

Managing Boundaries between (Dirty) Work and Church Life for Indonesian Migrant Workers in Japan

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Abstract

This paper elucidates the boundary management between (dirty) work and religious life for Indonesian migrant workers in Japan. It answers the critical question of how migrants doing physical, dirty work in fish-processing factories navigate the boundaries between work and religious life. The data in this study was derived from fieldwork in rural Japan, through participant observation, sensory embodiment in the daily activities of migrants and interviews. The study suggests that clothing and appearance act as an on-off switch between the “fishy” job and a life with dignity at church. The boundaries between work and church for Indonesian migrant workers in Japan are located and managed via the practices of expelling the foul smells from the body and the working uniform, and by emphasizing the visibility of fashion and branding at the church.

Keywords: dirty work, church, clothing, body, Indonesian, Japan

Introduction

Managing the boundary between work and non-work entails deciding whether to blur or sharpen the boundary of multiple life roles (Rothbard & Ollier-Malaterre, 2016). In other words, as Ashforth et al. (2000) and Nippert-Eng (1996) argued, it may exist anywhere on the continuum between either complete integration (boundary removal) or complete segmentation (boundary placement) as the two extreme ends. In her conceptualization of boundary placement and boundary removal, Nippert-Eng (1996) did not explain in detail why and how some of these boundaries were placed as they were, or how these boundaries were removed or made more permeable (e.g. through strategies of integration) (Mahmood & Martin-Matthews, 2015). Cruz and Meisenbach (2018) briefly mentioned that, if both roles were perceived as mutually exclusive, individuals would be likely to engage in segmentation behaviors, including having different sets of clothes for work and for personal time. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of empirical evidence to demonstrate in depth how these “segmentation behaviors” are practiced, to elaborate how identity is constructed based on the behaviors entailed in the boundary management. Furthermore, although Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) mentioned possible work third-place domain transitions, little of the work-life boundary research has included other domains beyond family, such as religious roles. In addition, the number of studies on boundary management of professional office work exceed those of the dirty work.

The negotiation of self-representation and identity in dirty work has attracted researchers’ attention ever since Hughes (1958) used the term for the first time. Some of the previous studies have illustrated the diversity of dirty work, including restaurant workers (Shigihara, 2014), social workers (Asher, 2014), butchers (Meara, 1974), border patrols (Rivera & Tracy, 2014), domestic workers (Bosmans et al. 2015), spiritual healers (Drake, 2013), exotic dancers (Grandy, 2008; Grandy & Mavin, 2011), and sex workers (Blithe & Wolfe, 2017). Dirtywork refers to jobs, roles, or tasks that are seen as being disgusting or degrading (Hughes, 1951; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999); such tasks are often undertaken by those at lower levels of the social hierarchy or at the margins of the labor market (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Working in a fish or seafood-processing factory, for example, is associated with smell and dirt, and requires physical bodily contact with dead creatures. Thus, according to the classification of dirty work by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), such work falls into the category of *physical taint*, as opposed to that of *social taint*, such as being a prison guard or a social worker, or of *moral taint*, such as those tasks related to prostitution. However, Simpson et al. (2012) argued that this conceptualization fails to acknowledge the significance of the body and embodied dispositions; for example, those related to race and nationhood.

The body and embodied dispositions for migrants, for example, experience a double stigma when working in a dirty job. This is because the imagery of dirt and filth are common representations of the “Other”; thus, for migrant groups marked as other by race and nationhood, dirt and disorder are also part of their embodiment (Brah, 1999). Workers doing the dirty work tend to limit their strategies for managing work-life boundaries to cope with the taint of their occupations (Blithe & Wolfe, 2017) by distancing their work from their personal lives, identities and experiences (e.g. Ashforth et. al., 2007; Goffman, 1963; Thompson et. al., 2003). Nevertheless, more accounts of work-life management explain white-collar jobs in the intersection with family or non-work life. In the case of migrants, with embodied stigma and limited resources to represent themselves as social beings, managing the boundary between dirty work and religious life has even more complexities.

Dress and Body

The essence of visibility lies in identification – not just identification in the concrete sense but identification as a way of recognizing the other's existence and accepting his identity" (Lomsky-Feder & Rapoport, 2010, p. 12, as cited in Dekel, 2016). The perpetual negotiation between identity and representation appears in one of the research participants' photograph in Dekel's book which best captures the process of identity formation in choosing clothing and her "hybridity" on parallel life as migrants.

The photograph features a young woman whose figure is split in two (composed of two photos): one part is elegantly dressed, and the other wears the simple work clothes of a housemaid. [...] The artist describes this image as reflecting a dialectic move between the old and the new, which together form a hybrid identity that captures the immigrant's sense of being simultaneously European (foreign) and Israeli (local) and protests the regimenting stereotypical gaze. It also suggests that she can choose whether to deviate from or adopt the ruling norms. (Dekel, 2016)

The photograph shows the stereotypical downward gaze on a migrant. The migrant woman, as of European origin, is used to dress elegantly; however, as a migrant, she is often stigmatized as low class. The old and new identities are also negotiated through how migrants dress.

The photograph also reminds me of a different representation of negotiating the appearance in two realms, as happened to Sri Lankan garment workers between their private and work life. In her book "Juki Girls", Caitrin Lynch looks at how women are negotiating and trying to make sense of how people are perceiving them and what they are trying to convey. As narrated by her, spending all the time in the factory covered her and others with cotton dust. Her hair and clothes had little bits of fabric and thread in them. "And at the end of the day, I would be standing, waiting to leave with people, and all the other people besides me were brushing their hair. [...] they were all brushing their hair and getting stuff out." There is an awareness of self in these Sri Lankan migrant workers that they do not want people to stigmatize them by their appearance as garment workers. Here, self-representation not only occurs through clothing, but also in the boundaries between two realms in everyday life, through how someone wants to be perceived and how s/he is visible. There is "a potential for confrontation between two powerful sources of meaning and identity, between home and work, [...] a potential collision of values, ideas and roles" (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, p. 115) in the boundaries of those two realms.

