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Legitimacy Work

Managing Sick Leave Legitimacy in Interaction

MARIE FLINKFELDT

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Abstract

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This thesis studies how sick leave legitimacy is managed in interaction and develops an empirically driven conceptualization of 'legitimacy work'. The thesis applies an ethnomethodological framework that draws on conversation analysis, discursive psychology, and membership categorization analysis. Naturally occurring interaction is examined in two settings: (1) multi-party meetings at the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, in which participants assess and discuss the 'status' of the sick leave and plan for work rehabilitation; (2) peer-based online text-in-interaction in a Swedish forum thread that gathers people on sick leave.

The thesis shows how mental states, activities and alternative categories function as resources for legitimacy work. However, such invocations are no straight-forward matter, but impose additional contingencies. It is thus crucial how they are invoked. By detailed analyses of the interaction, with attention to aspects such as lexicality and delivery, the thesis identifies a range of discursive features that manage sick leave legitimacy. Deployed resources are also subtle enough to be deniable as legitimacy work, that is, they also manage the risk of an utterance being seen as invested or biased.

While legitimate sick leave is a core concern for Swedish policy-making, administration, and public debate on sick leave, previous research has for the most part been explanatory in orientation, minding legitimacy rather than studying it in its own right. By providing detailed knowledge about the legitimacy work that people on long-term sick leave do as part of both institutional and mundane encounters, the thesis contributes not only new empirical knowledge, but a new kind of empirical knowledge, shedding light on how the complexities of sick leave play out in real-life situations.

Traditional sociological approaches have to a significant extent treated legitimacy as an entity with beginnings and ends that in more or less direct ways relate to external norms and cognitive states, or that focus on institutions, authority or government. By contrast, the herein emerging concept 'legitimacy work' understands legitimacy as a locally contingent practicality – a collaborative categorially oriented accomplishment that is integral to the interactional situation.

Keywords: legitimacy, legitimation, legitimacy-in-action, sick leave, sickness absence, sick role, Sweden, social insurance, sickness benefit, conversation analysis, discursive psychology, ethnomethodology, membership categorization analysis, institutional talk, categories, moral work, social interaction, talk-in-interaction, text-in-interaction, meetings, online forums

Marie Flinkfeldt, Department of Sociology, Box 624, Uppsala University, SE-75126 Uppsala, Sweden.

For Barbro Flinkfeldt, who was my
first and most dedicated teacher

List of Papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

I   Flinkfeldt, M. (forthcoming) Wanting to work: Managing the sick role in high-stake sickness insurance meetings. *Submitted manuscript*

II   Flinkfeldt, M. (2011) Filling one's days: Managing sick leave legitimacy in an online forum. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 33(5): 761-776

III Flinkfeldt, M. (2014) Making equality relevant. Gender, housework and sick leave legitimacy in online interaction. *Feminism & Psychology*, 24(3): 295-313

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Contents

Acknowledgements

This thesis is about legitimacy work. At the same time, it is in itself legitimacy work. In my texts, I do "being a researcher" and I make use of resources that I have picked up along the way: theory, method, and analysis, but also, on a more detailed level, the choice of some words over others. Not only by *what* I write, but *how* I write it, the results of my research will be understood and valued differently. As we talk or write, we establish who we are to one another, and therefore, presenting one's research is not only about the research—it is also about the researcher and the readers. As this thesis is read by my opponent and members of my committee, who will ultimately decide whether I "pass" as a researcher (literally!), we collaboratively contribute to upholding (or shifting) the legitimate boundaries of the category of "PhD" and "sociologist." In other words, while negotiating whether I legitimately belong in this category, the category and its predicates are also negotiated.

   (At this point, it might be useful to take a few minutes to consider what this prefatory introduction *itself* is doing by means of constructing my thesis, and me as a researcher, in a certain way (cf., Ashmore 1989; Potter, 2010). I will not go into that here, because the layers of reflexivity are endless, but I will be happy to discuss it over coffee and a slice of cake.)

   Someone once said to me—jokingly, but nonetheless—that the acknowledgements section is the most important part of a thesis. It is often the first thing that people read (*Who's in it? Am I mentioned?*), and some people hardly read beyond it. Of course, this particular part of the thesis is important for other reasons, too. A researcher is never alone in the process of doing research, and the acknowledgement section makes this visible. This preface, then, is not only about me, doing "being a researcher"; it is about all those others, and about the observability of our relationship. Writing this thesis has been a long process, and many people have in different ways contributed to it reaching its end. I would like to give a heartfelt *thank you* to all those who have helped make visible the boundaries of the category "researcher," those who have offered me tools to use in my own categorial work, and, not least, those who have been there for me both in work and in life. I hope you know who you are; know that I do, even if I am only able to mention some of you here.

   A first thank you goes to the nineteen people who allowed me to record their status meetings. I am grateful that you were willing to share that

Abbreviations

CA	Conversation analysis
DP	Discursive psychology
MCA	Membership categorization analysis
MCD	Membership categorization device
SIA	Social Insurance Agency
CO	Social insurance case officer
DR	Sick-certifying doctor
EA	Employment Agency representative
SL	Person on sick leave

1. Introduction

When someone is sick, how is it that you know that they are sick? It might be that it shows—in a runny nose, crutches, or unmotivated crying in the middle of the workday—or it might be that they tell you that they are sick. However you come to know, this knowledge is not some neutral fact that is "out there," but an accomplishment. This means that how we let others know of our illness is part of how we are understood as being sick, and this often requires more than a simple statement—we may need to "work" for it by naming a diagnosis, displaying or describing symptoms, and so on.[1]

To some extent, this description may come across as simple. We already know this, because at some point in our lives, we have worked our way through these matters. We typically know what to say (and what not to say) when calling our workplace to say that we are sick, and practical reasoning about whether someone is "sick enough" (or not) to stay home from work is commonplace in people's everyday lives. As members of society, then, we know (or come to learn) how to "do" being sick and, by extension, how to "do" being on sick leave. This is expressed in the following example, which comes from one of the interactional data sets that this thesis examines: a meeting held by a case officer (CO) at the Swedish Social Insurance Agency with a person who receives sickness benefit for being on long-term sick leave (SL), her doctor (DR), and a representative from the Employment Agency (EA). We join the participants in the midst of a discussion about whether SL will be able to join a work rehabilitation program, which, prior to the excerpt, she has expressed doubts about.

Excerpt 1: Not an advantage.[2]

```
1  SL    ja [förstår precis] va du
         I  understand exactly what you

2  EA       [ de ↑vänder  ]
         it ↑changes

3  DR       [     mm      ]

4  SL    [mena]r [men,] [ ja ] opponerar mig
         mean but, I'm objecting
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[1] The notion of "work" is central to the thesis and is understood as the act of producing meaning; situated practices by which ''account-able'' phenomena are practically accomplished (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970).
[2] For a transcription key, see Appendix A.

```
5  EA    [ aa ]
         yeah

6  DR            [ mm ]

7  EA                   [↑m↓m]

8  SL    [för att] min sjukdomsbild ~blir ganska [allvarlig~]
         because my state of illness ~gets pretty serious~

9  EA    [.↑hm↓m ]                            [   jaa   ]
         .↑hm↓m yes

10 SL    emellan [varvena,] [å: ]
         sometimes n':

11 EA            [   mm   ] [mm:]

12 SL    de kanske inte [syns] på mig,
         maybe it doesn't show,

13 EA                   [.hm ]

14 EA    [  mm  ]

15 SL    [å de'e] [inte en] fördel alla [gånger.]
         n' it's not always an advantage.

16 DR            [   mm   ]

17 EA                              [ .hnej ]
         .hno

18 DR    mm

19 SL    för att [jag ] (.) ser [till å] sminka på mig [lite när man]
         because I (.) make sure to put some make-up on when you

