② -

East Japan Railway Company ① - ② -

Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation ① - ② - They started a “Diversity promoting team” in 2007. (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation, n.d.)

KDDI Corporation ① - ② “KDDI is determined that *promotion of diversity is indispensable as our business strategy for the sustainable development*. We aim to develop an organization and establish an environment that doesn’t demand a certain ‘mold’ about ostensible figures, internal characters nor organizations that one belongs in character of our human resources. We aim to grow an organization and environment in which each individual can utilize his/her individuality and demonstrate the abilities.” (KDDI Corporation, n.d., author’s translation)

NTT Docomo, Inc. ① - ② -

The Kansai Electric Power Company, Incorporated ① “Human resource we look for – Action: A person who can walk, run and jump *of his own accord* to meet our customers’ need.... Creativity: A person who can create something that has never existed *by his own flexible inventiveness and insight*, or prominent logical thinking. Challenge: A person who can aim high, and has an aspiration that allow him to accept daring challenges.... Communication: A person who can convey his thoughts with his affluent power of expression, and convince people. And a person who can retrieve what people say or people’s needs aptly.” ② - (The Kansai Electric Power Company, Incorporated, n.d., author’s translation)

SoftBank Corp. ① “Human Resource we look for – Person who is enthusiastic about the information revolution.... Person who is adaptable

to the rapid change of time. . . . Person who can keep challenging to be No.1. . . ” ② - (SoftBank Corp., n.d.)

Appendix C

Dynamic Properties of Interaction

Table C.1:

Dynamic Properties of Interaction presented by Turner (2002, p. 39)

Emotional Properties	The level and type of emotion experienced by self and displayed toward others, and the reactions of others and self to emotions
Transactional Properties	The needs of individuals with respect to (a) confirming self, (b) receiving positive exchange payoffs, (c) trusting others, (d) sustaining a sense of group inclusion, and (e) sensing facticity
Symbolic Properties	The texts, technologies, values, beliefs/ideologies, and norms guiding (a) the categorization of persons and situations, (b) the frames delimiting what materials are to be included and excluded, (c) the modes of communication to be employed, (d) the types of emotions to be displayed
Role Properties	The mutual emission and interpretation of configurations and syndromes of gestures signaling the likely courses of behavior of individuals toward (a) each other, (b) others, and (c) broader cultural and social contexts
Status Properties	The placement of individuals in positions, revealing different characteristics, power, and prestige, as well as varying patterns of network relations
Demographic/Ecological Properties	The number of individuals copresent, the distinctions among them, the distribution of individuals in space, the use of stages and props, and the movement of individuals