Smell

The notion of smell as a symbolic cue to social bonding has long been less valued (Synnott, 1991) and neglected despite its ethnographical observations since the 19th century¹ (Aspria, 2008). Authors such as Walmsley (2005) and Low (2005) have reflected on the difficulties of expressing the nature and meaning of smell verbally, suggesting that this is one reason for the marginal place of smell in social sciences (Zeitlyn, 2014). In fact, smell played a significant role in social categorization; Orwell described the reason for class apartheid in the west in four words, "The lower classes smell" (Orwell, 2001, p. 116). Odor also becomes a statement of one's identity; it is "a boundary maker, a status symbol, a distance-maintainer, an impression

¹ See Largey and Watson's piece, "The Sociology of Odors" (1972) and Howes' *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991).

management technique” (Synnott, 1991, p. 438). This emphasizes the premise that olfaction functions as a social channel employed by individuals in many ways, including in the judgment of others (Harris, 2007).

In the context of boundary management between physical dirty work and life of migrants, (the smell and dress of) the body is the key channel and social marker which concerns migrants. However, through the readings of the aforementioned, there is a lack of studies elaborating the involvement of the olfactory sense and visibility as shame markers in related occupations of migrant workers. This paper aims to answer the question of how smell and visibility of the body plays its role for migrants – doing *physical* dirty work – in navigating the boundaries between labor and religious life. This analysis will thus allow for the exploration of the ways in which social categorizations operate via visible (dress) and “invisible” (smell) aesthetic senses. In a way, it offers a new view of boundary management and identity formation in the religious domain and the labor life of migrants that has not yet been addressed in the past theory and research on dirty work and boundary management (Languilaire, 2009; Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Kossek, 2016; Dekel, 2016). In other words, the discussion in this paper is the point of departure to shed light on the vague, overlapping sides of the dirty work-life boundary management, body and embodiment, and religion in the context of migration.

Indonesian Migrants in Oarai

Oarai is a small town along the northeastern seashore of Japan, about 100 kilometers from Tokyo. Indonesian migrants in Oarai are predominantly Japanese descendants² (*Nikkeijin*) from North Sulawesi (formerly recognized as the Minahasan region). The first arrivals were facilitated by a broker who persuaded them to work in Japan utilizing the 1990 Immigration Act³. Although ethnically related to the Japanese, many studies have revealed that Japanese descendants of various nations have been socio-economically marginalized as disposable migrant laborers performing 3-D – dirty, dangerous, and difficult – jobs (Tsuda, 2003), which do not match their qualification levels. They are also subject to social prejudice, both as migrants and as unskilled factory workers, thus reserving them for the lowest levels of the social hierarchy in Japanese society (Tsuda, 1998).

Unlike other foreign migrants who mainly work in dense industrial cities, the Indonesian-Japanese descendants and migrants from North Sulawesi developed an ethnic community in a small and considerably remote town⁴. The total number of registered Indonesian migrants in Oarai is 366 people (2016)⁵, but including the unregistered ones as well raises this number considerably. Most of them are employed in fish-processing companies, the products of which are predominantly sold at local markets in the Kanto region. Moreover, what is particular about these people is their long-standing tradition of Christianity, which was inherited from the occupation of the Spanish and Dutch in the past. Their work in smelly fish-processing factories

² They are the descendants of Japanese migrants, who had offspring with the local people in North Sulawesi, who came to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) before or during the Pacific war.

³ The broker performed various procedures in Indonesia, such as interviewing to confirm births, creating genealogies, arranging the travel expenses, engaging in housing mediation, and other provisions of the necessities of life for the *Nikkeijin* (Fukihara, 2007). All of the expenses for going to Japan were based on a loan scheme.

⁴ The initial path of Indonesian *Nikkeijin* arrival began when a broker from Oarai, the leader of a company association in Oarai, came to North Sulawesi in 1998 and occurred primarily in three main sub-regions: Manado, Bitung, and Tomohon. From 1998 onwards, the broker introduced 180 *Nikkeijin* from North Sulawesi to 20 companies in Oarai (Meguro 2005; Fukihara 2007).

⁵Source: Oarai Town Office.

is juxtaposed with their religious life as Christians. Despite working as 3-D workers, some of them also become pastors, preachers, and bishops in the ethnic churches established in Oarai. The establishment of six Indonesian churches in Oarai alone demonstrates their uniqueness. The church and Christianity are inevitably the central focus of their daily lives, and religious values and church systems have been of significant help to them while enduring the hardship of being laborers in Japan (Tirtosudarmo, 2005) for almost two decades. Due to space limitations, I will discuss only the church that has the biggest congregation (around 300 members), which I will call Church B in this paper.

Background

Kaisha

The Japanese word *Kaisha* is often translated as “company” in English. However, Nakane (1997) asserted that, for the Japanese, the term *kaisha* symbolized the expression of group consciousness, conceived of as a house, with all its employees qualifying as members of the household and with the employer at its head (Nakane, 1997). In Oarai, the owner of the Kaisha is called *shachou* (head of the company), and his wife is called *mama-san* (respected mother). This metaphoric “family” extends to the employee’s personal family; it encompasses him totally (*marugakae* in Japanese) (Nakane, 1997).

A fish-processing kaisha is run based on the cold chain process. A cold chain is a temperature-controlled supply chain. The steps in processing include transporting the pallets of fish from the freezer to the workstations, thawing, separating and selecting, cutting, cleaning and trimming, and arranging, most of which can only be performed manually by a human workforce. This type of work is manual labor. Because of its restricted time cycle, a large workforce is needed to accomplish the workflow. Once the seafood products are outside of the freezer, they have to be processed and packaged within 24 hours. Thus, the employees have a minimum of a 12-hour working day, and a weekend work schedule with frequent overtime, particularly when there are large orders at the end of the year.

When entering the workspace, a worker has to wear a white uniform⁶, with a cap to cover the hair, and gloves. The uniform is similar to a jacket that covers the laborers’ casual clothes. Some kaishas require the workers to wear a full-body uniform, while others only require an outer shirt. The workspace is wet most of the time, and the employees’ uniforms and bodies are in contact with the melting ice, the innards of the fish, the fish scales, and the smell. Fish processing is one of the dirtiest, most demanding, and smelly kind of job, as indicated in various studies, as many workers have reported that they cannot bear the fishy stench for long (Mathew & Lingam, 1998). The wet, stinking, laborious working conditions, stained uniforms and tainted bodies are what make this a physically dirty job.