20 EA            [mm,:]          [ mm,: ]              [   mm↓m    ]

21 SL    ska på [möte.]
         are going to a meeting.

22 EA            [.hm  ]
```

Without embarking on a full analysis at this point, I want to draw attention to how the person on sick leave (SL) orients to what is at stake in the meeting, putting into words what some of the conditions for legitimate incumbency of the category "sickness benefit recipient" in this particular setting are. In lines 12–21, she contrasts her illness to her appearance, acknowledging that the severity of the illness might not show, and formulates this as "not always an advantage"; that is, not always an advantage if she is to be seen as legitimately on sick leave. In other words, she is voicing otherwise tacit knowledge of what we as members of society might recognize as managing the legitimacy of sick leave.[3] This thesis suggests that such management can be conceptualized as "legitimacy work."

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[3] This display of awareness of what is at stake in the meeting in turn works to negotiate the legitimacy of the sick leave in two ways: first, by working to disconnect appearance and illness, making explicit that she is, in fact, sick, despite not looking it, and second, by making visible that, despite knowing how she might be perceived as a consequence of her appearance, she has made no attempt to make herself look more sick (e.g., by not wearing make-up when going to these meetings). This, in turn, counters any notion that she is "strategic" regarding

Legitimacy has been called one of the oldest problems in intellectual history and has in the social sciences mostly been associated with domination, authority, and social stability. Interrogating legitimacy has meant asking under what conditions actors consider cultural beliefs or norms to be valid or binding for social action (e.g., Weber, 1978 [1924]; cf., Izzo, 1987; Jost and Major, 2001; Zelditch, 2001). Regardless of whether researchers have focused on legitimacy or legitimation—that is, on the end point or the process—legitimacy itself has typically been treated as an entity that is external to social situations in which "legitimation" takes place. In addition, legitimacy has often been discussed as a large-scale affair of institutions, ideological systems, or organizations, whereas everyday legitimatory practices have received little attention (Luckmann, 1987).

By contrast, this thesis investigates legitimacy as a mundane concern that is managed in interaction. This means that legitimacy is seen as existing in and for the interactional situations in which it is managed; it is an accomplishment internal to the situations themselves, rather than an end point to be reached once and for all or a quality of some external normative force that influences action. From this point of view, situations such as the one in the example above are of key analytic interest. This is where people do "legitimacy work"; this is where legitimacy is accomplished and brought to life.

Empirically, the thesis focuses on the case of long-term sick leave in Sweden. This is a particularly relevant case for investigating legitimacy as an interactional accomplishment, since the process of sick certification involves continuous assessment of the legitimacy of claimants' grounds for compensation, and shifts in regulations and administrative procedures in Sweden have been motivated in part by considerations of legitimacy (cf., Hultgren, 2011). Correspondingly, the debate on these matters in the Swedish media has been intense over the last couple of decades and has largely focused on the issue of legitimacy, exemplified by cases in which people have been granted sickness benefits but it is deemed that they should not have and vice versa (cf., Frykman and Hansen, 2009; Johnson, 2010). Matters of legitimacy are thus at the core of the Swedish welfare state.

Meanwhile, research on sick leave in Sweden has contributed to minding the legitimate boundaries of this institutional category by providing the kind of knowledge that debates on sick leave legitimacy ultimately rely on, namely explanations of variations of different kinds. For example, attempts to explain why some groups or geographical areas have higher levels of sickness benefit can either support the notion of legitimacy (if the suggested reasons are deemed valid) or illegitimacy (if the suggested reasons are not deemed valid). In some instances, results have even been presented with

such matters—a notion that could work to undermine the legitimacy of her sick leave. In other words, SL is not only orienting to legitimacy work in this excerpt, but also engaging in it.

reference to the debate in question, orienting to how the research strengthens or undermines the notion of illegitimate sick leave as a problem (cf., Flinkfeldt, forthcoming).

Given the prevalence of legitimacy as a concern in different arenas that focus on sick leave, it is notable that very little sick leave research has taken an interest in the details by which sick leave legitimacy actually comes about. While a few studies have asked about people's experiences of being on sick leave, reporting feelings of being questioned or not believed as well as a constant need to think about self-presentation (e.g., Hammarlin, 2008; Lännerström et al., 2013; Vidman, 2007), these have been limited to interview accounts of such situations, rather than studying the situations themselves, and have not taken an interest in actual practices. If people's practices are to be considered as the foundational means by which legitimacy is established, maintained, or undermined, which this thesis suggests, then there is undoubtedly a need for detailed knowledge about *how* this is done in real-life situations outside the interview room. This is true for the case of sick leave in Sweden, but it is also a point that relates to the sociological understanding of legitimacy more generally.

The Study: Investigating Legitimacy Work

The purpose of this thesis is to empirically investigate and theoretically develop the notion of legitimacy as an interactional accomplishment—as *work*. This is done by examining the case of long-term sick leave in Sweden and, more specifically, asking how sick leave legitimacy is managed *in situ*. In broad terms, this means that I aim to examine how people in different settings talk or write about issues relating to their own and others' sick leave, especially focusing on what discursive resources are used and the work that these resources do. This broad aim has been a starting point for the analysis, guiding the project in its initial phases of study design, data collection, and analytic overview. During the analytic process, more specific questions have arisen that have subsequently been pursued in more detail, resulting in three articles, each dealing with the question of sick leave legitimacy from a different angle.

In the articles, I study "legitimacy work" in naturally occurring interactions in both institutional and everyday settings. The first data set consists of audio-recorded multi-professional "status meetings" that the Swedish Social Insurance Agency holds with people who receive sickness benefit. The stakes in these meetings are high, as they feature working ability assessments and an explicit aim of facilitating a return to work. In the second data set, the stakes are considerably lower, at least in institutional terms. This data set consists of online text-in-interaction between people who are on sick leave—a mundane, anonymous setting. I analyze the fine

details of interaction, applying a broadly ethnomethodological framework that draws heavily on conversation analysis, discursive psychology, and membership categorization analysis. This analytic framework enables me to focus on the ways that sick leave legitimacy is managed in these different settings.

The broader aim of the thesis can therefore be re-specified in relation to the three articles:

1. To investigate how "want formulations" in the Social Insurance Agency's "status meetings" with sickness benefit recipients manage the legitimacy of long-term sick leave and how this theoretically relates to Parsons's sick role theory.
2. To investigate how descriptions of everyday activities manage the legitimacy of long-term sick leave in peer-based online forum text-in-interaction.
3. To investigate how gender equality is made relevant in peer-based online forum text-in-interaction and how gendered accounts of housework, as well as gendered categorizations in relation to housework, manage sick leave legitimacy for participants presenting as women.

In addition to generating new, detailed knowledge specifically about sick leave legitimacy, these three analytic questions serve to generate knowledge relating to different theoretical aspects of legitimacy as an interactional accomplishment more generally. For the first question, this has to do with investigating legitimacy work done through orientations to *mental states*; for the second question, the concern is with how legitimacy work relates to the notion of category-bound *activities*; and for the third question, legitimacy work is put in relation to *context* (in the form of gender and gender equality).

As a final point, a brief discussion of the terminology is in order. The thesis focuses on the group of people in Sweden who are on long-term sick leave from work due to an illness-induced inability to work and who receive state-funded compensation for the loss of income that this entails. This group can in Swedish be referred to as "sjukskrivna," (literally: "sick written") which is an informal term widely used both in institutional settings and in everyday talk (cf., Junestav, 2009: 9). Several English translations are possible. One option is "sick-certified (people)," which captures the medical legitimation of illness provided by a doctor's sickness certificate (cf., Sandvin, 2009: 14). However, this translation does not quite correspond to the bureaucratic classification that the Swedish term typically implies; to capture that connotation, it might be better to use the term "sickness benefit claimants/recipients." But this is a more institutionally specific and technical term and does not capture the way that "sjukskrivna" is used in everyday talk. An alternative is to label the category "people on sick leave." This

label, however, can be too general as it is technically nonspecific: Swedish social insurance distinguishes between sick pay, sickness benefit and sickness compensation as alternative forms of income compensation for sick leave (see next chapter), and although the thesis does not examine these distinctions specifically, too general a terminology risks hiding them altogether. The more specific "people on *long-term* sick leave" only escapes parts of this problem. Another commonly used term, at least in research on sick leave, is "sick(ness) absentee" (a Swedish correspondent is "sjukfrånvarande"). This word defines incumbents of the category in terms of their absence from some kind of working life—current or hypothetical employment—and thus imposes a work perspective. Finally, it should be noted that the category in question is referred to in different term across institutional settings: whereas doctors tend to discuss their "patients," the Social Insurance Agency often uses the label "the insured" ("den försäkrade"). Lacking an unequivocally suitable term, and with this discussion in mind, the thesis will use different labels, largely depending on which aspects are emphasized.

The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized as follows. The next chapter—*Research Context*—takes the sociological concept of legitimacy as its starting point, argues for the need to develop an interactional approach to legitimacy, and suggests that long-term sick leave in Sweden is a suitable empirical case for doing so. I argue that, although legitimacy has been a core concern for both policymakers and sick leave researchers, little attention has been directed at the way that legitimacy is negotiated in actual situations. The following chapter—*Studying Legitimacy-in-action*—outlines how this can be done. This chapter presents a framework of theoretical assumptions and analytical tools for empirically analyzing legitimacy as an interactional accomplishment. In the subsequent chapter—*Data, Procedure, and Ethical Considerations*—I describe the design of the empirical studies. I discuss the choice of different materials for analysis, how these materials were collected and analyzed, and important ethical considerations relating to each data set. Finally, following a summary of the three articles, the concluding chapter brings together the results both empirically and theoretically. This chapter explicates the theoretical properties of "legitimacy work" as the concept has developed based on the empirical analyses. It also discusses the thesis's implications and offers suggestions for future research.

2. Research Context: Legitimacy and the Case of Long-Term Sick Leave

This chapter addresses legitimacy in two ways. First, it gives an overview of how legitimacy has been approached in sociology and related disciplines and argues that the question of how legitimacy is managed in actual situations has largely been ignored. Second, it establishes legitimacy as a prevalent concern in policy and administration, as well as in public debate on long-term sick leave in Sweden. It argues, however, that scholarly research on sick leave has oriented to, provided for, or more explicitly contributed to debates on the issue of sick leave legitimacy, rather than investigated legitimacy in its own right. This makes long-term sick leave a suitable case for exploring legitimacy as a practical accomplishment. By bracketing concerns about what "is" or "should be" legitimate sick leave, I suggest that legitimating practices themselves can instead be made a topic for analysis.

Legitimacy in Social Research

Legitimacy has been called one of the oldest problems in intellectual history, having engaged philosophers and social theorists for well over two thousand years (Zelditch, 2001). Legitimacy as a commonsense concept goes beyond notions of what is "legal" and is often used to signify the normatively justified or warranted, or, "the quality of being reasonable and acceptable" (Legitimacy, n.d.). The concept has been used in sociological theory in a range of ways; indeed, some claim that most sociological literature in one way or another makes links to legitimacy in a broad sense (Izzo, 1987), which makes it more or less impossible to provide a full account of sociological understandings of legitimacy. This section will introduce what I see as the main strands, focusing on approaches of most relevance to the interests of the thesis, thus excluding normatively oriented accounts that discuss what is or should be legitimate.

Several sociologists have pointed out that legitimacy as a phenomenon is diffuse. Zelditch (2001: 40), for instance, writes:

> Because the dependent variable differs from process to process and from level to level, there appears to be no unique dependent variable associated

with legitimation processes, except that legitimacy is always a matter of voluntarily accepting that something is 'right', and its consequence is always the stability of whatever structure emerges from the process. What is accepted as right is concretely different from case to case.

Dominant sociological approaches to legitimacy have primarily been concerned with explaining power, authority, and political stability, asking under what conditions people come to accept obedience as a moral obligation (for overviews, see, Izzo, 1987; Zelditch, 2001). Weber, for instance, identified different types of legitimate orders of domination (i.e., authority), focusing particularly on the acceptance and implementation of power (e.g., Weber, 2007 [1919]; 1978 [1924]: 215 ff.; see also, Bensman, 1979). Social order, he argues, is most stable if it "enjoys the prestige of being considered binding, or, as it may be expressed, of 'legitimacy'" (Weber, 1978 [1924]: 31). By this account, legitimacy thus means that actors consider norms to be "valid," so that action is governed by a belief in the order as binding in a sense that goes beyond self-interest or custom.

Interpreting Weber as part of developing his own theorizing, Parsons (1937) found in Weber support for his own view of action as steered by internalized cultural values. It has, however, been argued that Parsons exaggerated the centrality of norms for Weber's conception of social action more generally, as well as the importance of legitimacy relative to other factors in which domination may find its foundation (Cohen et al., 1975). Regardless of how close his understanding of legitimacy is to Weber's, a great deal of Parsons's work relates to legitimacy. Most relevant for this thesis is his conceptualization of the sick role (Parsons, 1951; 1975; see also Burnham, 2014; Williams, 2005). In short, this conceptualization models the conditions under which illness is seen as warranting exemption from social responsibilities (such as work). These conditions stipulate that the person must both want to get well and subject him- or herself to medical expertise (Parsons, 1951: 436 f.). Taking a sick day is then seen as guided by an internalized norm that it is okay to do so as long as the person fulfills the conditions of this normative order. The sick role is discussed in more depth in article I.

Approaching legitimacy as primarily having to do with institutions (e.g., family), Berger and Luckmann (1967) define legitimation as something that "'explains' the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings and (…) justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 93). Legitimation is thus not sense-making in broader terms, but a specific kind of sense-making: justifying what is in terms of what should be (Luckmann, 1987: 111). This is a matter not only of values, but of knowledge, too. In effect, legitimation is built into the vocabulary on a fundamental level, since incipient legitimation takes place whenever a

system of linguistic objectification is transmitted (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 94). A second level of legitimation involves pragmatic schemes in the form of, for instance, proverbs, wise sayings, and folk tales, whereas theoretical knowledge and the development of more autonomous legitimating bodies constitute a third level. On a fourth level are bodies of theoretical tradition that encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 94 f.). While Berger and Luckmann's conceptualization of legitimacy allows for attention to detailed social practices, the connection to actual, rather than invented, instances remains rather vague.

In his later writing, Luckmann (1987: 109) notes that "[e]verybody seems to be concerned with major legitimatory constructs," and proposes drawing attention "away from the grand ideological systems and down to ordinary legitimatory processes in everyday life"—"small time" legtimatory strategies such as those "by school children vis-à-vis their teachers and vice versa." He explicitly opposes, for instance, Luhmann's (1987) approach to legitimating processes as found in social systems, arguing that their roots instead lie in social action and that they thus have an interactional basis (Luckmann, 1987). Relating his argument to Weber's, Luckmann (1987) argues that legitimation is the act of making sense of power, or of a certain distribution of power; since power and its legitimation can be found almost anywhere in society, researchers should study the procedures by which people engage in such legitimation. Analyses of legitimacy on an interactional level, Luckmann (1987: 113) argues, have been "if not entirely overlooked, then surely neglected" within sociology, and he stresses an urgent need for systematic study, identifying in particular conversation analytic research and some forms of linguistics as contributing important knowledge in this respect.

Similarly, social psychologists have argued that matters of legitimacy enter into ordinary forms of social interaction, so that such concerns are integral also to social psychology (Jost and Major, 2001). In a review of this research, Johnson et al. (2006: 57) conclude that they mostly tend to see legitimacy as:

a) the construal of social objects as consistent with cultural beliefs, norms and values that are presumed to be shared by others in the local situation;

b) fundamentally a collective process, mediated by the perception and behavior of individuals;

c) depending on a perceived (not necessarily actual) consensus that most people accept the object as legitimate;

d) having both a cognitive dimension that constitutes the object as objective, and a normative dimension that constitutes the object as right.

Despite constructionist orientations, therefore, there seems to be some consensus regarding the pivotal role played by beliefs and values for legitimacy (Jost and Major, 2001). Furthermore, while it has been argued that the concept of legitimacy as implying a notion of some clearly defined state is something that should be abandoned in favor of a more processual approach (e.g., Johnson et al., 2006), a focus on processes is still typically taken to imply a starting point and an end point involving cognitive states (cf., Bourricaud, 1987). To the extent that such reliance on cognitive assumptions entails an understanding of practices as dependent on or reflective of inner states, it not only risks downplaying the relevance of social practices, but also brings into question the observability of legitimacy.

A systematic, identificatory approach to legitimation is the discourse analytic, descriptive framework developed by van Leeuwen (2007; cf., van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). He identifies four forms of legitimation of institutions: authorization (legitimation by reference to authority, tradition, custom, or law); moral evaluation (legitimation by reference to value systems); rationalization (legitimation by reference to goals of institutionalized social action); and mythopoesis (legitimation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish illegitimate actions), all of which are realized through specific linguistic resources. Discourses, he argues, can be viewed as legitimation discourses, so that the concept of legitimation provides a link between social practices and discourses (van Leeuwen, 2007). In other words, this approach not only entails a notion of discourses as entities of some kind, but also sees practices and action as, at least to some extent, separate from discourses; an understanding that is quite different from ethnomethodologically oriented approaches in which legitimation is inherent to action, as this thesis suggests.

To summarize, some common features of the described understandings of legitimacy can be identified. While sociological accounts often focus on larger-scale systems or notions of authority and stability, there are also approaches, particularly within social psychology, that have a clear interest in legitimatory practices. These viewpoints broadly share some core ideas. First, they tend to explicitly or implicitly rely on cognitively based notions such as perceptions, beliefs, values, or internalized norms. Second, legitimacy is treated as an entity, with beginnings and ends, that is external to situations in which it is displayed or negotiated. Finally, the main focus has been the legitimacy of institutions (or, in organizational sociology, of organizations).

By contrast, an ethnomethodologically oriented approach involves bracketing cognition in examining people's practices (this will be theoretically developed in the next chapter). While it could be argued that ethnomethodological, conversation analytic, and related lines of research implicitly deal with issues of legitimacy (cf., Luckmann, 1987), the concept itself has not been given much attention wthin this literature; however, it is

used in a more or less commonsensical way. Arguably, an ethnomethodologically oriented notion of legitimacy focuses on the methods by which something is established *as* legitimate (or illegitimate), that is, *as* justified, right, warranted, acceptable, etc.; it is *legitimacy work*[4] in actual situations that is of interest. Such work can be performed in relation to different things, and consequently, this literature has mentioned legitimacy in a range of ways.

Discursive psychological research has discussed legitimation practices in terms of, for instance, how accounts warranting different forms of *oppression* (such as racism) are structured (e.g., Tileaga, 2005; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Such research has also identified rhetorical devices that legitimate certain organizational processes—a "discursive apparatus" for legitimacy (Kilger and Börjesson, 2015). With a slightly different focus, conversation analysts have pointed to how *actions* can be treated as legitimate or not in talk-in-interaction; by explaining the reasons for not knowing the answer to a question, for instance, the speaker treats the question as legitimate (Keevallik, 2011). Along these lines, extreme case formulations have been identified to legitimate claims when interactants anticipate co-interactants to undermine them, or to, as part of a complaint, portray a situation as a legitimate complainable (Pomerantz, 1986). Similarly, as part of patients' requests for medication, the use of extreme case formulations have been argued to justify the legitimacy of invoked health concerns (Lindström and Weatherall, 2015). Another possibility is that an *activity* may need to be legitimated. For instance, doctors and patients in primary care visits tend to orient to the "doctorability" of medical problems; that is, they legitimate the activity of seeking medical care (Heritage, 2009). Finally, *categorization* can work to focus attention on matters of legitimacy; for instance, the ways in which asylum seekers are oriented to in categorial terms can inform a debate "about the legitimacy or illegitimacy of asylum seekers' claims" (Goodman and Speer, 2007: 179).