Church

Church B is a migrant church that was established in 1998, only several months after the first Japanese descendants from North Sulawesi arrived in Japan. This church adopts the structure of the main synod in North Sulawesi. Thus, this church can be categorized as a migrant church. The system of administration is led by the migrants themselves. In 2007, the church requested a pastor from the synod through a missionary agreement with a Japanese church in Mito. This church was not officially listed in the church association in Japan in May 2017 at the time at

⁶ They usually leave the uniform at the kaisha and wash it once or twice a week. Some workers who have more spare uniforms bring them home every day.

which the fieldwork was conducted. At the time of writing, four pastors from North Sulawesi, Indonesia, had served the congregation.

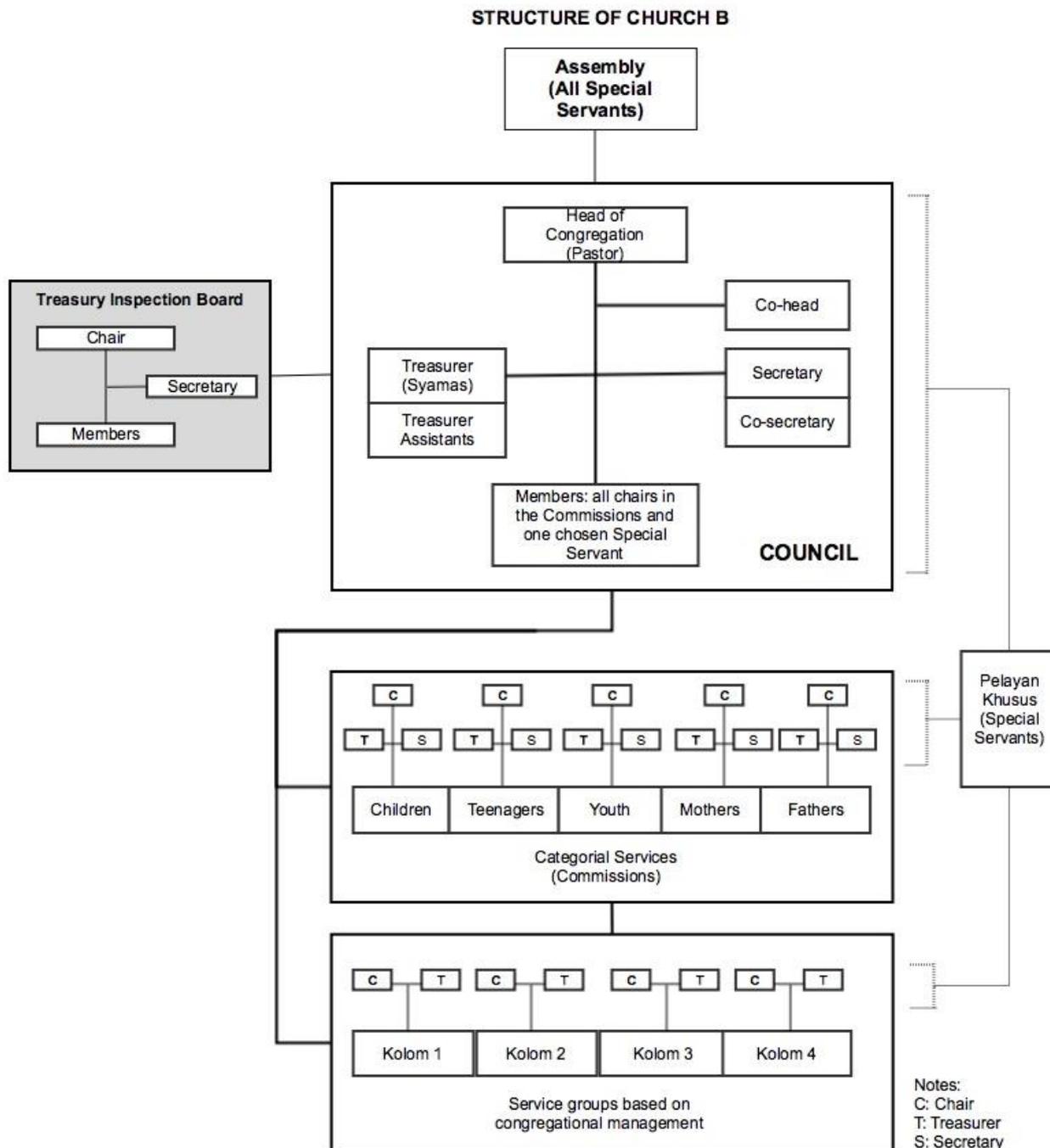


Figure 1. Structure of Church B (based on the author’s observations and interviews)

This church uses the *Presbyterial Synod* in its church structure (see Figure 1). *Presbyteros* is derived from Greek the word meaning respected elder. In Church B, the presbyters refer to *Pelayan Khusus* (special servants), including the *Syamas* (the treasurer), the *Penatua* (the respected), and the *Pendeta* (the pastor). The *Pelayan Khusus* (abbreviated as *Pelus*) is chosen via election, self-surrender, and a ceremonial inauguration. Through this system, decisions on leadership, services of the church and the congregation, have to be made in a democratic

“*musyawarah-mufakat*” (deliberation-consensus) way by the Pelayan Khusus in the Assembly (see Figure 1). The categorial services in the structure include children (below 12 years of age), teenagers (aged 12–16 years), young adults (17–30 years of age and unmarried), mothers or married women, and fathers or married men. For each categorial service, there is a commission structure called the *Kompelka* (Komisi Pelayanan Kategorial), which includes the Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the members. The *Kolom* is a “service group based on congregation management” (Badan Pekerja Majelis Sinode, Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa, 2016, p. 40), which consists of 15 to 25 households. In brief, each layperson belongs to both the *Kolom* and to the Categorial Service. The organizational structure of the church is bureaucratic and involves various hierarchical positions and leadership roles, all of which are filled by the migrants; these roles are highly respected. People ordained as a Pelayan Khusus are usually addressed using the titles Syamas (treasurer) Penatua (elderly respected person), or Pendeta (pastor), respectively, before their names, even outside of the church.

Research Methods

Participants

My data stems from qualitative in-depth interviews with Indonesian migrants from North Sulawesi, participant observation and my sensory experience in Oarai, Japan. The participants comprises two Japanese and 26 Indonesian migrants (n=28), mostly from a church with a major congregation. With regard to their ages, the participants were mainly 41-50 years old (12), 51–60 years old (9), 31–40 years old (4) and 61–70 years old (3). 85% of the participants are Japanese descendants or their spouses. The two Japanese are one Japanese pastor from a Japanese church, and a factory owner. Those with Japanese ties are mostly third- and fourth-generation Indonesian-Japanese descendants and their spouses. The following is the definition of each generation used in this study: The third generation refers to the descendants of the second generation (*Sansei*). The fourth generation of Japanese refers to the descendants of the third generation (*Yonsei*).

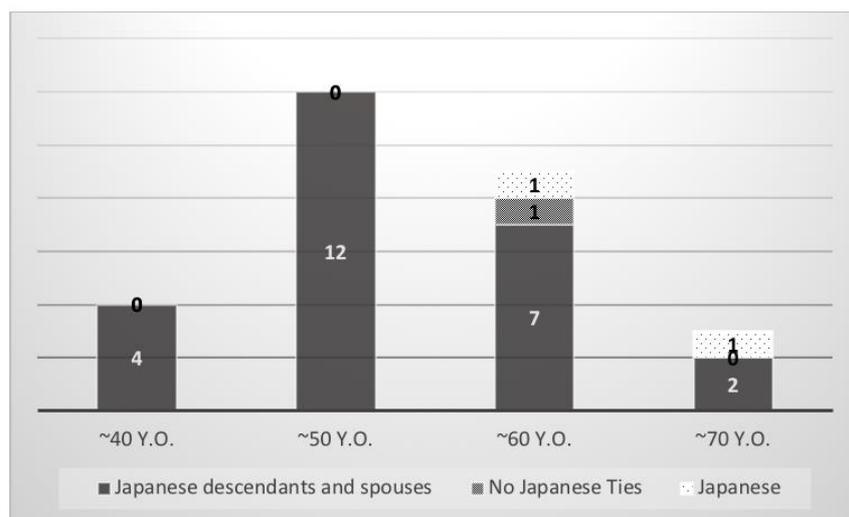


Figure 2. Participants according to Ages and Japanese Ties (n=28)

Participants were recruited through the church and kaisha, although the main recruitment place was the church because of the interviewees’ higher time availability during church time compared to when they were at work in the factory. All interviews and observation for this paper were undertaken between February and March 2016, between April and November 2017,

and in June 2018. All names were coded for the data analysis process while, in this paper, they are referred to by pseudonyms. The interviews were conducted in the most natural way through their life courses, focusing on immigrants' personal migration history, from the past to the future. It includes, their memory on before migration, the first years in Japan, a typical work day, their family matters and the future plan. The language used is Bahasa Indonesia mixed with Manado Dialect and Japanese.

Although my participants were familiar with my presence as someone residing in Oarai and attending the liturgies, when conducting the interviews, they participated voluntarily and were well informed about my role as a researcher via a letter of consent and details of my study. They were always able to indicate any information that they wanted to be excluded or stop whenever they wanted to stop participating. All interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were read through several times. The details of the study and consent letters were also sent to the Assembly of the church for permission and consent from the pastors. I was also given time to introduce myself at the church for my study purposes.

Methods

One thing to note is that the participants, both women and men, work every day from morning to evening and still have to attend to a few evening religious activities after work, with scarce time available even for themselves and their families. Thus, one of the challenges for the researcher was to conduct a full interview in a quiet atmosphere. Some participants agreed to spare only a short time between their activities, or in some unexpected, spontaneous situations. Of the 28 participants, 18 had long interviews, three had long, yet interrupted interviews, while seven people had short interviews, supplemented with questionnaires they brought in from home. The interviews lasted between 15 to 115 minutes, with interviewees taking their own decision on when to have breaks or interruptions. Thus, participant observation and my sensory experience were crucial in order to understand more than what the participants could share due to their time constraints. On the other hand, much past research, which foundationally established the early literature on the Indonesian community in Oarai, has been drawn mostly from surveys, interview and questionnaires (such as Meguro, 2005; Pudjiastuti, 2005; Okushima, 2005; Tirtosudarmo, 2005) with limited participant observation. It was also confirmed through the statements of some participants that no other researcher had ever been living in Oarai to study them. One among the few who lived and also worked in Oarai during his research is Sumakul (2005), who explored the concept of vocation in Reformed theology for those migrant workers for his dissertation.

I resided throughout April and November 2017 in Oarai, worked part-time in a factory, went to the clinic, hospital, supermarket together with migrant workers, as well as participated in church activities, particularly in teenagers' categorial service. Through daily activities, I embodied the experience and emotions of the migrant workers, which were not usually captured easily through narration, but must be felt and experienced to be understood (Rivera & Tracy, 2014). The senses and emotions I experienced during the fieldwork is also utilized as autobiographic narratives in this paper. "Messy" texts and narratives by a researcher in representation data is key for accessing tacit knowledge encompassing the "ineffable truths" (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p. 491). In particular, Goffman (2001) asserts that the body in participant observation is an important way to gain "data" because you "subject yourself, your own body [...] to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals" (p. 154). Thus, I put my body and emotions into the scene and stories through living, working and interacting with individuals in Oarai to reveal the complexities experienced in migrants' everyday life.