While these and other studies within this broader field of discursively or interactionally focused research mention legitimacy, the lack of a more systematic approach to legitimacy means that their sociological contribution in this respect has remained elusive. Luckmann's (1987) anticipation of this field's potential for informing the sociological understanding of legitimacy has thus not been fully realized.[5]

In focusing on legitimacy, empirically investigating how it is managed in interaction and theoretically developing the concept of legitimacy work based on these investigations, the thesis attempts to clarify what an

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[4] This concept and its properties are further specified and discussed in the concluding chapter.
[5] In addition, only some of these examples might be understood to explicitly relate legitimacy to notions of power, in the sense that Luckmann (1987) proposed. This should not necessarily be seen as a shortcoming, but has to do with the way that particularly conversation analytic research tends to approach "context," see p. 41–43.

ethnomethodologically informed position, with a focus on talk- and text-in-interaction, would be. The thesis thus aims to contribute to the sociological understanding of legitimacy more generally by developing an alternative approach to legitimacy that does not rely on cognitive assumptions, does not assume an external entity or end-point, and emphasizes categories rather than institutions, rendering legitimacy an immediate concern for people in their social encounters.

Legitimacy on the Agenda: The Case of Sick Leave in Sweden

I will, in what follows, describe and discuss long-term sick leave in Sweden from three angles: regulations and administrative process, public debate, and research. These descriptions serve as a contextualization and introduction for readers who are unfamiliar with the Swedish social insurance system, as well as a way to introduce long-term sick leave as a suitable case for investigating legitimacy.

Assessing Legitimacy: Regulations and Administration of Long-Term Sick Leave in Sweden

The main purpose of the sickness insurance in Sweden is to handle the risk of individuals not being able to provide for themselves if falling ill (SOU 2006:86; cf., Hugemark, 1996). One of the most important tasks of the social insurance administration is to distinguish between those who are entitled to benefits and those who are not. Regulations for assessments, administrative procedures, and rehabilitation measures thus function as distinguishing mechanisms (Lindqvist, 2000).

Since 1955, Swedish sickness insurance has been public and nonselective; that is, it is compulsory, and a person's medical history does not affect his or her inclusion (Brorsson, 2000). The insurance compensates for loss of income due to an inability to work caused by a medically certified illness.[6]

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[6] All information about the insurance can be found at the Social Insurance Agency's website (Försäkringskassan, 2015b). Unless stated otherwise, this is the source that has been used for all information in this section. The section describes the most common situations and does not cover all exceptions; see the Social Insurance Agency's website for more detailed information. It should also be pointed out that this is a description valid at the time of writing. During the course of the research project, the regulations and administratve process have been subject to several changes that have made the insurance stricter. Furthermore, there are indications that counter-changes will be made to relax the regulations in the near future (particularly regarding time limits for sickness benefit, which the parliament has decided to remove in February 2016). For these reasons, it is recommended that the reader who has a particular interest in the exact design of the compensatory system visits the Social Insurance Agency's website for an up-to-date account.

The first sick day is a qualifying day that is not compensated (for self-employed claimants, this waiting period is typically one week). Days 2–14 are compensated by the employer ("sick pay") at 80% of the normal salary. After that, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (SIA) grants and administers sickness benefit, which currently amounts to just below 80% of the person's income for those earning between 10 700 and 333 700 SEK annually.[7] Incomes below that do not qualify for the benefit, and incomes above the limit do not render a higher benefit. All compensation is taxed. A person who is sick for seven days or more needs to supply a doctor's certificate (in some cases this may be required from the first day of illness), which is used by the employer and the SIA to assess entitlement to benefits. Sickness benefit can be granted for 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% of full time, depending on how much working capacity is reduced. It is thus possible to work half the day and receive sickness benefit for the other half.

Sickness benefit is in the normal case limited to a maximum of 364 out of every 450 days. After that, it is possible to receive sickness benefit at a lower level of compensation (just below 75%, i.e., the "continuation level") for a maximum of 550 days. Beyond this, additional days at the continuation level can be granted under exceptional circumstances, such as hospitalization, an approved occupational injury, the likelihood of a significant worsening of the illness if the person were to participate in a labor market program, or if the nature of the illness would make any other course of action "unreasonable." There are also instances ("serious diseases") when it is possible to apply for more than 364 days of sickness benefit at the normal level of compensation, as well as instances when a person who has received the maximum number of days' worth of benefits and has no or a very low qualifying income can receive additional sickness benefit "in special cases."

If working ability is permanently reduced ("for the foreseeable future"), sickness compensation (which is lower than sickness benefit) can be granted for 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% of full time, depending on how much the working capacity is reduced. For people who are between 19 and 29 years of age, the corresponding benefit is "activity compensation," which works like sickness compensation, except that working ability does not need to be "permanently" reduced, as long as it is assessed as reduced for at least a year. Besides these different forms of state compensation, some people have private or contractual insurances that can render additional compensation.

Before 2008, it was possible to receive compensation for sick leave for an unlimited amount of time. The time limits were introduced to standardize the process and promote active rehabilitation and earlier return to work (although it has been suggested that the reforms have not had these effects, cf., Ståhl et al., 2012). In a similar vein, the process of assessing working

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[7] These levels follow the development of the economy, based on changes of the Consumer Price Index, which is updated annually.

ability was reformed, such that ability to work is judged in increasingly broad terms the longer the claimant has received sickness benefit. During the first ninety days, working ability is assessed in relation to current work tasks. This means that a factory worker who needs to be able to walk around might be granted sickness benefit for a foot injury, whereas an office worker who is sitting down during the work day might not. From days 91 to 180, working ability is assessed in relation to alternative work tasks with the same employer; perhaps the factory worker with a foot injury might be able to do some other work at the same workplace that does not require him or her to stand up. Finally, from days 181 to 365, working ability is assessed against the labor market as a whole. This means that even if our factory worker is unable to perform work tasks for his or her current employer, he or she might in theory be able to do something else at some other workplace, in which case sickness benefit can be withdrawn. This, however, does not apply if the SIA case officer makes the assessment that it is highly likely that the person will be able to return to his or her regular employer before day 366 (or if assessing working ability in relation to the regular labor market is deemed "unreasonable"), in which case working ability is continuously assessed in relation to the current workplace. For the self-employed and unemployed, the assessment steps work somewhat differently. Self-employed claimants' working ability is assessed in relation to current work tasks for the first 180 days, after which it is assessed in relation to the labor market as a whole. For unemployed claimants, working ability is assessed in relation to the labor market as a whole from the very beginning.

Another measure introduced in 2007 to promote shorter and more equal periods of sick leave was recommended time frames for sick leave. These were directed at physicians' issuing of sickness certificates, which form an important basis for the SIA's assessments of rights to compensation. Diagnoses are listed at the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare's website (Socialstyrelsen, 2015), together with recommendations for sickness certification, and departures from these recommendations should be explained in doctors' certificates. Research has suggested that certificates have become more detailed since this reform, but there might be other causes for this as well (Söderberg et al., 2010). Finally, it should be noted that multiparty "status" meetings are also an important part of the process of administering sickness benefit and sickness compensation. The regulations and functions of such meetings are discussed starting on page 65.

The points to be taken from this rather technical description are, first, that there is a lot at stake for people who seek compensation for sick leave, and, second, that the process by which their claims are administered is detailed, complex, and involves regular points of assessment. In addition, there are indications that this process has become increasingly difficult to navigate, given political signals that the SIA needs to make more "accurate" assessments of sickness benefit entitlements (cf., Hultgren and Barmark,

2008). This means that the way that claimants present their cases may have become increasingly important.

Debating Legitimacy: Authentic Illness, Attitudes, and Culture

As indicated in the previous section, the compensatory and administrative system for sick leave in Sweden has been the focus of continuous debate, which has oriented to the notion of wrongly categorized people (i.e., people who receive sickness benefits but should not) as a problem, thus making (il)legitimate sick leave relevant as a political concern (cf., Frykman and Hansen, 2009; Hermansson and Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2010; Junestav, 2009; Palmehag, 2007). Over the last fifteen years, the debate in politics, the media, and among researchers has to a large extent focused on variations in rates of long-term sick leave and the challenge of lowering these numbers and thereby decreasing society's costs (Johnson, 2010). Much of this debate has been spurred by the fact that numbers doubled between 1998 and 2003; they have since decreased significantly, but there is a rising trend, and updated figures are publicly reported on a regular basis (Försäkringskassan, 2015a).

The debate has taken several turns, shifting between two moral standpoints: one that defines people on sick leave as victims, and one that regards them as actors choosing services provided by the state (Frykman and Hansen, 2009). In the first instance, citizens are deemed "at risk" (e.g., for a poor working environment) and thus in need of state interventions. In contrast, the second instance turns this relationship around, and focuses on the morally oriented risks associated with the insurance itself ("moral hazard", i.e., that people take advantage of the insurance or expose themselves to risk environments that they would avoid if it were not for the insurance). A study of how sick leave was described and debated in the major Swedish newspapers' opinion articles (such as editorials and letters to the editor) between 1997 and 2006 shows that sick leave has gone from being described mainly as a symptom of other problems in society or the workplace, to being seen as a societal problem in itself (Palmehag 2007; cf., Junestav, 2009). People on sick leave were, during this time, beginning to be questioned: were they all really ill? Weren't some of them just using sickness benefit for other reasons? Words like "overutilization" and "fraud" became part of the vocabulary used (Hermansson and Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2010). The defenders brought forth other explanations of the increase in sick leave figures, such as a tougher work climate and a breakdown of rehabilitation (e.g., Johnson, 2010; Larsson et al., 2005), and the debate soon became polarized. Eventually, the problem was said to lie in society's changed attitudes. People on sick leave were still said to be overutilizing the insurance, but they were described as doing so not to consciously take advantage of public resources, but because they had certain

(and, more or less explicitly spelled out, "wrong") attitudes toward illness and sick leave that made them think that they should be on sick leave for things that, following the regulations of the insurance, they should not. The description of "the sick leave problem" as linked to attitudes was eventually adopted by many on the other side of the debate, rendering what used to be a polemical dispute more consensual and subsequently leading to a less intense debate, along with a decrease in media coverage (Palmehag, 2007).

Since then, "activation" policies have gained significance. The notion that work per se is beneficial for health has increasingly been used to motivate changes in regulations that emphasize active work reintegration rather than passive compensation, aiming to stimulate participation in the labor market and thereby reduce sick leave costs (Seing, 2014; cf., Nybom, 2013).

Legitimacy is at the core of this debate. In addition, it is clear from the data examined in this thesis that the debate is recurrently oriented to in sickness benefit recipients' everyday and institutional encounters. Although the thesis does not investigate the effects of the debate on how people on sick leave manage legitimacy, it is therefore safe to say that the debate itself is a concern for people on sick leave and features in their legitimacy work.

Minding Legitimacy: Previous Research on Sick Leave in Sweden

To some extent, the above description of the public debate in Sweden also reflects the different strands of research on sick leave: researchers have tried to find reasons for what have been considered "high" rates and the variation in rates over time, between different groups, between different regions, etc., often in collaboration with or with funding from social authorities. In effect, the field of sick leave research is multidisciplinary and, to an overwhelming degree, explanatory in orientation (Alexanderson, 1998; Hetzler, 2005; Michailakis, 2008:163 ff.; Palmer, 2004; SBU, 2003).

Some main foci have been the effect of the physical and psychosocial working environment on sick leave (e.g., Bastin et al., 2003; Bäckman, 2001; Burdorf et al., 2014; Eklund et al., 2002; Göransson et al., 2002; Järvholm et al., 2014; Lidwall, 2003; Lindholm et al., 2005; Theorell et al., 2015; Wikman, 2004) and group-specific explanations of the variation in sick leave levels that emphasize variables such as gender or socioeconomic status (e.g., Alexanderson et al., 1996; Alexanderson, 2000; Andrén, 2001; Backhans, 2004; Krantz and Östergren, 2001; Krantz et al., 2005; Mastekaasa, 2000; Månsson and Merlo, 2001; Nordgren and Söderlund, forthcoming, 2016; Staland Nyman, 2008; Staland Nyman et al., 2014; Starzmann et al., 2015; Sydsjö et al., 2001). Another explanatory strand has focused on system-oriented factors, investigating, for instance, correlations with other state benefits or effects of reforms such as changes in

compensation levels or in the rehabilitation process (e.g., Hemmingsson, 2004; Hetzler, 2009; Hetzler et al., 2005; Hultgren and Barmark, 2008; Johansson and Palme, 2003; Nilsing et al., 2012; Seing et al., 2015b; Seing et al., 2015a; Seing et al., 2012; Sturesson et al., 2015; Ståhl et al., 2012; Söderberg et al., 2010).

Arguably, there are two main rationalities for these kinds of studies. Either, there is an underlying presumption of sick leave legitimacy, without which it may be difficult to interpret, for instance, the impact that a stressful working environment has on the level of sick leave. Alternatively, there is an underlying presumption of possible illegitimacy, which may inform the interpretation of studies that seek to investigate factors that, for a given state of illness, might increase the rate of sick leave. This is not to say that studies necessarily take such explicit standpoints (although it happens), but rather that the way that they report their findings provides for interpretations along either of these two lines (cf., Michailakis, 2008: 169 ff.).

These rationalities are visible in how research results are discussed in public debate. An illuminating example is the body of research on attitudes toward sick leave, or "sick leave cultures," which is largely an explanatory line of inquiry that has focused on the correlation between sick leave and attitudes (e.g., Frykman and Hansen, 2009; Frykman et al., 2009; Frykman and Hansen, 2005; Lindbeck et al., 2004; Palmer, 2006; Stensöta, 2009b). Spurred by public debate on whether people are "actually" as ill as the sick leave figures indicate, particularly in light of geographical differences in sick leave figures that do not seem to be related to the general level of health in a certain area, a number of studies have investigated these questions from both quantitative and qualitative points of view. As I have argued elsewhere (Flinkfeldt, forthcoming), the way that attitudes and culture are used as explanations for variations in sick leave levels in these studies provides for moralistic readings in which what is taken to be the "problem" of such a culture is individualized. The way these studies discuss the notion of a "culture" thus becomes a rhetorical resource for political interventions directed at people on sick leave: these studies differentiate and rank groups, essentialize traits, and explain and evaluate conduct (Flinkfeldt, forthcoming). Although the investigations of "sick leave culture" stand out in terms of their political implications, such studies are not unique in the way they have been used in political discussions about the legitimate boundaries of the category "sickness benefit recipient." In sum, then, the kind of explanations that this field of research has generated has contributed to a public debate in which sick leave legitimacy has clearly been the issue.

A much smaller strand of research consists of studies of people's experiences of sick leave. This predominantly qualitative line of inquiry has largely analyzed interview-generated self-reports about what it is like to be on sick leave. Surprisingly, in many ways this work is also explanatory in orientation, reporting, for instance, on lay explanations of issues leading to

ill health (e.g., Ede and Starrin, 2014; Frykman and Hansen, 2009; Lindbäck and Nordgren, 2015; Lännerström et al., 2013; Vidman, 2007). Like other types of explanatory studies, these qualitative studies provide arguments that lend themselves to being used by one side or the other in the public debate about sick leave legitimacy. In addition, some of these studies more explicitly orient to the question of whether interviewees' sick leave *seems* legitimate or not (e.g., Falkdal et al., 2006; Vidman, 2009). For instance, one study concludes that interviewees' descriptions show "that they have valued hard work and independence" (Vidman, 2009: 85, author's translation).

In conclusion, most previous research has treated sick leave as an entity to which behavior can be linked and investigated by a cause-and-effect type of analysis. In establishing "causes" of sick leave, this line of research largely presupposes or questions legitimate categorizations. To the extent that research builds on descriptions (of attitudes to sick leave, levels of impairment, experiences, etc.), these descriptions are typically treated either as reflections of underlying states or beliefs or as reports to be assessed for accuracy. Neither of these approaches takes into account the discursive and rhetorical embeddedness of descriptions (cf., Radley and Billig, 1996, for a similar critique in relation to health research in general). Such analyses interpret people's utterances, but ignore how those utterances are structured and what people do as they produce them.

However "critical" these points might be perceived to be, they should not be taken as disputing the achievements of the field of research on sick leave in Sweden. Rather, the point is to explicate assumptions and procedures that such analyses recognize, use, and ultimately depend on in an unexplicated way. This means that the kind of knowledge that this thesis brings and the kind of knowledge that the field of sick leave research more generally generates are "incommensurably different and unavoidably related" (Garfinkel, 1996: 9). These kinds of research should be seen as alternates, rather than alternatives: one can never replace the other, due to their radically different foci.

Analyzing Legitimacy: Introducing an Interactional Approach

Despite the ways in which regulations, public debate, and research on sick leave can be said to contribute to constructing the legitimate boundaries of sick leave or to even be "about" legitimacy, legitimatory practices have rarely been discussed in previous sick leave research. When legitimacy is mentioned, it is often in administrative terms, and without details about the practices themselves. For instance, researchers have noted that the medical certificate legitimates sick leave (e.g., Sandvin, 2009) and that an illness's

legitimacy within the social insurance system depends on factors beyond medicine (e.g., Johnson, 2009). Some researchers have also commented that the legitimacy of the system is undermined by the illegitimacy of some sickness benefit recipients (e.g., Stensöta, 2009a). When sick leave legitimacy is mentioned at all, it tends to be treated as a dichotomous variable—the sick leave is either legitimate or not—thus obscuring the relational and practical features of legitimacy.

Some studies have pointed to the legitimating practices of people on sick leave, but mostly in passing. For instance, Hansen (2006: 117, author's translation) mentions that "the more restrictive one can present the system, the more legitimate it is to be there," but without showing how this is achieved in practice. Vidman (2009; 2007) discusses sickness benefit recipients' reported feelings of embarrassment or shame at receiving sickness benefits and their experiences of being observed by social authorities and people in their everyday lives and so having to constantly think about how things they say or do might appear to people. Vidman (2009) also makes note of legitimating practices, writing that her interviewees described themselves as acting in morally acceptable ways and as being without blame for their illness, trying to prove—to others and to themselves—that they were not lazy or simulating in order to get out of work.

Being believed is something that several of these studies describe as an issue. For instance, Hammarlin (2008) reports that interviewees suffering from burnout said that they sometimes wished they had a diagnosis, such as cancer or a heart condition, whose implications would be easier for other people to grasp.[8] Similarly, Lännerström et al. (2013) describe sickness benefit recipients' feelings that the legitimacy of their sick leave is questioned and some of the ways they sometimes adjusted their behavior as a consequence:

> Being sick-listed was accompanied by a feeling of being questioned by both society and the authorities. Some participants described that society started to look at them differently when they became sick-listed. They expressed being stigmatized and expected to behave and look in a certain way. Some participants heard rumours saying they looked too healthy to be ill. (…) Some had heard people imply that they were sick-listed so that they could take care of their children. Other participants described embracing unspoken rules to not go out and work in the garden, or even go out at all, in fear of being seen as too healthy. (Lännerström et al., 2013: 6)

These studies support the notion that there is a need to further investigate how sick leave legitimacy is managed. However, they themselves build on descriptions of (the need for) legitimacy work, and do not examine the

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[8] A study of case files supports the notion that diagnoses matter for how the SIA assesses rights to sickness benefits. This study further concludes that the contextualization of an individual's illness or situation at work attributes moral value to the individual, which has an affect on outcomes (Hultgren, 2011:146).

practices themselves. By retelling stories of their interviewees, rather than studying those stories in terms of their structure or what they do in the situation of their telling, this research fails to take into account how interviewees' descriptions may work to legitimate the sick leave as part of the interview situation itself. Instead of approaching interviewees' descriptions *as* legitimacy work, they are treated as experiences *of* legitimacy work. As Potter (2012) has argued, such an approach to studying experience faces the problem of how to analytically suppress situated actions for mere description. An event can be described in an indefinite range of ways, and it is not possible to separate the representation, the act of representing, and the "object" to which the representation refers from each other. One study has more explicitly investigated how interviewees manage the legitimacy of their sick leave as part of telling a researcher about their experiences (see Flinkfeldt, 2007; 2008a; 2008b). This study, however, is theoretically undeveloped and has the more general problem that research interviews are very particular interactional situations, and it is thus not at all certain that conclusions based on such data bears much resemblance to what people do in other situations.

As compared to previous sick leave research, this thesis takes a radically different approach to investigating sick leave legitimacy by turning to ethnomethodology and developing the concept of "legitimacy work" as something that people engage in as part of social interactions in which their incumbency of a particular category is at stake. This is interactional work that people do, that constructs the incumbency of the institutional category "sickness benefit recipient" as legitimate (or not). Legitimacy work can be part of the process of obtaining sickness certification in the first place, both in the doctor's office (cf., Wheat et al., 2015) and at the social insurance agency—that is, it can be part of providing grounds for the institutional categorization as such. However, even when an institutional categorization has already been made by the granting of sickness benefit, legitimacy work is continuously performed as part of institutional contact and in mundane settings, where failing to appear as a legitimate incumbent of the category could affect how friends, family, acquaintances, and colleagues treat the ill person and could form a basis for a process of institutional recategorization. For instance, there are cases in which neighbors have reported a sickness benefit recipient to the Social Insurance Agency, questioning the legitimacy of their sick leave on the basis of things they have seen them do or heard them say (Vidman, 2009:180; cf., Haglund, 2013). Legitimacy work, therefore, is of crucial importance in the everyday lives of people who are on long-term sick leave, and this thesis investigates how it is done in practice.

This approach to legitimacy emphasizes interactional practices while bracketing people's inner processes. This also means that the question of explaining sick leave, with which scientific and public debate on sick leave has been so preoccupied, is bracketed, as is other "contextual" or "structural" information that explanatory accounts often draw on. Instead, "context" is

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treated as an emergent feature on the basis of participants' orientations. These theoretical standpoints have their foundations in ethnomethodological theorizing and in theoretical and empirical work done within the ethnomethodologically oriented strands that have developed from Harvey Sacks's (1992) work on talk-in-interaction. Since the approach to legitimacy that is developed in the thesis is both theoretically informed and data-driven, it is necessary to first describe the theoretical framework, the data and methods, and the empirical analyses—which will be done over the next three chapters—before returning to a more detailed conceptualization of "legitimacy work" in the concluding chapter.

3. Studying Legitimacy-in-Action: Framework for Analysis

When we interact—in talk or in text—we establish who we are to one another, constructing versions of the world and of ourselves using whatever means are available to us (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Drew, 2005a).[9] People in society thus actively and attentively engage in practices that produce the world as witnessable and recognizable (Garfinkel, 1967; 2002). This ethnomethodological foundation has stimulated a range of approaches to empirically studying how such work is done in actual situations. Of particular relevance to this thesis are lines of ethnomethodologically oriented research stemming from Sacks's (1992) understanding of conversation as the primordial site of sociality, along with the methods for examining the systematic ways in which conversation functions that have developed based on this understanding (for a comprehensive overview, see Sidnell and Stivers, 2014). This approach extends to talk-in-interaction more generally, providing insights into the detailed workings of institutional interaction, and has increasingly come to engage with Sacks's (1992; cf., Fitzgerald and Housley, 2015; Hester and Eglin, 1997a) original understanding of categories and with explicitly non-cognitivist standpoints specified further within discursive psychology (e.g., Edwards, 1997; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007a; Tileaga and Stokoe, 2015). In taking a synthetic approach to this broad field of interactional research, this chapter provides a theoretical foundation for conceptualizing legitimacy as something that is not just "talked about," but *worked for* in, through, and for talk- and text-in-interaction.

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[9] Constructionism, in this thesis, is understood "not as a positive statement opposed to realism" (Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 1995: 41) but instead refers to "the constructive nature of descriptions, rather than the entities that (according to descriptions) exist beyond them" (Edwards, 1997: 48). The bottom line is that all reality-producing acts can be examined for how they are produced, and illness, poverty or any other phenomenon is thus no less real for being viewed as a construction in epistemological terms (Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 1995; Iversen, 2015).

Ethno-methods, Social Action, and Order: Some Ethnomethodological Foundations

Everything happening in the social world relies on shared methods of practical reasoning, or *ethno-methods* (Garfinkel, 1967: 252). The term "ethnomethodology" originated in a study of jury members' "folk ways" of addressing the methodological aspects of the process of coming to terms with what "actually happened" in particular legal cases (Garfinkel, 1974) and has been defined as "the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life" (Garfinkel, 1967: 11). Garfinkel thus directed researchers' attention to the local, orderly production of intelligibility and intersubjectivity, which were to be studied in actual situations. Members[10] work to render activities "visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes" (Garfinkel, 1967: vii), meaning that they are "accountable": actors are, in and for a practical situation, seen to behave in recognizable and describable ways (Garfinkel, 1967: 185). This implies that the shared methods of practical reasoning inform both the production and the recognition of action—indeed, the methods of production and recognition are the same (Garfinkel, 1967: 1).

In his famous "breaching experiments," Garfinkel demonstrated the orderliness of the ordinary. For example, questioning the meaning of an interactant's use of commonplace words would result in accounting practices making what had happened intelligible and reasonable, such as the other person having an agenda or simply being crazy (Garfinkel, 1967: 42). Rather than being analyses, these experiments served as tutorials "to stop the process of taking for granted the process of social construction, and, in doing so, reveal the details of member's methods for producing social orders" (Rawls, 2002: 33). In this sense, they served to make Garfinkel's students grasp the way that accounts of "what happened" are retrospective representations of action as if depending on norms or rules (Garfinkel, 2002).

Garfinkel's relationship to other sociological lines of theorizing is complex. In genealogical accounts, Garfinkel's work is often presented as reactive to Parsonian functionalism, as phenomenology, or as a form of symbolic interactionism. However, as Rawls (2011; 2002; 1989) has noted, such accounts tend to downplay the originality of ethnomethodology and/or misunderstand some of its core aspects.

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[10] Although the term "member" is often used in places where we are accustomed to see the word "person," these should not be understood as synonyms. Rather, this substitution makes explicit that individuals themselves are not of much interest to ethnomethodology. The term "member" refers to mastery of natural language, that is, to competencies that people have as members of society, that allow them to talk and act in ways that make sense to others and are correspondingly heard and recognized by them "as members" (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970).

While Garfinkel was a student of Parsons, his ideas had started to form long before this, reactive, in a sense, to basic assumptions of the time, rather than to Parsons's writing in particular (Rawls, 2002). Shifting focus from Parsonian grand theory to the practical organization of social life opened up for exploring social order on a detailed level—the study of *how* ethnomethods are used in everyday life (Heritage, 1984). This shift crucially entailed a different take on social action, developed in opposition to conceptualizations of action as caused by internalized cultural values (for instance as represented by Parsons, 1951; 1937). Garfinkel argued that those conceptualizations missed out on the everyday practical reasoning of social actors, and sought to remedy "the sketchy treatment of the actor's knowledge and understanding within the voluntaristic theory" (Heritage, 1984: 9). In this critique, Garfinkel was influenced by phenomenology, particularly Schutz's (1964) emphasis on actors' active participation in the construction of social order by their experiential interpretation of it in terms of commonsense constructs. In addition, the phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity as practically achieved and maintained based on the assumption that experiences are similar for all practical purposes bears some resemblance to the ethnomethodological standpoint. However, Garfinkel developed a more empirically oriented approach that more clearly took constraints into consideration (cf., Heritage, 1984: 71 ff.). In a similar sense, Garfinkel engaged with symbolic interactionist literature, developing his own ideas in relation to standpoints taken therein. For instance, Garfinkel's understanding of identity partly developed in relation to Mead (e.g., 1934) but rejected the conceptualization of role as something individuals possess or inhabit, as well as the focus on people's consciousness and motivations, arguing that this focus reified the conception of the person (Rawls, 2011).

The central point of the above discussion is that Garfinkel was an original theorist and did not, in fact, belong to or accept "*any* other perspective" (Rawls, 2011: 278, emphasis in original). Juxtaposing ethnomethodological analysis to what he calls "formal analysis," Garfinkel (1996) makes evident that this does not mean that the achievements of other approaches are questioned or that ethnomethodology can offer better answers to the questions asked by them. Rather, ethnomethodology is asking other questions, respecifying the analytic formats of formal analysis, thus resulting in answers that they are unable to provide. The research literature of conventional social science can, in this sense, work as a basis towards which ethnomethodological alternates relate. This literature makes visible the accounting practices of research and thus forms a basis for asking what more there is to the phenomena under study that formal analysis depends on, uses, and recognizes, but inescapably loses in the process of interpretation (Garfinkel, 1996). Garfinkel (1996; 2002) himself has claimed that if anything, his work takes seriously Durkheim's aphorism that the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental principle (cf., Durkheim,

1982 [1895]: 45), but that this aphorism should not be understood as positivist, given an understanding of objectivity and facticity as locally achieved or constructed. An ethnomethodological respecification is therefore that

> the objective reality of social facts, in that and just how every society's locally, endogenously produced, naturally organized, naturally accountable, ongoing, practical achievement, being everywhere, always, only, exactly and entirely members' work, with no time out, and with no possibility of evasion, hiding out, passing, postponement, or buyouts, is *thereby* sociology's fundamental phenomenon. (Garfinkel, 1996: 11)

This, Garfinkel (1996) points out, is the core of ethnomethodology. Based on these foundations, ethnomethodological research has developed in different directions of empirical study and theoretical elaboration. Most influential of these, *conversation analysis* (hereafter CA) has come to study the kind of actions that may seem transparent to members in the sense that they just "are" invitations, requests, promises, and so on, but that have been "curiously absent from sociological inquiry" (Schegloff, 1996: 164), although they "make up the cultural inventory of the society" (Schegloff, 1996: 211). It is to this line of inquiry that we now turn.

Studying How: Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorization Analysis, and Discursive Psychology

First developed largely as an empirical elaboration and specification of Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodological take on social order, CA drew on a wide range of scholarly traditions to create something new and revolutionary (Maynard, 2014). Besides ethnomethodology, Goffman's (1959) work to establish interaction as a viable area of study was of particular importance to CA's development. CA especially embraced his argument that the "interaction order" is a pervasive, independent institution, or reality *sui generis*, that warrants analysis in its own right (Goffman, 1983; cf., Heritage, 2001). The foundational premise of "order at all points" (Sacks, 1992: 484; cf., Schegloff and Sacks, 1973) takes a variety of forms, the investigation of which has made some distinctively sociological contributions to social theory: it has established the existence and described the workings of stable organizations of human interaction, situated those organizations within an understanding of social relations, and foundationally transformed the conceptualization of social action (Heritage, 2008). These core insights were empirically specified and developed by Harvey Sacks and colleagues Gail Jefferson and Emanuel Schegloff in a number of groundbreaking papers (e.g., Sacks, 1987; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff et al., 1977) and not least in Sacks's lectures on conversation (later published as

Sacks, 1992), all of which worked to establish conversation as the "bedrock of social life—the primordial site of sociality" (Schegloff, 1987a: 102).

CA is the empirical analysis of this bedrock. In a highly cumulative fashion, CA has examined the systematic ways in which talk-in-interaction functions on a detailed level as interactants produce and recognize social order:

> We have proceeded under the assumption (an assumption borne out by our research) that insofar as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only for us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the coparticipants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversation) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another (…) Accordingly, our analysis has sought to explicate the ways in which the materials are produced by members in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness, have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action. (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 290)

What this means in terms of the empirical investigation of how people design and coordinate talk-in-interaction will be developed further on p. 45.

In addition to the orderly co-production of talk, Sacks's (1992) lectures on conversation dealt with categories' centrality to social life, rendering the study of their actual use—where individual and collective life intersect—an important site for sociological inquiry (Housley and Fitzgerald, 2015). Sometimes categorized as part of CA (e.g., Schegloff, 2007b), sometimes as CA's ethnomethodological sibling, sharing some but not all analytical interests and procedures (e.g., Fitzgerald, 2012), studies within *membership categorization analysis* (hereafter MCA) are considerably fewer than those focused on the structure of social action in conversation (Stokoe, 2012c). Although both CA and MCA scholars have pointed to the way in which sequential and categorial aspects of social interaction inform each other, so that they in practice "are so closely intertwined as to be separable only for the purposes of analysis" (Hester and Eglin, 1997b: 3), the primary focus for MCA has been on categories-in-use, rather than on sequential structure, and in practice these foci have not often been integrated (Stokoe, 2012c).

Joining CA and MCA in the ethnomethodological project of studying members' shared methods in different situations, contemporary *discursive psychology* (hereafter DP) overlaps considerably with both of these. The term "discursive psychology" was coined by Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter (1992) in what originated as a critique and reorientation of traditional, cognitive social psychology. This critique contributed to a respecification of social research that has been called "a quiet revolution in the social sciences" (Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007b: 1) by challenging the predominant view of people's utterances as a channel to what is going on in their minds (e.g., Billig, 1996; Edwards, 1997; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Instead, DP understands discourse as action-oriented—

involving active constructions of versions of reality without seeing utterances as intentional, strategic, or goal-oriented in a cognitive sense (Potter, 1996).[11] The critique, therefore, "comes less from developing an alternative model of the actor […] than through developing an alternative understanding of language and its role" (Potter, 2003: 791). In addition to the close engagement with ethnomethodology and CA, DP theorizing has also drawn on rhetorics, understanding reports as rhetorically organized to undermine alternatives, without necessarily implying an act of consciousness or explicit "strategizing" (Edwards and Potter, 1992). This rhetoric of dialogue and argumentation emphasizes the constant possibility that speech can be opposed by counter-speech (Billig, 1996).

Social Structure, Culture, and Context

Ethnomethodological analyses are sometimes perceived as individualistic or radically micro (e.g., Alexander and Giesen, 1987). This is a misunderstanding of the extent to which this approach's understanding of social order differs from that of conventional sociology in ways that render the micro/macro distinction problematic in the first place (Rawls, 1989). From Garfinkel's perspective, the traditional view of social structure as the constraining force of institutions on individuals' actions focuses on the result of social practices rather than examining social practices themselves, thus obscuring and leaving unexamined the ways that social order is *inherent* to action and the ways that social structures are constructed and maintained in, through, and for action. The emphasis on the local and tangible should not be confused with a preoccupation with the micro, but is based on "a concern with social practices which are the methods of producing both microstructure and macrostructure as well as any presumed 'linkage' between these two" (Hilbert, 1990: 794; cf., Schegloff, 1987b).

Relatedly, culture is characterized as "an apparatus for generating recognizable actions" (Sacks, 1992: 226). Rather than seeing culture as an entity that influences action—as action in culture—ethnomethodology puts culture in action, which means that what people *do* is the primary concern (Hester and Eglin, 1997a). In effect, ethnomethodology provides a framework for analyzing text and talk as part of the ongoing assembling of social and moral order (Baker, 2000).

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[11] Since DP is sometimes classified as a kind of discourse analysis (e.g., Börjesson & Palmblad, 2007; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000), it is important to note that DP does not attempt to identify "discourses" in the sense of entities with beginnings and ends (e.g. "the discourse of medicine") but sees "discourse" as the *practical* use of language in talk or text (Potter et al., 1990). Delimiting the DP stance from that of other approaches, Potter states that it is "broader than the conversation analytic concern with talk-in-interaction, but rather more focused on the specifics of people's practices than the Foucauldian notion of a discourse as a set of statements that formulate objects and subjects" (Potter, 1996: 105).

As a methodological issue, and particularly in relation to empirical analyses with a CA orientation, the notions of "culture," "institutions," or external "structures" have largely been discussed in terms of "context" (for a summary, see Stokoe and Weatherall, 2002). In short, there are two main standpoints (which broadly represent a strict CA on one side, and critical discourse analysis on the other, the latter broadly corresponding to other "critical" sociological approaches in this respect and also attracting some strands of more critically focused DP). The argument is that claims of contextual or categorial relevance should be evidenced in the orientations of participants themselves and visible in the details of their interaction (Schegloff 1997). The point of departure is thus the data rather than whatever theoretical preconceptions the researcher may have of the importance of certain contextual information.[12] This means that imposing, for instance, a gendered reading onto a set of empirical data is problematic, not only because it presupposes a particular category to be relevant (where it may not be), but also because it risks excluding other possible relevancies (Stokoe, 2005). While this position has been problematized for its restrictions in answering the classic CA question "why this utterance here?" (Wetherell, 1998), as well as for suggesting a false sense of neutrality (Billig, 1999a; 1999b), numerous empirical studies, particularly regarding gender, have suggested it to be fruitful and methodologically robust (Weatherall, 2012; cf., Edwards, 1998; Speer and Stokoe, 2011; Stokoe, 2009; 2012a; see also article III).

This debate can, to some extent, be understood as an epistemological and methodological question, rather than a discussion about the influence of context *per se* (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008: 217). Perhaps a certain macro feature *did* influence the participants to say a particular thing, but how can we convincingly show that? As Schegloff (1987b: 217 f.) writes about the relationship between social structure and action:

> All kinds of conversational, linguistic, so-called nonverbal, and other interactional behavior have been related to such classical dimensions of social organization as class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Although one may choose to proceed along the lines of such a strategy in order to focus on important aspects of social structure in a traditional sociological sense, the risks of underspecification of the interactional phenomena should be made explicit, and with them the risks of missing the opportunity to transform our traditional understanding of what is important in social structure. Although the trade-off may be made in order to benefit important sociological or sociopolitical concerns, even these concerns may suffer if the interactional phenomena are not completely explored on a technical basis.

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[12] This argument does not undo or contradict, for instance, statistical patterns of wage discrimination, but it does not presuppose that they influence interaction, and the analysis, therefore, does not engage with them unless they are visibly "made relevant."

Furthermore, Weatherall (2002) points out that a CA approach does not necessarily exclude the theoretical assumption that, for instance, gender is a pervasive social category and is always potentially relevant in interaction. Other ethnographic information might be acknowledged in a similar way, and the cultural knowledge of the researcher (as a member of the society under study) can thus show the way to interesting questions for analysis. Rather, Weatherall (2002) argues, the challenge brought forth by conversation analysts to show just *how* this ethnographic information is manifested (and not just assume that it is) means acknowledging that our contextual preconceptions do not imply an escape from the requirement to convincingly ground our claims in the analyzed data; this challenge should be taken up in the social sciences to a greater extent.