Results

Kaisha Life

The Beginning. After a Japanese broker set up the housing and placed the first Indonesian-Japanese descendants in some fish-processing kaisha in Oarai, they entered Japan and began to work within an asocial setting. They did not interact directly with local people, relying entirely on the broker during the first years of migration. These migrants had diverse backgrounds, and many of them were university graduates. Although they were informed about the kind of industry in which they were going to work, most participants did not expect such working conditions in the kaisha. The first day after their arrival in Oarai, in July 1998, the broker introduced Ms. I and three other workers, who were her cousins, to one Kaisha:

The first Kaisha we entered was Maruichi (pseudonym). All WERE (Ms. I emphasized) Manadonese people over there ... the overstayers. When we arrived, we said to each other: *“Oh we are going to work ... work like this?”* *“They are cleaning the fish at that time ... ”* *“Oh what should we do? It’s so smelly.”* I said to the others, *“We have to work like this? Why do we have to work like this? We worked at office before”* (laugh). *“Oh, I prefer to work in (name of city). I don’t want to work like this. Oh, God forbid, I never even held a knife at home, now I have to clean fish?”* (Ms. I, personal communication)

Ms. I’s first impression of the kind of job she was going to perform reveals the first and long-lasting impression that most of the workers were not proud of the reality of their jobs in Oarai. The working conditions are wet and unbearably smelly. “Wet work”, such as cleaning the fish, cutting, and trimming, is one of the aspects avoided by most of the workers, as opposed to “dry work”, such as packing and sealing. None of them were familiar with seafood processing in a factory. The kaisha life in Japan is far from what they had imagined.

Fish and the Smell. In Oarai, in which many small and a few middle-range seafood-processing Kaisha are located, the small factories are sometimes not visible because they look just like a one-story warehouse or a two-story house. One of the clear indicators is the fishy stench though. When I walked past such a warehouse, the strong fishy smell would often spontaneously cause me to stop and look around to identify the source of the smell. Besides the smell, another clue is the appearances of workers in white uniform.

On one sunny day, Ms. H drove a car from her son’s school. I sat next to her, and the window was open to allow the breeze to enter. At a three-way junction that had a Kaisha at the end, the car slowed down to turn right. The car stopped to wait for other cars to pass, and then passed right by the entrance of the Kaisha warehouse. I caught a glimpse of a man I knew, with a tired face and wearing his white uniform the cap, lifting a full pallet of fish with another work colleague. His name was Mr. L. The pallet looked heavy. He saw me, and forced a smile. On the weekend, I met the same man at church, looking dapper and wearing a natty jacket. I greeted and talked with him as usual, but we tacitly agreed not to discuss anything connected with the last encounter. Mr. L, in terms of his appearance as a worker and as a member of the church, are one and the same person existing in two different worlds. In my impression, his work was not something he wanted outsiders to see. When I noticed someone wearing a white uniform, I always felt that I had met a different person from the one I had seen at church. Through the observation and embodied experience, I sensed the demarcation that the church and the kaisha were two separate worlds for these migrant workers.

From Kaisha to Home. When I visited or had a homestay in participants’ houses, I often found soaking wet, dirty white shirts with a fishy odor in a separate pile waiting to be washed. Although the shirts were always in a pile, they were never put where the regular dirty clothes were usually collected. For example, I saw shirts below a washroom basin, in a bathtub, on the upper floor’s washroom, and so on. It was noticeable that there was demarcation as well as postponement regarding the washing. Another interesting point is that the householders always apologized to me about the soaking shirts, even before I had seen them myself. Furthermore, when I met people while they were wearing their uniforms, they also apologized to me because of the unpleasant odor; again, even before I had smelled it myself.

They also took a bath immediately after returning from work and washed their hair every single day, even though the uniform includes a cap. This must have been very demanding for women with long hair, but they did not compromise on this. This is why I often observed women arriving refreshed, often with wet hair, at the weekday liturgy. The smell of the white uniform and the cap is apparently not something of which they are proud. Indeed, the smell was pungent, reminding me of the smell of some streets in Oarai whenever I walked near by a kaisha.

Church Life

Pelayan Khusus (Pelsus). At the church (see Figure 3), the Pelsus usually sits in the front row overseeing the congregation. The pastor wears a robe and a red (or green) stole when conducting Sunday worship; but when leading Kolom liturgy, the pastor only wears the stole. The assigned Pelsus wears a white stole at the Sunday service, but not at the Kolom or categorical liturgies. The unassigned Pelsus of the day can take a seat in any place, usually in the front row.

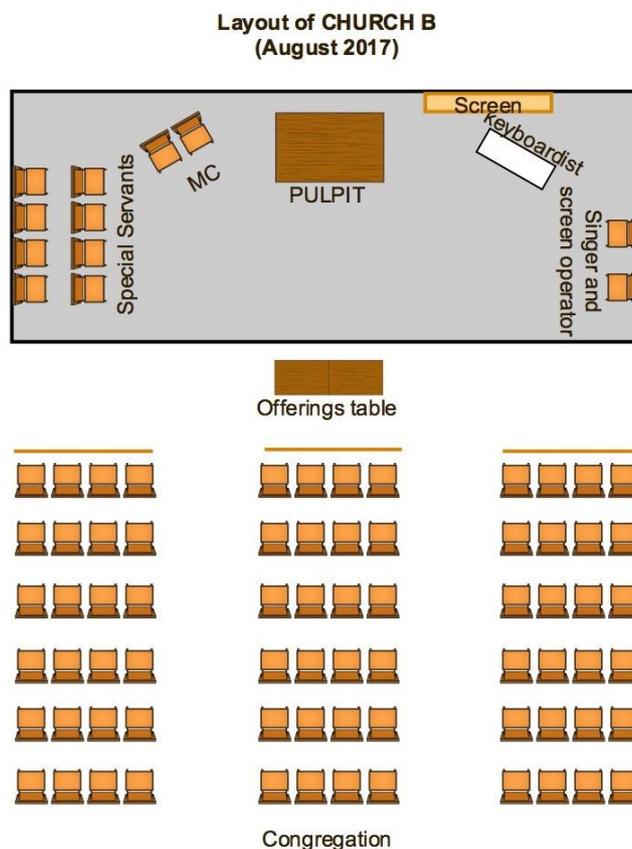


Figure 3. Layout of the Church for Sunday Service (Author, August 2017)