Actors and Inner Processes

It is tempting to attribute mental states to people based on things they say. In fact, such attribution is something members frequently do, and this commonsense reasoning is part of the process of understanding. So it is perhaps not so strange if researchers, too, are inclined to use such practices to grasp what people "actually" think, want, like, remember, etc. (cf., Edwards, 2006a). From an ethnomethodological standpoint, it has been argued that the focus on the cognitive is one of the main problems of sociology (Rawls, 2002). Despite his focus on knowledge and understanding, Garfinkel (2002) understood the actor's point of view as constituted in interaction rather than external to it. In this sense, social order is not dependent on individuals' compliance with social norms that they have internalized through socialization (Garfinkel, 2002). While this standpoint is sometimes perceived as leaving little room for social change, Garfinkel does not deny original or nonconforming ideas and thoughts; he only emphasizes that "[c]reativity, nonconformity, and even rebellion can only *meaningfully* occur against a background of mutually constituted intelligibility" (Rawls, 2002: 25, emphasis added).

It has been argued that notions of cognition should be treated in the same way as context because they "present the same analytic trouble, and the same analytic temptations, as the conventional building blocks of context (…) [so] that they thereby become susceptible to the type of argument that Schegloff directed at (other features of) context" (Potter, 1998: 34). This argument also connects to the ethnomethodological notion that invocations of mental states "do" things—they construct a version of what is going on in people's minds—but whether this version "actually" corresponds to mental processes is not the object of inquiry (thus forming a non-cognitivist rather than anti-cognitivist approach that brackets mental processes but does not deny their existence). Furthermore, the production of versions of reality is intimately tied to cognition on a discursive level, so that "cognition and reality only

seem so neatly separable in the abstract analytic language of social researchers" (Potter, 1998: 35).

While cognition has been a topic for DP from the outset (e.g., Edwards, 1993; Edwards, 1997; Edwards and Potter, 1992; te Molder and Potter, 2005), constituting a major respecification of traditional cognitive psychology and social psychology, some CA and MCA is more "willing to consider cognition as a realm to be connected to interaction rather than something studyable as an object in and for interaction in the manner of discursive constructionism" (Potter and Hepburn, 2008: 276). Some CA scholars have worked to explore the degree to which cognition can be "detected" using the normative features of talk-in-interaction as a foundation (e.g., Drew, 2005b), but the general CA argument is nevertheless that the properties of talk-in-interaction are not dependent on psychological variables (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008: 220).

Empirical DP and CA work on mental state "displays" or "embodiments" has shown some of the resources people use to make such "states" visible and the work that these displays do in and for the interaction in which they feature. This line of work has, for instance, investigated crying (e.g., Hepburn, 2004; Hepburn and Potter, 2010), laughter (e.g., Haakana, 2001; Glenn, 2003; Jefferson, 1984; Jefferson et al., 1987; Osvaldsson, 2004; Potter and Hepburn, 2010), empathy (e.g., Ruusuvuori, 2005; Hepburn and Potter, 2007), and pleasure (e.g., Wiggins, 2002). DP has also taken a specific interest in how mental states are *formulated* in interaction (Childs, 2014; Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007b). This line of inquiry includes analyses of, for instance, intention (Edwards, 2008), upset (Hepburn and Potter, 2007), beliefs (Iversen, 2014), honesty (Edwards and Fasulo, 2006), scripts (Edwards, 1994; 1995), pain (Jenkins, 2015), and wants (Childs, 2012a; Childs, 2012b; see also article I). All in all, this literature points to some of the systematic ways that mental states are displayed and formulated, including the flexibility by which they may be deployed and the range of functions they may have. This makes the non-cognitivist standpoint not merely theoretical, but one that is also translated into and supported by empirical analysis.

This approach to cognition can also be distinguished from strands of some qualitative, interpretative sociology that, although typically not interested in social cognition per se, sets out to find out about people's views, beliefs, experiences, feelings, and so on, thus relying on the assumption that the contents of people's minds can be studied by examining what they say or do (Potter, 2012; Radley and Billig, 1996). In this respect, then, the line of research put forth in this thesis is no closer an ally to interpretative qualitative social research than it is to quantitative or experimental work that builds on the

same assumptions regarding the theoretical and analytical relationship between inner processes and language or utterances (cf., Potter, 2010).[13]

Analyzing Interaction

This section gives a basic conceptual overview of the thesis's analytical tools. It is organized into four parts. The first describes the way that the design and coordination of talk has been conceptualized (the key project of CA). The second part discusses how such interactional resources can be used to build descriptions as objective and reasonable and how subjective stance may also work to manage such matters (some core interests within DP). The third part engages with some of Sacks's (1992) concepts relating to the analysis of membership categories (developed more recently within—or as—MCA, cf., Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002). Finally, I discuss the notions of "institutional talk" and "institutional categories."

Designing and Coordinating Talk

When we interact, we take turns at talking. This basic idea of CA, it has been said, "is so simple that it is difficult to grasp: CA studies what an utterance does in relation to the preceding one(s) and what implications an utterance poses for the next one(s)" (Arminen (2005: 2). People tend to talk one at a time, meaning that there is a scarcity of speaking opportunities and a need for some mechanism for allocating those opportunities: the social

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[13] It should be noted that it is rather difficult to talk about non-cognitivist discursive analyses in a way that does not imply participants' consciousness. Language, in this sense, can be said to be cognitively contaminated, making it difficult to say new things with old words (cf., Rawls, 2002). Describing the "rhetorical strength" of an utterance, the "strategic ways" in which people present as sick, or how what they want is "made visible," "expressed," or "signaled" can connote cognitive awareness and a core of inner processes that is more or less accurately "reflected" in discourse. Such readings become a problem for presenting non-cognitivist research in accurate and sufficiently specified ways that are still readable and understandable. In contrast to Billig's (2008) argument that discourse analytic researchers should aim to make their language more accessible (advice that certainly also applies to ethnomethodologists), the problem here is that some of the expressions used are also members' terms, but as such, are cognitively loaded. Somewhat paradoxically, then, we might be in need of a new, less "cognitively contaminated" vocabulary; but then again, this would likely result in less accessible analyses (and such a vocabulary might have a realist rhetoric of its own, cf., Billig, 1999b; 1994). The problem is perhaps especially salient for research that connects to issues that have been subjected to extensive public debate, as is the case with the current thesis, for which results are sometimes read not only as implying conscious strategizing on behalf of the interacting participants, but also, in extension, as accusing sickness benefit recipients of "lying" and "malingering." Such misunderstandings have made me reluctant to use some words ("strategy," "rhetorical"), while sticking with others ("making visible"). I am not sure there is a way around these problems, other than acknowledging them and being prepared to explain and discuss epistemological standpoints when necessary.

organization of turn-taking thus distributes turns among interactants (Sacks et al., 1974). The completion of a turn constructional unit (units that are complete in the sense that they could be treated as a turn of talk) constitutes a transition-relevant place where speakership may be transferred (but need not be), either as "current speaker selects next" or by means of self-selection, making up a process that is systematic, but not automatic (Sacks et al., 1974). Speakers monitor others' production of turns to anticipate completeness and facilitate smooth transitions. Resources for such monitoring include action completeness (e.g., has there been an answer to a question?), grammatical completeness, and vocal cues such as pace, volume, and prosody (Schegloff, 1998).

The orderly organization of turn-taking is not "like identical beads on a string" (Schegloff, 2007a: 1), but turns are sequentially organized. In this sense, turns of talk are context-shaped—that is, produced in relation to preceding talk (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 1968)—as well as context-renewing—that is, projecting a particular next action type as relevant in the following turn (Schegloff, 1972). For example, a turn designed to invite someone to come for dinner has certain fitted responses (accepting, declining), and a failure to deliver such a relevant "second pair part" is notably absent, that is, participants typically orient to such absences (cf., Schegloff, 1968). Furthermore, some responses are normatively preferred over others (Heritage and Atkinson, 1984). For instance, an invitation prefers acceptance rather than declination. This can be seen in how preferred responses are typically produced immediately and without qualification, whereas dispreferred responses are often delayed, hedged, and delivered with well-prefacing (Schegloff and Lerner, 2009) or accounts (Heritage, 1988). In addition to such "action type preference," there is a preference structure in terms of form, such that the invitation "Would you like to come for dinner?" prefers acceptance, whereas "You wouldn't like to come for dinner?" prefers declination (Sacks, 1987; Schegloff, 2007a). Furthermore, there is a preference for grammatical type-conformity on a fine-grained level, so that a yes-no interrogative prefers a yes- or no-prefaced response, and thus, "grammar and social organization are intertwined" (Raymond, 2003: 964).

The study of knowledge, knowledge claims, and the "morality of knowledge" (Stivers et al., 2011) has emerged as a key area on the research agenda (studies include, e.g., Beach and Metzger, 1997; Heritage, 1998; Heritage and Raymond, 2005; Kärkkäinen, 2003; Weatherall, 2011; see also chapters in Stivers et al., 2011). It has been proposed that epistemic asymmetry is what motivates and drives sequences (Heritage, 2012a), thus offering an answer to "the mechanism from which the power of a first-pair part to elicit a second derives" (Drew, 2012: 65). Heritage (2012a) argues that an indication of imbalance of the information that speakers have—that is, a relative epistemic stance and status—is sufficient to motivate and

warrant a sequence. Heritage (2012b) also distinguishes between these epistemic grounds in suggesting that the epistemic status of a speaker takes precedence over the epistemic stance displayed morphosyntactically in the production of action. This means that neither grammatical form (e.g., declarative or interrogative syntax) nor final rising intonation is sufficient to determine whether a turn is requesting or conveying information. This means that "interactants must at all times be cognizant of what they take to be the real-world distribution of knowledge and of rights to knowledge between them as a condition of correctly understanding how clausal utterances are to be interpreted as social actions" (Heritage, 2012b: 24).

   Since epistemic status is deeply intertwined with social categories and identity (Raymond and Heritage, 2006), the ways that participants may demonstrate orientations to particular social statuses or categories in making references have increasingly attracted researchers' attention (Heritage and Stivers, 2014). In this respect, it has been argued that matters of social role, status, and identity should be incorporated into the consideration of action (Heritage, 2013).

Subjectivity and Objectivity

Part of the business of accomplishing intersubjectivity in interaction has to do with establishing what is said *as* corresponding to that which is talked *about* or otherwise conveyed. This means that descriptions of objects, people, or events appear "factual," that a taken stance appears "actual," and that whatever action is done appears to be the action that was "supposed" to be done. How such interactional matters are maneuvered has been a key concern particularly in DP research. While early work focused on facticity, that is, how people produce versions of things or events as objective reflections of those things or events (e.g., Potter, 1996; Edwards and Potter, 1992), subsequent analyses have drawn attention to how people attend to the "subject side" as "an integral part of those same practices of description and accountability" (Edwards, 2007: 31). To work up an account as subjective often undermines its objectivity, rendering such practices particularly useful for casting suspicion on what someone else has said or done as invested or biased and therefore potentially inaccurate. In addition to such issues of "stake," psychological and dispositional concerns more generally may need to be managed as part of the action a speaker engages in; otherwise, whatever the utterance relates might appear to be in the speaker's imagination or personality. For example, in making a complaint, dispositional inferences undermine the evidentiality of the complaint and make it hearable as stemming from the person ("She's the kind of person who complains about everything!") rather than from the situation that the complaint focuses on, in which case there are no grounds for the complaint (Edwards, 2005; cf., Drew, 1998). This means that any notion that the

speaker is disposed to get things wrong (e.g., being prone to over-interpret, brag, or otherwise say "too much") may need to be countered. This can be done overtly or subtly, for instance by invoking honesty (Edwards and Fasulo, 2006) or ordinariness (Wooffitt, 1991; Jefferson, 2004a; cf., Sacks, 1984b), using character-inducing words such as the modal would (Edwards, 2006b), laughing (Edwards, 2005; Jefferson, 1984; Potter and Hepburn, 2010), or crying (Hepburn, 2004).

By such means, the speaker produces her- or himself as a credible witness and speaker. Like knowledge, then, stake and dispositions are accomplished, undermined and managed in interaction and also work to serve particular interactional goals. Although different interactions may have different stakes in a sense that might be preconceived by the analyst based on contextual knowledge, it is as participants' orientations that such matters can be visibly analyzed.

Heritage's (2012b) conclusion that epistemic status takes precedence over epistemic stance and that matters of identity therefore need to be increasingly incorporated into analyses of talk-in-interaction (Heritage, 2013) corresponds to the way in which notions of subjectivity may also in part be categorially based. Invocations of categories may therefore work to manage subject-object relations through the inferences the category carries; invoking a category as part of an action makes that action hearable as done on a categorial basis—for example, saying something "as a woman," "as someone who is sick," "as a sickness benefit recipient," etc. (without necessarily invoking the category in this particular way). In this respect, the work within both CA and DP that has been discussed in this and the previous sections relates to the analyses of membership categorization devices, predicates, and category-bound activities, to which we now turn.

Membership Categories

A starting point for this thesis is the myriad of ways in which we can describe or refer to people. We are all incumbents of many categories. I might be categorized as a sociologist, a woman, a parent, a Swede, a gardener, and so on, and since these categories are not mutually exclusive, but are available as possibilities for categorizing myself or others in situated and reflexive ways, they may also function as interactional resources. The reason that they constitute resources is that they are not neutral, but "inference rich": they come with certain expectations because they store "a great deal of the knowledge that members of a society have about the society" (Sacks, 1992: 40 f.). Invoking a category can thus be a way to effectively explain or account for something by mobilizing commonsense knowledge that is recognizably bound to that category (Whitehead, 2009). Categories are in this respect "something people in society do, achieve, negotiate, attribute things to and act upon as part of their daily lives"

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(Housley and Fitzgerald, 2015: 3). The local methods of categorization and practical reasoning that people make use of can therefore be seen as "doing society," or as "culture-in-action" (Hester and Eglin, 1997a).

In this sense, categories are for talking (Edwards, 1991). On a granular level, we perform social actions—make assessments, ask questions, complain, and so on—and we regularly invoke categories as part of this business, making them "relevant for the doing of some activity" (Sacks, 1992: 597). Rather than researching social categories as researchers' *a priori* classifications, much can therefore be gained from investigating them as members' phenomena. Using such an approach, questions relating to social categories or identities arise from the data to the extent that they are oriented to by participants. This approach thus investigates how issues associated with social structure are located, observed and described within situated action (Evaldsson, 2005).

Sacks's (1992) ideas of members' categories were centered on the "membership categorization device" (MCD), which collects and organizes social categories and their relevant actions. For instance, "adult" and "baby" can (but need not) be understood as belonging to the MCD "family," but they can also belong to the MCD "stage of life." Categories can be paired in this sense, so that they carry certain duties or moral obligations to each other. This may take the form of "category-bound activities" (which link categories to certain activities: crying, for instance, can be seen as bound to the category "baby") so that "adults," as part of the "standard relational pair" adult-baby, are normatively expected to "look after" babies. "Predicates" are similar in that they are characteristics, attributes, or motives tied to categories, for example that a father "loves" his baby (useful introductions to all these concepts are given by Stokoe, 2012c; Schegloff, 2007b).

Importantly, the way that the above aspects are related to each other is something that should be seen as a local accomplishment rather than a decontextualized "fact" (Hester and Eglin, 1997a: 46). In this sense, sequential and categorial aspects of interaction not only inform each other, but also are both systematic, and those systematics can be subjected to similar kinds of analyses (Stokoe, 2012c).

A persistent question for debate has been to what extent the researcher can claim categorial relevance in cases where the category is not made explicit in the talk or text that is being analyzed. Ambiguity is in itself a resource, and a category can therefore be implied by, for instance, mentioning a category-bound activity or predicate, while membership in the category is still deniable, since it has remained implicit (Stokoe, 2012b). As Stokoe (2012c: 282) writes, "[t]he fact that we cannot be definitive about relevant categories and inferences is what gives language practices their *defeasibility*." This being so poses a problem for researchers, since it means that instances when people "possibly imply" the relevance of a category can

hardly be pinned down empirically, at least not on a level beyond members' own methodical analysis of each others' conduct.

Institutional Talk, Institutional Categories

While the social sciences tend to define institutions as systems of normative rules that in expectable and codifiable ways structure social interaction by constraining and enabling behavior (cf., Hodgson, 2006; North, 1990), ethnomethodological research emphasizes the observable ways in which institutions, through interaction, are "brought to life," "talked into being," "reproduced," or "instantiated" (Heritage and Clayman, 2010: 32). Institutional talk is often understood as taking place within "institutional contexts," that is, "contexts where the interacting parties orient to the goal-rational, institutionalized nature of their action" (Arminen, 2005: xiii), such as education, medicine, social insurance, and so on. However, as Heritage and Clayman (2010: 35) argue, a full definition of institutional talk is probably impossible, in part because the range of institutions is so varied and institutions within sociology are commonly understood as extending beyond organizations to notions such as family or science. Furthermore, that talk occurs in a setting that we typically understand as institutional (a hospital, a school, a courtroom) is no warrant for assuming that it is institutional in character. Similarly, talk may be institutional even if it takes place outside such a setting (Drew and Heritage, 1992). According to Drew and Heritage, (1992: 22 ff.), talk can be characterized as institutional if[14]

> a) there is some orientation to a goal, task or identity related to an institution—for example to a diagnosis or treatment in a medical clinic (cf., Heritage, 2010);
> b) and/or participants orient to a particular constraining structure of the talk—for example, courtrooms impose highly restricted possibilities for interactional contributions by the participating parties (cf., Atkinson and Drew, 1979);
> c) and/or participants make relevant specialized inferential procedures or frameworks—for example, the terminology may be institutionally specialized so that lexical choice can indicate familiarity with the institution's business (cf., Heritage, 2005).

Research of institutional talk-in-interaction has, in other words, investigated the systematic relationship between interactional practices and institutional identities and tasks, responding to the notion that who we are might have some importance in and for the interaction (Heritage and Stivers, 2014). That

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[14] With this definition, both of the interactional data sets this thesis uses can be characterized as institutional, even though only one of them takes place "within" an institutional setting.

"task-based" social identities are primary—for example, that a doctor in a primary care visit speaks primarily *as* a doctor (rather than as a mother or a left-wing radical, however true those identities might be), is something that must be investigated and evidenced in the data, rather than presumed. Orientations to institutional identities, in this respect, can often be seen in how institutional tasks are carried out, bringing such context-relevant identities into play in implicit but nevertheless clear ways (Button et al., 2012); for instance when an emergency service call-taker refuses to be the recipient of a joke and therefore closes an incoming call (Zimmerman, 1998).

MCA researchers have nevertheless criticized CA analyses of institutional talk-in-interaction for neglecting to analyze categories or for basing analyses on MCA in an "unexplicated way" that insufficiently illuminates situated institutional identities (Hester and Francis, 2000; 2001; Mäkitalo and Säljö, 2002b; Watson, 2000). Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 100) therefore suggest that MCA provides an alternative ethnomethodological method for understanding what is institutional about institutional talk. Importantly, institutionality may be done at the same time as institutional identities are done even when these conflict, such as regarding the display of agreement when students "do" education (orienting to the teacher) at the same time as they "do" being part of a student group (Nyroos, 2012: 61).

Something that has received some attention is the notion of "omni-relevance." As defined by Sacks, a device is to be considered omni-relevant if it

> (…) is relevant to a setting via the fact that there are some activities that are known to get done in that setting, that have no special slot in it (…) but when they are appropriate, they have priority. Where, further, it is the business of, say, some single person located via the "omni-relevant device" to do that, and the business of others located via that device, to let it get done. (Sacks, 1992: 313 f.)