Pelsus are usually dressed in dapper outfits: the men wear shirts, blazers, and black shoes, while the women dress in high-heels, with make-up and hairdos, branded bags, apparel, and jewelry. On some special occasions, the men dress in suits or batik, while the women wear black blazers or formal dress, with skirts or trousers. While the congregation dresses in various ways, most of the time the members appear fashionable. The pastor of Church B also reminded the Pelsus about their attire during the Assembly, telling them always to look presentable because they are the chosen ones who serve the church and God. Mr. F, who had been chosen as a Pelsus in Church B for 17 years in row, expressed his feelings about being a special servant and wearing a stole as “heavy”:

The feeling of wearing the stole is, hmm ... It is heavy. It is here (he touched his nape and both shoulders where a stole is usually hung). The responsibility is heavy. Not that it becomes a burden, but that is my commitment to God. So, once I wear the stole, I really have to be careful in my doing and saying. It feels very special. Pelsus, for me, is a lifetime obligation that even when I don't wear it, I have to manage my personality. ... Many times, outside the church, people still call me *Penatua*. (Mr. F, personal communication)

Pelsus are truly prominent figures. As migrants, a congregation typically chooses respected persons who are not financially lacking, have a good personality and good behavior to be assigned the role of Pelsus. The financial condition is considered because, being special servants, they have to be willing to work extra hours for the church and cannot generally take on many extra paying jobs. People are also chosen based on whether the person has a passion for serving and is a respectable figure. It is interesting that these positions are not only open to those with a Japanese-descendant visa, but also to others with “trainee” or “refugee” visas, if they are chosen by the members. At the time I conducted the fieldwork, one “trainee” and one “refugee” were chosen as special servants and who willingly gave their extra time to serve the church. This signifies that visa status is at the periphery of church life, and does not deliberately affect someone's image as a respectable person. At the church, migrants can be considered more respectable than the others because of being *Pelayan Khusus*.

One evening in June 2017, there was an election of the *Pelayan Khusus* for a Kolom group of the church. A Pelsus of a Kolom consists of the *Ketua Kolom* (the leader of the Kolom), the *Wakil Ketua* (co-leader), and the *Syamas* (treasurer). Although about 14 people attended the liturgy that evening, only four names were mentioned in the votes. Apparently, the members had the same figures to choose among the total of 40 members (including children and babies). Two candidates, although not present, could be elected without their confirmation. If someone is chosen by the members, it is considered to be God's will, which should not be refused. They believe that those who refuse God's will may suffer misfortunes. That night, Mr. L, the man I saw bringing in the full pallet of fish, was chosen as the leader of this Kolom.

Sunday. Migrants' work occupies most of their time during the week, and Sunday is the only day on which people can do other things besides work. However, in the past, when the workload was heavier than it is at present, migrants were forced also to work on Sundays. In consequence, they could not go to the church. If they wanted to propose a day-off on Sunday to attend a Sunday service, the *shachou* (head of the company) always challenged them.

In the past, if we want to go to a church on Sunday, we had to argue first with *shachou*. Every day was working day, including Sunday. He once said to me, “I

am the one who gave you a salary, not your God.” So, it was tough (to attend the Church). (Mr. U, personal communication)

The church accommodated for this situation by providing two periods of Sunday services: morning and evening. Those who had to work in the morning could still attend church in the evening. After many negotiations and actions, more kaisha have now compromised and let Sunday as a day-off, in order to keep the migrants staying in Oarai. It appears, managing the time to accommodate church-kaisha boundaries was more challenging in the past.

At the time of writing, most of the migrants worked from Monday to Saturday. Although a few people still worked on Sundays, Sunday was the only holiday for most workers. Thus, the day is overwhelmingly used for both leisure and religious purposes, which are often merged into one time and place – the church. People sometimes go shopping or do other things after the Sunday Service, as this is the only available time they have for any non-work-related activities. The church has become the main place at which they meet their compatriots regularly outside of the kaisha. The church is thus more than just a religious site, it is also the place where people spend some of their leisure time and socialize, particularly on Sundays. The kinds of clothes people choose to wear at the church and after church also emphasize that they want to be identified as “different people” compared to when they are at work.

Body and Self-Representation. On one Sunday, I met Ms. K at the church. Ms. K wore a tight green dress with a hemline that was five inches above her knees. Her shoes featured a leopard pattern and had 10-cm heels. This mother of three looked so tall and slender. Besides slenderizing the ankles, wearing high heels also “generate[s] the sensation of power and status” (Smith, 1999, p. 11). On that day, Ms. K was the liturgy leader, as she was substituting for the pastor, who was sick. Over her dress, she wore a robe and a green stole as symbols of being the ordained liturgy leader. Before a Pelsus comes forward to the pulpit as a liturgy leader, someone else has to place the stole over him or her. This respectable appearance diminished her taken-for-granted status as a low-class laborer.

Even though Ms. K and the other women at the church were mostly in their 40s, they had not aged much in terms of looks and posture, with their white complexions and slender bodies. Thus, they could not resist wearing colorful dresses in different styles, with some skirts that were inches above their knees, sleeveless dresses, transparent blouses, and even blatantly tight dresses without showing too much disjuncture “between the expectations of the dress and the aged body that wears it” (Twigg, 2009, p. 9). Therefore, choosing what to wear to attend a Sunday service at Church B becomes what I am solicitous about, to belong. There was a sense that it was required to appear fashionable, and not to be overlooked amid the ubiquitous styles, branded bags, and apparel at the church. We try to make sense of belonging collectively. Thus, the conformity to fashion at the church could have been quite demanding for some people.

Where do people buy their clothes and apparel, given that there is no department store in Oarai? I had the opportunity to go shopping and window-shopping with some participants on several occasions. The participants often went to a second-hand store near Mito city, the capital of Ibaraki prefecture, about a 30-minute drive from Oarai. On arriving in the store, they immediately knew where to go: the branded watch and clothes section. Ms. G looked at the imitation gold jewelry. She explained that she liked to find beautiful accessories at a bargain price at the store, and that she likes luxury items. I heard many stories from her about her familiarity with jewelry, authentic diamonds, high-carat gold, expensive perfume, and good-quality chocolate. She was proud of this knowledge and of her ability to discern the quality and

authenticity of these expensive items. Once when we were looking around the perfume section, she tested me by asking “Do you know the difference between EDT and EDP?” I replied, “I don’t know.” She then explained that EDP has a higher concentration of the perfume essence; thus, it lasts longer than does EDT; this knowledge made her feel special within the migrant community.

Where Are They Going with that Dress? Dressing well is not only part of the social life at the church, but also in the neighborhood. One Saturday night, Ms. H sat on her sofa in front of a flat 40-inch television, her back against the armrest. I sat on the *tatami* floor next to the sofa, also facing the screen. It showed a cartoon in high-definition color in Japanese, which was being streamed on-line from a children’s YouTube channel; neither of us followed the story.

Neighbors were *urusai* (noisy). They actually watched us, like what we wear. I even heard they talked to other neighbors. They said, when we go to work, we wear shabby clothes, but we often wear a blazer and suit in the evening. You know when my husband has (his turn) to lead the liturgy at the church, he is in a suit, right? They asked, “*Where are they going to go with that dress?*” Because we always look ugly when going to work, so they are curious. They pay attention to us, even to our changing clothes ... and that I have nice bags. That is why I never bring a fake Luis Vuitton bag when I have to meet the mothers (at her sons’ schools), because they know which is original and not. (Ms. H, personal communication)

Ms. H strongly felt the neighbors’ stigmatization of herself and her family for being migrants. She clearly did not want to be judged in this way. This caused her to be aware of her self-representation, including the sense of visibility that she wanted to demonstrate by buying a large flat screen television and avoiding carrying a fake Luis Vuitton bag on any occasion in which she interacted with Japanese people. The shabby clothes she wore when going to work signified that she considered her work to be dishonorable and as requiring her to wear nothing but the same worn-out clothes she wore at home. I noticed that, after waking up, she and her husband had a small breakfast, and went to work without changing clothes, without bathing, and even without brushing their hair. Several times, I did not even notice that they had already been to work because of their permeable appearance with a home look.

Discussion

The White Uniform and Smells

Life and identity at a *kaisha* are personified by the white uniform, confirming the workers’ equality and identity as migrants, and as being powerless and vulnerable. In their white uniforms, these migrants are identified collectively as belonging to the lowest level of the Japanese social system, working the most unwanted jobs for Japanese people their age. The long working hours and the smell of fish make such activity falls into the category of a 3-D job (Komai, 2010). The fishy odor and the white uniform also became markers of their identities as migrant labors, and as members of the lower class. They were fully aware of this, despite their continuous allegiance to this type of job for over two decades. Outside of the *Kaisha*, the white uniform (although it is not worn) causes them to apologize for its existence, even before other people see or smell anything at all. It is like saying, “It will stink and I know it.” This is in line with a great deal of qualitative research that has indicated that people performing dirty work tend to be acutely aware of the stigma that is attached to their work (Davis, 1984; Rollins, 1985; Thompson & Harred, 1992).

The white uniform has become a symbol of their struggle, as well as of the vulnerability of life in a Kaisha. The smells are embodied and carried from one space to another, both physically and as memories (Canniford, Riach, & Hill, 2017). The stigma of doing dirty work is so pervasive that it may stick or remain even after the mark is removed; that is, once the individual leaves work (Bergman & Chalkley, 2007). Therefore, washing her hair and bathing after work, particularly before the liturgy, are at the center of their perpetual personal care (Twigg, 2015), as well as their “rites of passage into institutions” (Twigg, 2000, p. 5) to expel the Kaisha from their bodies and identities. Since odor serves as a differentiator of class and as an instrument for social discrimination, it heightens the awareness of hygiene (Nugent, 2009), and the privatization of stench. Separating and soaking the white uniform indicates the lengthy process of getting rid of the offensive odor and the aversion, resulting in an intentional delay in washing it. In brief, the presence or absence of smell signals the boundaries of taste, class, and identity at personal, group, and spatial levels (Low, 2005; MacPhee, 1992; J. Nugent, 2009), and mark the boundaries between work and the religious life.

Change Clothes, Change Self

The division of kaisha and church life began when Sundays were approved as a day-off by most Kaisha, giving the workers a little leisure time. The church has become not only a place for religious activities but also a place for leisure. Consequently, the permeable religious and leisure times at the church are indicated in the way in which people dress on a Sunday. Their stylishness, fashionability, and brand accessories are superfluous at the church at which they meet their compatriots; however, the change is made because the changing of outfits symbolizes the changing of the self. Clothing and appearance act as a switch, the *on-off* switch between the “fishy” job and a life with dignity. Through the church, they present themselves to the world, validate their social status and class, and fulfill the needs of freedom and self-representation. Their identities and identification are signaled by those to whom they are similar and those from whom they are different, and the clothes intermediate the body and its public presentation, which can be put on or off (Twigg, 2009).

Life at the church also has its own social dynamics, with rigid organizational structures and positions. Although migrants reside on the lowest social stratification level in Japan, the social landscape of the church is different. People’s positions are arranged hierarchically based on their church position and social categorizations, one of which is via visual consumer objects such as fashionable clothing, jewelry, and branded items. However, in Christianity itself, lavish displays are condemned. The repression of sensual pleasure, a prerequisite for salvation, is invariably preached (Harris, 2007). For Church B, the pastor pays a substantial amount of attention to the dapper appearance of the Pelayan Khusus in the hope that the congregation will follow them as a divine epitome. As a Pelayan Khusus for the church, they are the chosen ones, the prominent figures. The fact that they are also laborers and migrants is detached, and becomes invisible via their attire and appearances. The robe worn at church, among other things, helps to emphasize the role of pastor, the Pelayan Khusus, and to “de-emphasize the personality of the man in the pulpit” (Meyers, 1997), including their roles and whatever they do outside of the church. To overcome the less-than-respectable feeling amongst the congregation, the church in general, and the Reformed Church in particular, has historically placed special robes on its ministers when they conduct worship. In conclusion, the purpose of the robe and stole are to cover the man/woman and to emphasize his or her God-ordained office or calling (Meyers, 1997).