This does not mean that a category is always relevant for a certain person, but rather that in a particular institutional setting where the omni-relevant device features, it can be hearably oriented to, depended on, or implied, locally and contingently; when it is not, this is notably absent (McHoul and Rapley, 2002). It has also been argued that a device may "remain unstated throughout a spate of interaction, yet operate on an omnirelevant (…) level for the participants both in, and beyond, the immediate interactional task at hand" (Fitzgerald et al., 2009: 46). A typical example is the category "therapist" in therapy sessions (cf., Sacks, 1992), which could be explicitly invoked (e.g., "You're the therapist—you tell me"), but need not be for it to be visibly relevant in how participants display and constitute in locally relevant ways "a sense of 'who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing'" (Fitzgerald et al., 2009: 50).

Regardless of whether MCA terminology is applied, categorization practices in interaction are "one of the key analytical 'sites' in which the daily generation of social problems is to be found" (Schegloff, 2005: 449). Institutional practice is thus intertwined with categorization, and the ways in which "social problem categories" are constructed as true, valid, etc. may have far-reaching consequences for the individual (Börjesson and Palmblad, 2008: 36 f.). The way that people are categorized within institutions (client, patient, claimant, and so on) carries obligations and entitlements as specified within the institution in question; in this sense, institutional categories may differ from noninstitutional categories by having some preexisting definitions as grounds for classification and by being linked to material resources of the institution (Mäkitalo and Säljö, 2002a). Categories can thus be the means and ends of institutional interaction (Mäkitalo and Säljö, 2002b). However, categorization is rarely so straightforward as this might imply, and although there are sometimes institutional classificatory systems (cf., Mäkitalo and Säljö, 2002a), institutional categorization should still be approached as a situated activity.

As Edwards suggests, DP's focus on subject-object relations can provide important insights into features of a range of institutional arenas, especially those "arenas of social life where doubt and dispute, or motivated bases for saying things, are themes endemic to the setting" (Edwards, 2007: 47). In such settings, people's actions may be consequential for whether they come to be seen as "real" incumbents of the category, which has been shown for institutional categories featuring both in institutional settings (e.g., Speer, 2011) and in mundane ones (e.g., Goodman and Speer, 2007).

In this thesis, I argue (and attempt to show) that "sick leave talk" shares such features of consequentiality in both institutional *and* mundane settings. In addition, the category "sickness benefit recipient" (or "person on sick leave"; see p. 19) is treated as omni-relevant in the sense that it does not need be explicitly *mentioned* for it to be seen as *oriented to* (for instance, in discussions of what might be understood as category-bound activities and predicates). This notion of omni-relevance goes beyond that of, for instance, a therapist in a therapy session, since the thesis deals not only with interaction in institutional meetings, but also in peer-based, online text-in-interaction. In the latter, however, the thread start invokes categorial membership as an explicit *condition* for participation ("we who are on sick leave"). The way that this is seen as suggesting omni-relevance is thus still more limited and contextually dependent than, for instance, Garfinkel's (1967) conceptualization of gender as an omni-relevant category.

The Legitimacy of Institutional Categorial Incumbency

This chapter has outlined the broadly ethnomethodological framework of the thesis. I have taken a synthetic approach in describing some core features of ethnomethodological theorizing and of the three partly overlapping, ethnomethodologically grounded analytic frameworks of DP, CA, and MCA. I will finish this chapter by closing in on the core topic of the thesis, namely legitimacy work in relation to institutional categorial incumbency.

As discussed previously in the chapter, CA and those strands within MCA and DP that closely build on CA (e.g., Stokoe, 2012c) tend to advocate that categories should be investigated as participants orient to them in interaction. In practice, this has often come to mean that instances when a category is explicitly mentioned are examined for the work that the category does: what action is done with the help of the category, what the sequential placement of the invocation is, and so on (e.g., Stokoe, 2009). This is a powerful imperative. However, the case is a bit different for institutional categories in interactions whose explicit purpose is to focus on the kind of categorial membership that I am interested in. In my data, the category "sickness benefit recipient" is typically not invoked as a resource in the way that gender, for instance, is in article III, which makes it difficult to follow recommendations to find "explicit mentions of categories" (Stokoe, 2012c: 280). It is also not introduced as a topic as it was in Wheat et al. (2015), which described a regular doctor's appointment in which sick leave was brought up. In contrast, both interactional data sets that I make use of in the thesis are underpinned by membership of the category "sickness benefit recipient" as a *prerequisite* for participation in the first place, as well as something that is potentially in question. In this sense, the category is omni-relevant in these particular data.

Given such omni-relevance, this thesis suggests that a fruitful way to analyze how category membership is managed or negotiated is by examining mentions of predicates and category-bound activities. Of course, this suggestion will not work for all categories in all settings (cf., Stokoe, 2012b; 2012c), but for this more restricted application, I suggest that such mentions are sufficient to claim categorial relevance (i.e., that they are, in fact, predicates and activities *bound* to the category around which the interaction evolves and thus work to *manage* legitimate incumbency of that category). Mentions of predicates and category-bound activities are thus resources for negotiating categorial incumbency and can with more certainty be validated as such. Indeed, it might be argued that some CA research on institutional talk has done precisely this, but without conceptualizing it as categorial work. For instance, Heritage and Robinson's (2006; cf., Heritage, 2009) analysis of "doctorability," that is, how patients present their reasons for seeking medical care in a way that manages the legitimacy of the visit, could well be conceptualized as being about the legitimacy of incumbency of the

category "patient" as an omni-relevant category in the doctors' visits they analyze. Arguably, conceptualizing the accounts of "doctorability" as being about category membership puts focus on and makes more explicit what is at stake in these interactions.

4. Data, Procedure, and Ethical Considerations

This chapter describes the different kinds of data that are analyzed in the thesis: online forum text-in-interaction and social insurance "status" meetings. I will introduce the data types, describe how the data were collected and analyzed, and discuss how they have been treated in terms of ethics. First, however, I will motivate the practice of drawing on different types of naturally occurring data for analysis.

A Data-Driven Design

An imperative of CA-oriented research is to always put data first. Sacks, for instance, argues that analysis should begin with "unmotivated looking" in the collection, or selection, of data:

> [P]eople often ask me why I choose the particular data I choose. Is it some problem that I have in mind that caused me to pick this corpus or this segment? And I am insistent that I just happened to have it, it became fascinating, and I spent some time with it. (Sacks, 1984a: 27)

This ideal means that, rather than starting with research questions guided by theory and previous research about the topic in question, the researcher often starts with the data—often any piece of data that one is able to get access to. Of course, as is the case with this thesis, data collection is sometimes also guided by a general interest in a particular setting or topic, especially when going beyond questions having to do with the general structure of talk in favor of an applied approach. However, even such interests do not necessarily translate into prespecified questions or presuppositions relating to what might be found. Instead, preliminary questions arise from the data as part of the analytic process and are then checked against other instances of the same phenomenon in the data. This also means that relating analyses to other theory on the phenomena in question is something that is done afterwards rather than being a prerequisite that motivates the study.[15]

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[15] Of course, a traditional mode of presentation may disguise this process. It should therefore be noted that, in relation to this thesis, legitimacy work gradually arose as a central concern and was initially pursued alongside other topics. Similarly, for article I, "want" formulations

Within this field of research, there is a clear preference for studying naturally occurring activities in non-research settings, that is, outside the "interview room" (Potter and Hepburn, 2005b; Mondada, 2014). Such data include video and audio recordings across everyday and institutional settings, the analysis of which has provided insights into the interactional realities of, for instance, dinner table conversations (e.g., Butler & Fitzgerald, 2010; Jenkins, 2015; Wiggins, 2004; Wiggins and Potter, 2003), doctors' visits (e.g., Heritage, 2009; Heritage and Robinson, 2006; Heritage and Stivers, 1999; Lindström and Weatherall, 2015; Peräkylä, 2002; Pomerantz et al., 2007; Robinson, 1998), higher education (e.g., Benwell and Stokoe, 2002; Nyroos, 2008), children's interaction (e.g., Butler and Weatherall, 2011; Evaldsson, 2004), and helplines or service calls (e.g., Butler et al., 2010; Cromdal et al., 2008; Ekström et al., 2013; Hepburn and Potter, 2011; Kitzinger, 2005; Osvaldsson et al., 2012; Raymond and Zimmerman, 2007). As Potter (2012: 577) argues, a primary interest in the way that activities are organized "pushes researchers off well-worn social science agendas, and provides powerful leverage for real-life problems and issues."

The natural/contrived distinction is sometimes conceived of as a continuum of different levels of researcher involvement (Potter and Wetherell, 1995: 216 f.). At the far end of the continuum is a situation which would have been exactly the same if the study had not taken place or if the researcher had, for instance, got run over by a car on the way to the university that morning. This is what is sometimes referred to as the *dead social scientist test* (Potter, 2002). However, naturalness is not something that resides in certain types of data (Speer, 2002), but instead is the product of a particular analytic stance that "stays with the sense that any interaction has for its participants" (Potter and Wetherell, 1995: 219). An interview is not necessarily an interview, but is worked up as such by the participants. How this is done is an empirical question, which means that the activities of research interviews are "natural" if the objective is to investigate how interview interaction works (see Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1997; Houtkoop-Steenstra and Antaki, 1997; Iversen, 2013; Maynard and Schaeffer, 2006; Suchman and Jordan, 1990). While such research has provided valuable insights into the "black box" of data collection, most researchers' interests are not primarily in how research interviews are conducted. Most CA-oriented researchers have therefore studied other situational contexts (ten Have, 2002), approaching topics as they are talked-into-being for purposes other than research (but for examples of interview studies with a more "topical" purpose, see Flinkfeldt, 2008a; 2008b; Horton-Salway, 2001; Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995).

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cropped up as interesting to pursue further, and were considered in relation to Parsons' (1951) sick role model only after analyzing the interactional features.

The different articles included in this thesis would pass the "dead social scientist test," because they are based on situations that take place regardless of the researcher's involvement. Of course, the presence of a recording device and participants' informed consent interferes with the "naturalisticism" of the situation, but as Speer and Hutchby (2003b: 357) point out, this is an "inevitable feature of research-as-part-of-social-life" that can be reflexively analyzed rather than being taken as a methodological problem (see also Speer and Hutchby, 2003a; Hammersley, 2003). However problematic this is considered to be, it also does not remove the fact that the co-constructive work takes place among and between participants, rather than between a researcher and informants.

Another tendency of this field of research is that researchers often use several different data sets. This is a way to realize Sacks's data-driven ideal, and can be motivated by the focus on practices rather than people. Stokoe (2012c: 280, emphasis in original) proposes for studies of membership categories:

> *Collect* data across different sorts of domestic and institutional settings; collect both interactional and textual materials depending on the focus of the study. Data collection can be purposive (e.g. gathering together instances of particular categories in use because of an a priori interest in that category) or unmotivated (e.g. noticing a category's use and pursuing it within and across multiple discourse sites).

While the corpus-building ideals that Stokoe (2012c) sets up are far from realized in the current thesis, which rather draws together different case studies in a complementary fashion, some of her points can work to motivate choices made in collecting and analyzing different data.

First, Stokoe proposes using data from both domestic and institutional settings. Examining both institutional meetings and everyday online interaction between peers, the thesis is, in this respect, more focused on the category and the practices by which it is realized, managed, or negotiated than on the settings in which such work takes place. The choice to include both institutional and noninstitutional data is further motivated by the varying stakes of these settings (cf., Horton-Salway, 2001). There is a difference in terms of participation between the examined settings: while there is a legal obligation for the sickness benefit recipient to attend a summoned status meeting, participation in the online forum is voluntary and can easily be withdrawn. Relatedly, there is a difference in what might happen if the sickness benefit recipient is not seen as legitimately belonging to this category. In the examined status meetings, what is said can have far-reaching consequences (cf., Tollin, 2007). It is therefore of particular importance to study how the legitimacy of sick leave is collaboratively managed in this context. While it might be argued that the more or less anonymous situation of the examined forum lessens the need for legitimacy

work, what is "at stake" includes being accepted as part of the group (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 251 ff.; Stommel and Koole, 2010), which in this case also includes being accepted as (legitimately) belonging to the category in question (cf., Horne and Wiggins, 2009). In addition, when for instance designing accounts, participants may address not an expressed or assumed critical stance of the interlocutor, but "a wider, culturally based scepticism" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008: 180; cf., Sacks, 1992: 580). This is not to say that participants consciously design their posts or turns with the goal of countering such an implicit or explicit scepticism, but the ways in which some versions are selected over others nevertheless work in such a direction in both the examined types of interactional data. Finally, the examination of institutionally oriented discussions in a mundane setting offers the possibility of exploring legitimacy work as something that is not restricted to formal situations or domains, but is visible even in lower-stake encounters.

Second, Stokoe demonstrates the value of working with both talk and text (cf., Rapley, 2012). This is important, not least because of the predominance of conversational data within the field, and especially in CA. Pointing to text as a valid and important data source means acknowledging the increasingly important role that text, and perhaps especially text-in-interaction, has come to play in our social lives.[16]

Finally, Stokoe argues for the possibility of collecting data in either a purposive or an unmotivated manner. While her recommendation here seems to be more about how to approach existing corpuses (gathering "instances") than about building new ones, the distinction illuminates the process through which sites for recording are identified. "Purposive" does not mean going out and trying to make people talk about the topic or category of interest (for instance, in interviews), but rather seeking out settings in which it is plausible that the topic might surface.

Designing the current project, then, initially meant thinking about accessible settings that might feature "sick leave talk" in one way or another. By coincidence, I came across the online forum data, and like Sacks's experience (1984a), this data was fascinating, so I spent some time with it. After having done some initial analyses of these data, I became interested in what sick leave talk would look like in a more high-stake setting. The status meetings that I ended up recording were expected to yield such data, and although there were alternatives that might have resulted in equally rich and interesting data, the resulting recordings did indeed fulfill those expectations.

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[16] Note that Stokoe makes a simple distinction between interaction and text. The concept of "text-in-interaction" proposed in this thesis suggests that such a division is too simplified—that it renders invisible the way that text is increasingly used in, or as, interaction. This point will be further developed in the next section of this chapter.

In the remainder of the chapter, the two types of data are presented and discussed in more detail.

Online Forum Text-in-Interaction

The first data set consists of a Swedish online forum thread. I will in this section describe some of the ways in which CA-oriented research has approached this "new" type of data.

With the rapid technological development of the last thirty years, and especially the more recent growth of social media, the way that we interact has changed. New forms of mediated interaction have emerged in which text plays a more crucial role: when we write to each other in internet forums, comment sections, and chat-based applications on our smartphones—to mention only a few of the arenas that have gained significance in recent years—we do the very things that interactional scholars have, for many decades, claimed that we do in talk. In textual interaction, we establish who we are to one another, we are socialized into the norms of life, and we go about a great deal of the social business of our everyday lives (cf., Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). Drawing on the CA notion of talk-in-interaction, this type of interaction might therefore be termed "text-in-interaction." Online interaction should thus be seen not as a stand-in for talk "in real life," but as naturally occurring interaction in its own right, to be studied as such (cf., Giles et al., 2015). Following CA research interests, this may take two basic forms.

First, the research may focus on the structural features of the interaction in a particular online setting to develop a "digital conversation analysis" (Giles et al., 2015). CA researchers have argued that previous research on internet interaction has not captured the ways in which users perform social actions (Antaki et al., 2005) and that CA is well equipped for analyzing features of recipient design, sequential organization, and the achievement of intelligibility online:

> Electronic discourse is inherently interactional; that is, it is designed for a particular recipient or recipients; it unfolds sequentially responding to what has come before and building a context for what comes next; and its intelligibility is centrally related to its role in building and responding to particular actions. To analyze such interactions it is necessary to employ a method which can best explicate how interaction functions. We propose that conversation analysis (CA), which has dealt in great detail with how spoken interactions are managed, is the best method for doing this. (Meredith and Potter, 2014: 370)

This line of research has analyzed online interaction as sequential on the basis that participants treat it that way (Vayreda and Antaki, 2009). Among other things, this research has asked how openings are done (e.g., Antaki et

al., 2005), how participants do repair (e.g., Meredith and Stokoe, 2014; Schönfeldt and Golato, 2003), and how CA concepts such as turn-taking (e.g., Garcia and Jacobs, 1999) and adjacency pairs (e.g., Gibson, 2009) translate to different forms of online interaction. Mapping such regularities might be understood as a "pure" CA approach, albeit in "technologized interaction" (cf., Hutchby, 2001b), and an important feature is attending to how online interaction differs from offline talk-in-interaction. Some basic distinctions between the two include asynchrony, non-linearity, quoting possibilities, space limitations, nonverbal features such as pictures and links, polylogality (i.e., an unlimited number of potential interactants dropping in and out of interactions), double articulation (i.e., an overhearing audience that extends beyond the interactants themselves), moderation, and censorship (Giles et al., 2015).

Alternatively, the research may have a more or less "topical" interest. This means analyzing the interaction not *primarily* in structural terms, but for how versions of the world are produced, how accountability is managed, how categories are made relevant, and so on. Within the scopes of the current thesis, it is this second strand that has been followed, connecting to a more distinctively DP and MCA oriented framework, which has been suggested as appropriate when analyzing asynchronous online interaction (Meredith and Potter, 2014). This line of work follows in the footsteps of Lamerichs and te Molder's (2003) argument that contemporary perspectives often fail to grasp the everyday dynamics of online interaction, and that instead of seeing internet research as a way to reach the people behind the screen, online interaction must be recognized as performing various kinds of discursive actions. With the constructionist understanding of all identities as "virtual," online identities are therefore no more or less real than offline identities, but simply "the identity work that *happens* to occur online" (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 245, emphasis in original). In this sense, online interaction is neither to be seen as detached from "reality," nor as a repetition of what is going on offline, but is approached in a way that problematizes any simple real/virtual distinction (cf., Sundén, 2002: 307).

Researchers within this more topically oriented strand of online interaction research have generally focused less on identifying the ways in which the interaction online differs from, for instance, face-to-face interaction (but see, Guise et al., 2007). Instead, most researchers have acknowledged differences but without pursuing them (e.g., Durrheim et al., 2015; Osvaldsson, 2011; see also articles II and III). While it is important to make these data types' similarities, differences, and influence on each other an empirical issue rather than an a priori assumption (cf., Hutchby, 2001a), it is not the case that research based on Internet interaction always depends on knowing its relation to face-to-face interaction—that depends on the purposes of the study. The things that people do online matter if they treat them as if they matter. This means that regardless of whether patterns in

online interaction map onto other areas of social life, the contingencies that participants are dealing with are real ones in and for the situations in which they occur.

A Study of Online Text-in-Interaction: Data Collection, Analytic Procedure and Ethical Considerations

The examined Swedish online forum thread consists of 3,331 posts (95,410 words) in which a total of 38 participants who present as women[17] on long-term sick leave interact on an everyday basis over a period of three months (some posting regularly and some only once). The thread is publicly available, but the forum requires participants to register before they can post. The forum has a general, everyday profile and does not specifically gather ill people, but the analyzed thread seeks responses from people on sick leave, asking what they do to "fill their days" (see article II).

The analysis was conducted in steps (cf., Potter and Hepburn, 2005a; Hepburn and Potter, 2003). First, the thread as a whole was examined both in terms of content (descriptions of illness, everyday activities, contacts with the Social Insurance Agency or doctors, etc.) and linguistic features, but without a set question in mind. The way that different activities were described stood out as relevant at this point, and instances of activity descriptions were therefore collected and analyzed in detail in their local context. This meant systematically examining how activities were mentioned or described as part of different actions, how posts related to each other, how topics were picked up or transitioned, and what implications grammar or lexical choice had. This also included examining non-textual elements such as emoticons, which work to compensate for the absence of audio-visual context (cf., Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 252). Throughout the process, comparisons between examples were made in order to look for similarities or differences; to see patterns in any of the examined aspects (such as what functions minimizing certain activities had and the range of ways in which this was done). The examples that were deemed to most clearly capture the main findings were selected for article II.

During this process, it was noted how gender and gender equality were invoked, particularly in descriptions of housework of different kinds. These instances were therefore collected and analyzed separately. This meant going through the thread to find all instances where gender or gender equality was oriented to as part of housework descriptions. When analyzing these (primarily in terms of action, the relationship between posts, topic expansion or transition, and the implications of grammar, lexicality, and non-textual elements), it was found that gender was either invoked in accounts for

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[17] In the analyzed thread, participants are referred to as "girls," the discussions recurrently relate to pregnancy-related issues, and aliases are often variations of women's first names.

housework, or in explicit, gendered categorizations relating to the performance of housework. The analysis therefore came to focus on both the functions of these gender invocations (what they *did* in the interaction), and the details by which they were brought into the interaction and responded to. How was, for instance, jocularity accomplished, that is, what was it that provided for a reading of something as non-serious? Similarly to article II, the clearest examples were selected for article III. Selected excerpts relating to both these articles were also recurrently discussed in data sessions at different universities in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The analyses were based on the original Swedish posts and were conducted in Swedish. Data used in the articles have, however, been translated from Swedish into English. As Sneijder and te Molder (2004) point out, translation can be seen as a form of analysis rather than a purely technical matter, since the translation is necessarily designed to reveal what the analyst and the translator see as significant. The translations of the chosen data extracts include spelling and grammatical mistakes where possible. Spelling mistakes where letters closely situated on the keyboard seem to have been interchanged (e.g., a and s, so that "appointment" becomes "sppointment," see article II, extract 1) have been translated so that the typo remains similar. The sentence structure has been altered to make the sentences understandable in English (rather than applying a word-by-word translation), and the translations are thus to be signified as "free" or idiomatic. This is arguably easier to do for textual data than for talk-in-interaction, since talk-specific features, such as the pitch of a specific word or the placement of overlaps, are difficult to add in idiomatic translations of talk.

Linked to the question of what online interaction "is," as discussed under the previous heading, are questions about anonymity, public status, and access. When researchers have tried to understand the forms of interaction that have emerged online, they have commonly made comparisons in order to figure out what this interaction is mostly *like*. Is online interaction in, say, internet forums mainly private, like private letters, telephone conversations, or a chat with friends? Or is it more public, like letters to the editor published in local newspapers, speeches held at city squares, or a statement given to a journalist in a news broadcast? Choices of how to collect, analyze, and refer to data are necessarily influenced by procedures within more established research fields, making comparisons a natural starting point. It has, for instance, been argued that publicly available online forum interaction is not equivalent to private letters in the sense that e-mail messages are, since they are deliberately intended for public consumption (Paccagnella, 1997). Compared to ordinary conversation, a point with internet interaction in forums being publicly accessible is to provide for others to read the threads, and it is consequently not always considered rude to access an internet forum without contributing or otherwise making one's

presence known. There is also often an opportunity to have discussions via private messaging functions, further distinguishing the private from the public realm. In the forum thread analyzed in this thesis, participants observably moved sensitive discussions to private channels, thus expressing an awareness of the public status of the forum. It might then be argued that if the participants treat the forum as public and explicitly orient to the possibility that other people might read things that they write, the researcher could do the same (cf., Chernoff and Widdicombe, 2015).

That participants orient to their contributions as public does not, however, mean that they would necessarily consent to research based on those contributions (cf., Markham, 2012). On the other hand, professional writers might also prefer not to have their texts subjected to social research; publication provides for readership but does not necessarily imply consent to have that publication analyzed. Where do we draw the line? For this study, the collected data were treated as published and therefore available to use in ways similar to how researchers use other published, nonprofessional text that authors produced without necessarily thinking that it might eventually be analyzed by a researcher (such as published letters to the editor of a newspaper).

While this standpoint comes with a range of problems, it can be supported by the thesis's sole focus on linguistic and interactional features and lack of interest in individuals themselves. It also has the ethical advantage that no personal details about the participants are sought in order to identify them offline; I have not attempted to trace participants to ask for their consent. Pragmatic considerations also motivated this choice: it would likely not be possible to trace all participants, partly because creating a forum login does not require using one's "actual" offline name and e-mail address (any name and address will do) and because e-mail addresses are sometimes not actively used (e-mail accounts can be created solely for registering at different websites) or may have expired. While I do think that, in some respects, it would be ideal to ask for permission to analyze the data, doing so is hardly a straightforward matter.

On a basic level, this discussion is about whether the research is seen as studying *people* or *representations* (White, 2001). Researchers from different academic disciplines tend to draw upon different conventions for research, and their choices are connected to how data are viewed within their disciplines. Following a humanities perspective, in which internet material is seen as published, creative expression in a public realm, it might be deemed unethical not to acknowledge that authorship, and to deliberately misquote would be very problematic (cf., Pitts, 2004). A consistent approach in this respect would entail quoting data in full, providing a direct link to the thread, using actual aliases, and not concealing or changing information about the participants. These are things that I have not done, instead taking the standpoint that while the data is publicly available, withholding this

information maintains some privacy, if not anonymity, for the participants. It is not that unlikely that eventually, someone reading a research article could recognize an alias, having perhaps come across it when interacting online. It is quite unnecessary to draw this kind of attention to a participant, even in their offline statuses, especially since that information is not part of the analysis.

A related point is that search functions on the internet tend to make some disguising attempts obsolete. A way to prevent this would be to change major parts of the quotes used or even fabricate quotations (Markham, 2012), but this would of course undermine close-to-data research altogether. Another option that some studies using non-English data have chosen is to only include English translations. For linguistically detailed analyses, however, this poses a major problem, since it makes it impossible for readers to check the analysis against the original data.[18] In addition, this method does not work for data in English.

Another ethical matter concerns seeking an ethics committee's approval for the study, which is a requirement in Sweden for research that concerns people and that handles certain personal data or could be harmful to participants (SFS 2003:460). These regulations are guided by a concern about the personal integrity of research participants, and studies that feature particularly sensitive types of personal data, such as ethnicity or race, political views, trade union membership, or health, are required to undergo an ethics trial (Prop. 2007/08:44: 22 ff.). At the time of initiating the study and collecting the data, these requirements were not as strict, and it was therefore not considered a legal requirement to seek approval for the study. Even with the stricter regulations that are currently in place, it is not completely clear whether it is necessary to seek approval for the kind of research that the current thesis features. However, a different case sheds some light on the issue. For a study of comment threads for Swedish newspapers, the Regional Ethics Committee in Uppsala (2013) decided that it did *not* fall under the scope of the law requiring ethical trial. That project has many similarities in scope and methodology to the current thesis: both examine how social phenomena are "talked" into being in online text-in-interaction, and both take a specific interest in the co-production of potentially sensitive categorizations (see, Hagren Idevall, 2014). Like the current thesis, the participants in the comment threads were required to register to post comments on the website, and, by connecting to Facebook accounts, offline names were sometimes displayed. Despite the sensitive matters discussed in the examined comment threads and the possibility of

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[18] When I submitted my first article using this data set (article II), I did not include the Swedish original excerpts, but the revieweers and the editor were in agreement that only using English translations was insufficient for the kind of analysis performed and required that I include the Swedish originals too.

identifying some participants by their offline names, the ethics committee took the standpoint that the application proposed research on *text*, not *people*, and that the research was therefore not legally required to be reviewed by the ethics committee. Given the vast similarities between that study and applicable parts of the current thesis, it is likely that the same standpoint would also apply to the research reported here.

Social Insurance Status Meetings

The second data set on which the thesis draws consists of the Swedish Social Insurance Agency's (hereafter SIA) multiparty "status" meetings ("avstämningsmöten") with sickness benefit recipients. Since the previous chapter discussed the notion of institutional talk and approaches to studying it, I will here focus more specifically on the meetings themselves—what they are and how they have previously been studied. This section thus extends the discussion of the regulations and process of sickness benefit, and of sick leave research in Sweden (see chapter 2).

As defined in Swedish law (SFS 1962:381, 3:8a), status meetings are institutional checkpoints during a period of long-term sick leave. They have been considered an important instrument for administering sickness benefits in Sweden because they aim to provide grounds for decision making and so lead to accurate assessments and speedy and active administration (Försäkringskassan, 2006). When the Swedish government proposed legislation about status meetings, it argued that the SIA needed to increase the number of such meetings because they were beneficial for the person on sick leave and would likely lead to lower levels of sickness absence, as well as reduced government spending (Prop. 2002/03:89: 27 f.; cf., Betänkande 2002/03:SfU10: 27).[19] Furthermore, the government justified the bill by claiming that patients' attitudes and motivation were the most important factor for getting a sick certificate, and case officers could more easily find out about such motivational factors through status meetings than through, for instance, written communications (Prop. 2002/03:89: 28). The sick-certified person's participation in status meetings was deemed so important that refusal to participate (for no "valid" reason) can, by law, result in withdrawn or decreased sickness benefit (SFS 1962:381, 20:3).

As formulated in the SIA's guidelines for case officers, a status meeting is "the method the SIA's case officers shall use when they together with the insured [person] and some more party or parties need to investigate and

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[19] In the Nordic countries, courts' and administrative authorities' interpretations and applications of written laws draw heavily on the legal history including government "white papers," etc., which are often rich in statements about the aims of the acts and their prescribed interpretation (Eriksson 2005; Nousiainen, 2001).

assess the insured [person's] medical condition, working ability and need for and possibilities to rehabilitation" (Försäkringskassan, 2006: 4, author's translation). The SIA case officer summons the meeting, which, apart from the person on sick leave and the case officer, may also include the certifying doctor, the employer (if the person is employed) or an official from the Employment Agency (if the person is unemployed) and, in some cases, a representative from the trade union or another person called in to support the person on sick leave (such as a friend or family member). Most status meetings in which the certifying doctor takes part are held at the doctor's office to make it easier for doctors to take the time necessary to participate (Runnerstedt and Ståhl, 2005; Bengtsson Malmeblad et al., 2007).

The instructions for the case officers at the SIA state that the motivation and attitudes of the person on sick leave should guide the meeting, which should focus on issues such as adjustment of the workplace to facilitate return to work, possibilities for part-time rather than full-time sick leave, etc. (Bengtsson Malmeblad et al., 2007). The meeting should normally result in a plan for rehabilitation and return to work, and it is the case officer's responsibility to make sure that this plan is pursued. The government has noted that status meetings should not have the character of an oral negotiation (Prop. 2002/03:89, 29); nevertheless, status meetings can result in changes to sickness benefits (Tollin, 2007).

Sick leave status meetings have been studied both by the SIA and by independent researchers. Most previous studies have built on examinations of case files and surveys or interviews with people on sick leave or SIA administrators. These studies have primarily had an evaluative focus. For instance, Tollin (2007) studied the effect of status meetings on sick leave levels and concluded that it was more likely that active rehabilitation measures at the workplace would be initiated in cases for which a status meeting had taken place. Similarly, according to a survey study, case officers themselves stated that status meetings led to faster returns to work (Runnerstedt and Ståhl, 2005). However, Hetzler's (2009: 69 ff.) study of case files suggested that the SIA systematically summoned to status meetings those individuals who had a relatively high probability of returning to work, and that this group returned to work at the same rates as those in this category that did not participate in a status meeting, indicating that status meetings have no real effect on the speed with which recipients return to work. In another study, interviewed case officers reported that formal demands risked turning the status meetings into routine events, because considerations of efficiency were negatively affecting the quality of the meetings (Bengtsson Malmeblad et al., 2007). This study also indicated that case officers experienced difficulties in creating a constructive and supportive atmosphere during meetings: they found it difficult to let all participants have their say while also steering the meeting and documenting its results. One identified problem was participants coming to the meeting

with a different agenda than the one set for the meeting. Another problem was the diagnosis becoming subject to discussion and change during the meeting. All in all, it was argued that the government had not reached its initial goal of improving cooperation between the SIA, the employer, and the doctor (Bengtsson Malmeblad et al., 2007).

A few studies have investigated actual sick leave status meetings firsthand, using observations or analyzing recordings of meetings. Hetzler (2009: 110 ff.) observed and recorded status meetings to evaluate how well they corresponded to what was stipulated in the law. Hetzler concluded that the status meetings were typically one in a series of meetings and were not working in the intended way. Instead, the meetings were asymmetrical; they restricted the sick-certified person's participation and the possibility of reaching consensus regarding what measures should be taken. Based on these conclusions, Hetzler (2009: 15 ff.) argued that status meetings are primarily an instrument of state control—a way to come to terms with citizens' "changed attitudes" toward sick leave and the SIA's inability to restrict sickness benefits—rather than a communicative measure aimed at taking individuals' everyday experiences into account in order to provide better assistance during recovery. These meetings, she argued, could therefore be said to use participation as a governing technique (Hetzler, 2009: 27). In another study, audio-recorded status meetings were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This study concluded that the examined meetings were characterized by an unequal distribution of power, since participating employers would determine whether the sick person could return to work and whether they had any working ability (Seing et al., 2012).

In sum, although sick leave researchers have taken an explicit interest in investigating status meetings, studies have for the most part had an evaluative focus. It is notable that two previous studies have examined recordings of actual meetings; this is unusual in the sick leave research literature. While these data allow for detailed analysis of interactional practices, however, neither of these studies employ this possibility to its full potential.

A Study of Status Meetings: Data Collection, Analytic Procedure, and Ethical Considerations

The data consist of seven audio-recorded status meetings that took place between 2009 and 2011. The meetings were 41–60 minutes long (adding up to a total of 5.5 hours) and were all held in meeting rooms at the certifying doctor's clinic. Each meeting included a doctor, a social insurance case officer, and a person on long-term sick leave, amounting to a total of three doctors, six case officers, and six people on sick leave (one had two recorded meetings). In addition, one meeting also included an employer

representative, one included a representative from the Employment Agency, and in two meetings, the person on sick leave had brought a companion for support. The main diagnosis varied, but all the sick-certified participants suffered from a combination of medical problems, including both physical illnesses (kidney disease, different kinds of back problems, heart condition, and pain) and mental illnesses (various depression symptoms and anxiety). The recorded meetings included people on both full-time and part-time sick leave, and there was also variation in terms of employment (two were self-employed, one was employed, and three were unemployed).

Initially, social insurance case officers were asked to assist with the data collection by providing the researcher with contact details to sick-certified clients that were scheduled to have a status meeting (with their permission). Case officers who were approached were positive and encouraging regarding the project, but did not themselves want to be recruited for this task. Those who gave a reason for this said that it was due to a stressful work situation; they did not want to take on more responsibilities. As an alternative strategy, doctors in primary care were contacted with the same question, and six doctors in four different care centers agreed to pass on information about the study to patients with scheduled status meetings and ask if the researcher could contact them with more in-depth information about the study. Some contacts with doctors did not result in any recorded meetings, due to few scheduled meetings, changes in work tasks, and other meeting participants declining to take part in the study.

The study has been reviewed and approved by the Regional Ethics Committee in Uppsala (Dnr 2008/385). From an ethical perspective, it is important to note that several people scheduled for meetings—both sick-certified participants and social insurance case officers—chose not to have their meeting recorded by the researcher. Several patients who learned about the study from their doctor said that they would rather that the researcher not contact them for further information. Also, one patient who had agreed to be contacted by the researcher chose not to participate after learning more about the study. In one case, the social insurance case officer declined participation despite all other participants' agreement. This shows that having a status meeting recorded is a sensitive issue (and not only for the person on sick leave).[20] This makes data collection difficult both in terms of getting a large enough data set (which has also been noted by Ståhl et al., 2012) and in terms of ethical sensitivity during all parts of the data collection.

For both these reasons, it was deemed problematic to do video recordings (despite those being preferable; see, e.g., Mondada, 2014). The participants in the study were expected to be less willing to participate if they would be

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[20] Hetzler's (2009: 76) study of status meetings confirms this: out of twenty-two observed meetings, thirteen were audio-recorded, whereas at least one participant in the remaining nine meetings preferred not to be recorded (but approved observation).

filmed. If they had still been willing to participate, they were expected to be more affected by the camera than by an audio recorder, so a camera could have created both ethical and analytical problems (cf., Andersson, 2008: 45). For these reasons, only audio recordings were made, despite the limitations that the lack of visual data imposes on the analysis (not being able to examine gaze, gestures, orientation to physical objects, etc. means that some lines of inquiry are not possible). Audio recordings were in this case considered an acceptable record of what took place in the meetings (cf., Sacks, 1984a: 26).

The process of gaining informed consent was also designed with the sensitive situation in mind: some time prior to the meetings, potential participants were informed about the study both orally and in writing and were thereafter asked if they wanted to participate in the study (see Appendix B). Consent forms were signed at the meeting, which offered participants another possibility to withdraw from the study (see Appendix C). Participants were also told that they could turn off the recorder at any point in the meeting if they so wished and that they could contact the researcher afterward if they wanted the recording to be excluded from the study. No participant withdrew from the study after having consented to participate. However, declinations at various points during earlier stages show that it was possible to say no to being recorded. In particular, some patients declined to be contacted by the researcher when their doctor first asked them. Since it might be difficult for a patient to say no in such a situation, these reports vouch for sickness benefit recipients' ability to refuse to participate in the study.

At the time of the meetings, an audio-recording device was placed visibly on the meeting table. This allowed for the researcher not to be present in the room during the meeting, which was a choice partly guided by ethical concerns. Given the importance of these meetings for the sick leave process, it was deemed important that they be held under normal conditions, in order to affect what took place as little as possible.