Managing Boundaries: Identity through Clothing and Bodies

The link between clothing and identity has long been an established theme for some researchers in dress studies (Twigg, 2009). From the time of Veblen (1899/1953) and Simmel (1904/1971) onwards, sociologists have explored the way in which clothing operates as part of class identity. Clothing can also be used as a form of agency, through which the individual exerts power, and as a commodity that helps to define social relationships (Neumann, 2011), as well as being one of the ways in which forms of social difference are made visible and concrete (Twigg, 2009). The contested identities in the parallel lives of the Kaisha and the church are manifested in the migrants' appearances. The white uniform is set in contrast to the stole and influential position of someone as a special servant, as well as to the "superfly" fashion of their leisure Sundays. The social classification struggles are reflected via the visibility of appearance, while a sense of protesting against their social status as laborers or workers is depicted through the acts of "neutralizing" the foul smells (see Figure 4). In the section on "Distinction", Bourdieu (1984) showed that the logic of class struggle extends to the realm of taste and lifestyle, and that symbolic classification is key to the reproduction of class privileges. Accordingly, the taste expressed when choosing what to wear is a part of how the Pelayan Khusus (and specifically, the elite) "establish, maintain and reproduce positions of power, reinforcing relation of dominance and subordination" (Bourdieu, 1984). Power is inevitably the reproduction of the bureaucratic system of the church, and is manifested in many ways, including the separation of where the Pelayan Khusus sit, how they dress and are addressed, and the use of the stole or robe.

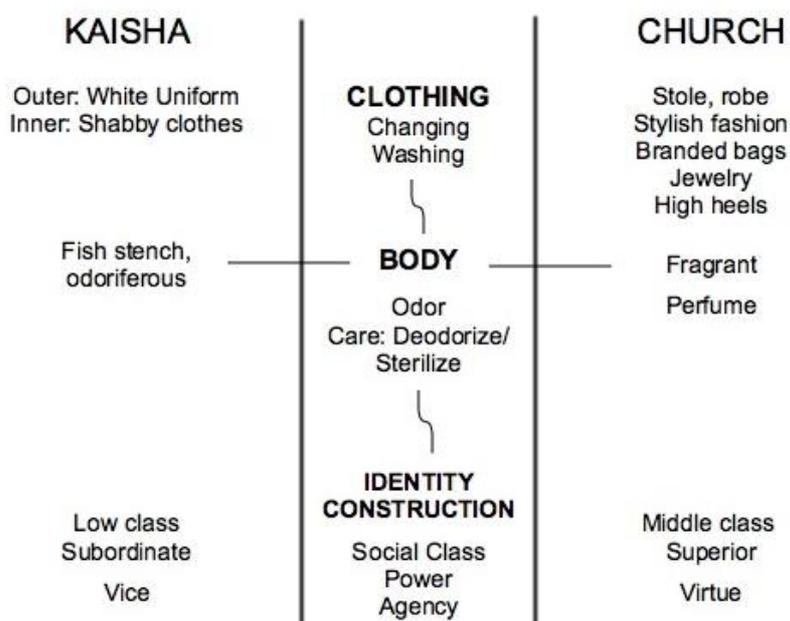


Figure 4. Framework for managing the boundaries between the kaisha and the church through clothing and body (Author)

The framework above constitutes the overlapping boundary management styles (Kossek, 2016), the olfactory classification (Aspria, 2008), and the concept of clothing and body (Twigg, 2009), which are discussed in isolation in existing studies. This shows that clothing operates in conjunction with the body and that there is an interplay between the two (Twigg, 2009). Hence, categorization is not predicated on the visual alone, but also transpires via the olfactory throughout the body, arising from an individual's expectations of others and their smells

(Harris, 2007). While clothes can be changed and the washing can be kept separate, the same body remains. Thus, the only transition channel between the Kaisha and the church is through the body. The daily acts of neutralizing the smells through bathing and hair washing are ways in which the boundary between the two realms is created. Clothing communicates the social identity symbolically; in other words, how a person seeks to appear in society (Davis, 1985). However, it must be emphasized that, bodily care through the acts of deodorizing and sterilizing is a one-way direction from the kaisha to the church, and not the other way around. Their outfit for being at home and working is often the same. Hence, the “body” and clothing from home to work life are permeable.

Nonetheless, the stylish appearance at the church was part of the migrants’ characteristics prior to migration. There is even a Minahasan maxim: “*Biar kalah nasi asal jangan kalah aksi*” (Sumakul, 2005), which means, “better lose in rice rather than lose in action.” Figuratively, this means that, although there is nothing to eat, it is more important to perform well or stylishly. The person as migrants perform at church are a reflection of their old world in North Sulawesi. The new-old worlds in their migratory context, then, are contested through the division between the kaisha and the church, with continuous boundary crossings. The wet and smelly work is deemed tainted, as it contradicts the noble characteristics of what society views as good or proper work (Hughes, 1958). Consequently, the boundaries between work and church for Indonesian migrants in Oarai are located and managed via the practices of expelling the foul smells from the body and the white uniform, and by emphasizing the visibility of fashion and branding at the church.

Conclusions

There is a dissonance and a detachment between who these migrants are at church and what they do in the kaisha. There was no ambivalence in the migrants’ management of their emotions as they had been dealing with the segmented behavior in the church and the kaisha for some time. This compartmentalization (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995) is embodied in the act of changing clothes and engaging in bodily care before entering the religious institution, which has allowed for the successful implementation of “image management strategies” (Kidder, 2006; Mavin & Grandy, 2013; Tracy & Scott, 2006) for almost two decades. Thus, there is nearly no confusion regarding when one is a laborer and when one is a bishop. Emotional conflicts between the two roles are resolved through smell removal and change in visibility.

Having positions in the bureaucratic and hierarchical structure of the church has prompted some migrants to maintain their demeanor in specific ways. Being special servants is deemed important and is accentuated via the symbolic attire and stole in order to de-emphasize the reality outside of the church and to gain more respect as special servants. The church itself serves as a non-work space in which religious and leisure time are merged, and where migrants can validate their social status as well as practice social identification through material visibility, such as outfits, branding, and high heels, as well as via the practices of prior washing and bathing to remove the stench of work. The stench and the work in the kaisha bind their bodies and identities, making bodily care and dressing serve as a switch to manage the division between kaisha and church life.

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