After the meetings had been recorded, they were transcribed orthographically, rendering them searchable. Based on multiple listenings of the recorded data, features attracting analytical interest were collected for more detailed analysis. For example, all instances featuring "want" formulations (see article I) were collected and analyzed separately. The analysis meant studying the sequential context in which the "wants" of the sickness benefit recipient were invoked (regardless of who, in the meeting, was invoking it). This included examining how the "want" formulations were designed and in which contexts they appeared (in relation to what). For example, what were the lexical and nonverbal features, what role did preference play, how was the turn-taking managed, and how were the invoked "wants" responded to? This also involved comparing instances to find similarities and differences. Out of the collected and analyzed excerpts,

those that were considered to most clearly show the main analytic findings, while allowing for brevity, were selected for article I.

To facilitate detailed analysis, collected excerpts were re-transcribed using Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004b; Hepburn and Bolden, 2014), for example, marking overlaps, pitch and emphasis, timing silences, etc., to produce as close an account of the recording as possible. Potter and Hepburn (2005b) note that while such detailed transcripts are preferable, their production will necessarily reduce time spent on other research tasks, typically making sample-size reductions necessary. The transcription conventions used in the thesis are listed in Appendix A. All transcription was done using Transana software. While the analyses have been based on the Swedish originals, extracts from the data that were used in international settings such as data sessions, conferences, and publications were translated into English. Unlike the translations of the online text-in-interaction, this was done using a simplified version of a three-line format, including both an idiomatic translation and a word-by-word translation that makes visible how certain words are marked and where there are overlaps.

It is important to point out that the specific cases or the participants as such have not been of interest to the study. For this reason, no case files have been examined. The object of the study is the interaction taking place. Contextual information has only been analyzed based on whether and how it is made relevant by participants themselves. As was discussed in the preceding chapter, many things can affect what people say and the way they say it, but it is not possible for an analyst to convincingly show that it is one thing (for example, the diagnosis) rather than another (such as the participant's age) that has this effect in a specific instance. In contrast, by focusing on participants' orientations (as they make diagnosis, age, or any other category relevant), the analyst can say something about what that piece of "background information" does in that particular context.

This chapter has described and discussed the data-driven design of the thesis, and the collection and analysis of the different interactional data that the thesis analyzes. The analysis of these data have resulted in three articles, which are described in the next chapter.

5. Summary of Included Studies

This chapter summarizes the three articles included in the thesis, focusing mainly on analysis and conclusions. Theory, data, and methods are discussed at length in the preceding chapters.

Article I: Wanting to Work: Managing the Sick Role in High-Stake Sickness Insurance Meetings

The motivations of people who are on long-term sick leave have long featured in public debate in Sweden. In addition, research has pointed to sickness benefit recipients' experiences and feelings of being questioned by doctors, social insurance case officers, and others, as well as a perceived need to look and act in a certain way to avoid delegitimizing accusations of, for instance, not "wanting" to return to work. This relates to Parsons's (1951) classic conceptualization of the sick role, which, among other things, states that a sick person must "want" to get well as a basic requirement for being exempted from social responsibilities.

This article examines how sickness benefit recipients' "wants" are formulated in audio-recorded status meetings at the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. Since such meetings provide grounds for assessments of working ability and for collaborative planning of rehabilitation measures, the consequences for the sickness benefit recipient of appearing "unmotivated," or as not "wanting" to get well and return to work, may be considerable.

Formulations of "wants" are examined as rhetorically organized, sequentially situated interactional accomplishments rather than being seen as mirroring an inner state. The analysis shows how the sickness benefit recipient formulates her or his "wants" as part of descriptions of how ill health restricts her or his return to work and does so in ways that work to manage the sick role. Features that work to establish a general character as the "kind" of person who wants to work include the modal "would," a low degree of specificity (focusing on willingness as such rather than its object, e.g., wanting to start "something"), and temporality orientations (e.g., reducing immediacy by deleting the word "start" in "wanted to st- work more"). In addition, emphasis, externalization, and markings of common knowledge are resources for establishing what the person "wants" as distinct

from what she or he "is able to do." The analysis also examines how professionals' formulations of "wants" as expressed by the sickness benefit recipient in the past can be used to hold her or him accountable in the present and how the sickness benefit recipient's "wants" are invoked to establish a course of recovery. In the data, the sickness benefit recipient responds to professionals' "want" formulations with accounts that work to qualify the "want" formulation and make explicit its relationship to the illness-related inabilities.

In showing how establishing "wants" is a prevalent concern in the examined meetings while pointing to contingencies that make this all but a straightforward matter, the analysis makes visible some of the fine-grained legitimacy work that is part of the process of long-term sick leave in Sweden today. The sickness benefit recipient must do extensive work to appear as "actually" wanting the things she or he claims to want (which involves managing notions of stake and interest), but without creating unwarranted expectations of unproblematic recovery.

The relevance of the sick role for understanding "want" formulations in the examined data suggests that the model, contrary to recurring claims of its "death," still has applicatory value, at least in the more limited use that the article exemplifies. The article suggests that close examination of naturally occurring interaction offers a data-driven elaboration of the sick role, rendering visible its constituent elements. Furthermore, it is argued that incorporating contextual, biological, or psychological features into the analysis based on participants' own orientations respecifies some of the criticism of the sick role model's inability to account for such specificities.

Article II: Filling One's Days: Managing Sick Leave Legitimacy in an Online Forum

Being economically compensated to stay home from work due to illness can be understood as a secondary gain of being ill, meaning that if such a situation is understood as desirable, the legitimacy of the sick leave may be questioned, and the ill person may risk being seen as a malingerer. Sick leave therefore renders people accountable for the activities they are seen to engage in when not working; when describing the things that one does when on sick leave, "too much" activity (of a certain kind) might imply working ability, whereas "too pleasurable" an activity might imply using sick leave as a way to get to do fun things. On the other hand, "too little" activity might imply laziness, and "too boring" activity might imply that the person is a whiner or habitual complainer. Such inferences could undermine the legitimacy of the sick leave. This article examines descriptions of activities

that people on sick leave posted to an online forum, showing how they collaboratively balance such concerns in the details of their interaction.

The analysis shows how the notion of free time and pleasurable activities are described in a way that downgrades any moral implications of being seen to engage in them. Identified features include relating such activities to illness-based constraints ("if I have the strength"), invoking illness-improving effects ("having fun one feels better"), and mitigating descriptions (e.g., describing crafts as "pottering' with "small hobby stuff"). The article shows how participants manage the "subject side" of descriptions by using externalizing devices that reduce agency and by displaying an ironic stance through the use of emoticons and extreme case formulations. Such features can work against the notion that they are lazy (for being seen to engage in "too few" activities or activities that are "too easy"), and, particularly when deployed in complaint-implicative descriptions of activities, these features also manage the notion of being a "whiner". While these features allow for managing such legitimacy-threatening inferences, they are also subtle enough to be deniable as deliberate legitimacy work. This makes for an effective resource as compared with, for instance, a more explicitly voiced awareness of how certain activities can be problematic to be seen doing while on sick leave, which might come across as "strategizing," and form yet another possible basis for undermining sick leave legitimacy.

The article shows that sick leave legitimacy is a pervasive, mundane concern for people on sick leave, visible in their descriptions of activities that they engage in. This analysis offers a practically oriented understanding of sick leave legitimacy that goes beyond social insurance or medical practices and settings. In the context of recent political debates in Sweden and elsewhere about whether people on sick leave are "really sick" or "sick enough" to be exempted from work obligations, this study shows some of the routine contingencies that such questions impose on their everyday lives.

Article III: Making Equality Relevant: Gender, Housework and Sick Leave Legitimacy in Online Interaction

People on long-term sick leave manage the legitimate incumbency of the category "sickness benefit recipient" in their descriptions of engaging in different activities. For women on long-term sick leave, housework is an activity that may pose additional concerns within a normative framework of gender equality. People on long-term sick leave typically spend a lot of time at home (rather than at a workplace); they have what might be perceived as "free time" that could be spent taking care of the home or with children; and

they are often economically vulnerable. This situation to some extent resembles that of a "housewife," a category that is considered problematic in Sweden and the incumbency of which can lead to questioning. Previous research on sickness benefit recipients' experiences has indicated that women on long-term sick leave may be faced with suspicions of using sick leave to take care of children and the home, which makes it risky to be seen spending "too much" time on such matters.

For these reasons, women on sick leave might need to manage such inferences as part of the way that they discuss housework. This article analyzes invocations of gender equality in descriptions of housework in an online forum thread gathering women on sick leave. It investigates housework as an activity bound to both the category "woman" and the category "sickness benefit recipient." The article thus empirically studies the relationship between gender equality, housework, and sick leave as these are "talked into being."

The article examines how, in accounts for housework, a male partner is mentioned, which puts housework in a gendered, heteronormative context. By presenting the performance of housework in relation to their partners' more extensive workload, the participants make their contributions visible as minor in comparison (e.g., by writing, "Now I'm going to do something useful here at home. My husband is doing things all the time, so now I get a bad conscience"). By contrast, the one instance in which a participant orients to a gendered partner as part of her descriptions of housework but does *not* do so in a way that makes his contributions visible ("That's my task during the day, having the food ready when the hubby comes home!!") leads to subsequent questioning of their division of labor ("He helps out too, doesn't he?"), which also connects the discussion to the person's illness. This shows how displaying a traditional division of labor in the home is oriented to as problematic and can be questioned on the basis of illness.

The article also examines humorous or ironic gendered categorizations, (e.g., "some matron, huh!" for having been baking, or telling a participant to go "off to the kitchen, woman!") If taken seriously, such categorizations might index a housewife category, which could be problematic both in terms of managing sick leave legitimacy and because it would appear to break with ideals of gender equality. However, extensive collaborative use of markers of jocularity (such as emoticons, capitalization, etc.) restricts such an uptake.

In sum, the article sheds light on how displaying a break with a traditional division of labor in the home (where women do more housework than men), can be a resource for managing sick leave legitimacy, while displaying that the woman on sick leave is responsible for the housework may instead lead to questioning on the grounds of the illness. The article thus develops a practically oriented understanding of how gendered aspects of sick leave legitimacy are managed in interaction.

6. Legitimacy Work: Concluding Discussion

Being on sick leave involves engaging in legitimacy work. When talking about illness and the extent to which it is incapacitating, the words that people use and how they deliver those words in coordination with others are part of how they are established as being ill and as unable to go to work. This means that sick leave legitimacy is a collaborative, interactional accomplishment—something that is "done," not only as part of discussing sickness certification at the doctor's office or applying for sickness benefit at the Social Insurance Agency, but also in everyday situations. For people receiving sickness benefits, a great deal depends on how this interactional work goes. A description of pain, for instance, typically works to establish what it feels like (is it burning or aching?), where it is located (on the left side of the neck or just behind the shoulder?), and so on. In turn, such descriptions form the basis for institutional assessments, and establishing a certain version over others is therefore crucial for determining whether and under what conditions sick leave is granted.

Taken together, the three articles in the thesis provide an answer to the question that was asked in the introduction, namely, how sick leave legitimacy is managed *in situ*, across settings of varying stakes. The articles point to contingencies that people on sick leave in Sweden may be faced with as part of their everyday lives and institutional encounters, and they describe some of the fine-tuned work by which sick leave legitimacy is collaboratively managed. The thesis thus engages with issues at the core of the Swedish welfare state.

The thesis makes a number of empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions that are intertwined. First, it contributes to several strands of CA-oriented research. It adds to the literature on institutional interaction, and especially by examining a mundane setting for orientations to institutional matters. This is something that previous research has hardly done, despite the standpoint that institutionality is talked into being rather than restricted to a certain setting. Relatedly, the thesis contributes to the study of categories in interaction by examining not only an institutional category and its predicates and category-bound activities, but also the category's relationship to other category incumbencies. In this respect, the thesis also adds to the literature on gender in interaction, especially regarding how gender *equality* may function as an interactional resource. In addition, the thesis extends the CA and DP literature on subject/object relations as well as on mental state

formulations. Finally, by analyzing online data, the thesis is extending the budding CA-oriented literature on interaction on the internet, as interaction worthy of study in its own right. The term "text-in-interaction," as used in the thesis, draws on the CA term "talk-in-interaction" and emphasizes that a simple distinction between talk and text risks hiding the interactional features of much text today. This is critical, especially given the rapid development of how people interact online.

Secondly, the thesis contributes to sociology of health and illness by connecting CA findings to Parsons's (1951) sick role model. The analysis, particularly in article I, shows that the benefits and demands that Parsons describes are visible as members' concerns. In article I, I suggested that CA provides an empirically driven re-specification of the sick role, informing the sociological understanding of the contingencies people are faced with when being ill, and how those contingencies are dealt with in real-life situations. In addition, the thesis connects the sick role to both psychology and context on a discursive level. Rather than making claims about the internalization or experience of the sick role, or about the impact of contextual specificities on the model's applicability, such matters are investigated if, and how, they are brought to life in the interaction itself.

The main contributions of the thesis, however, relate to the empirical field of sick leave research and the sociological understanding of legitimacy. For the former, the analyses provide new knowledge about the process of sickness benefit and the situation of being on long-term sick leave in Sweden. For the latter, the thesis constitutes empirically driven theorizing that develops the ethnomethodological concept of "legitimacy work." In the remainder of the thesis, I focus on these contributions, explicating and discussing each in turn.

Legitimacy At Work: New Kind of Knowledge About Sick Leave

Swedish public debate about sick leave, as well as the regulations and formalized administrative process of sickness benefit, can be understood as being "about" the legitimate boundaries of the institutional category "sickness benefit recipient." Correspondingly, research on sick leave in Sweden has been predominantly explanatory, ultimately contributing to upholding or redefining the categorial boundaries or the institutional methods through which such boundaries are maintained. Some qualitative research has described people's experiences of sick leave based on what they say in interviews. These studies have indicated that questions about the legitimacy of sick leave are a prevalent concern in sickness benefit recipients' everyday lives (e.g., Lännerström et al., 2013; Vidman, 2007;

2009). However, they have not investigated legitimatory practices themselves or acknowledged how people might be managing legitimacy *while* talking about their experiences in research interviews. Previous studies of how people manage sick leave legitimacy in interaction are thus practically nonexistent; the few examples are restricted to interview situations and are theoretically undeveloped (see, Flinkfeldt, 2007; 2008a; 2008b). The notion of legitimacy work and the detailed, real-life interactional evidence for how people orient to or manage legitimacy in their social encounters is therefore a contribution not only of new empirical knowledge, but also of a new *kind* of empirical knowledge.

The analyses have focused on three core aspects of legitimacy work: mental states (what sickness benefit recipients "want"; this may also be labeled a predicate of the category), category-bound activities (descriptions of what people on sick leave do to "fill their days"), and the complexities of certain activities as bound to other available categories (such as housework, gender, and sick leave). A conclusion is that mental states, activities, and alternative categories may work as resources for legitimacy work. However, invoking these categories is in no way a straightforward matter; doing so imposes additional contingencies that may in turn need to be managed on a detailed level. In a setting where one presents as being on sick leave, mentioning, for example, wanting to return to work, having just gone for a long walk, or doing more (or less) housework than one's partner can work to manage the legitimacy of the sick leave. Such descriptions are not neutral, which makes them useful resources, but there is a flip side to this: they may work to either strengthen or undermine legitimacy, depending on *how* they are used. Having gone for a long walk might work to establish a sense of being active in the rehabilitation process, but it might also work to establish a sense of enjoying having time for leisure activities or of being too well (if it is possible to go for a long walk, maybe it is possible to go to work?).

In analyzing aspects of delivery, the articles have identified a range of discursive features that manage, on a detailed level, any negative or de-legitimating inferences that the descriptions might prompt. These linguistic features can be used to work up the sick leave as legitimate by balancing between problematic end points; for example, they can be used to present the person as engaging in neither "too much" nor "too little" activity and in activities that are neither "too easy" nor "too tough." These features thus allow for managing possible legitimacy-threatening inferences, but at the same time, they are subtle enough to be deniable as deliberate legitimacy work; that is, they also manage the risk of seeming to be "invested" in a certain uptake or "trying too hard" to accomplish legitimacy. Due to space constraints, a full account of these features is not included here (see previous chapter and the included articles for more details). But to mention a few examples, the articles show that activities can be minimized (a "little" walk) or presented as rehabilitation (a "strengthening" walk), the object that mental

states relate to can be unspecific (wanting to start "something") while constraints to their realization are specified in detail, and alternative categories can be invoked jocularly.

As a whole, the thesis provides robust, detailed knowledge about situations in which people on long-term sick leave in Sweden today find themselves, as well as about the immense amount of work that is done in and for these situations. In addition, the thesis shows, in detail, how the imposed contingencies are actually navigated in both low- and high-stake situations, thus providing insights into the lived realities of people on long-term sick leave. The fact that the thesis examines naturally occurring data from both institutional and mundane settings is crucial in this respect: it suggests that legitimacy concerns are prevalent not only in formal institutional encounters, but in everyday life too. The thesis thus shows that sick leave has "very ordinary affairs as a foundation, sustained by routine and largely unnoticed practices that are a part of interactional organization" (Zimmerman, 2005: 445; cf., Maynard, 1988).

These results have the potential to create more awareness of the situation of being on sick leave in Sweden and the extensive work that it requires, which could provide grounds for professional self-reflection.[21] The results certainly cannot be used to reveal who is "actually" capable of work and who is not. On the contrary, practitioners can take from this thesis the insight that there might be reason to question the ways that people's talk is often used as an indicator of their being "really ill," "not motivated to go back to work," or whatever the issue might be. In that sense, the thesis not only makes visible some of the complexities of managing sick leave legitimacy from the sickness benefit recipient's point of view, but also points to complexities of the work that case officers and doctors are tasked with in their efforts to assess work ability and the right to sickness benefits.

The word "some" in the previous sentence is important for what it implies about future research. I do not claim to have described "all" the legitimacy work that people on sick leave engage in. Rather, the situated character of such work means that it may look quite different in other situations, depending, for instance, on the stakes and the relationships between the interactants. To further develop our knowledge of sick leave legitimacy work and the contingencies to which it orients is therefore a question for future research. How is sick leave legitimacy managed, for instance, at the work

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[21] The research is "applied" in the sense that it sets out to empirically specify the workings of an institution or social problem (Antaki, 2011), but this does not mean that it attempts to solve specified problems. There is reason to be cautious about justifying research by invoking an "ideology of application" or making premature claims of usefulness (Wiggins & Hepburn, 2007; Billig, 2012). Subsequent practical use of findings from CA research points to the potentials for institutional reflexivity and change inherent to this line of work (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). However, such use has often been more or less unintended; researchers have typically been devoted to analysis rather than change of practice (Antaki, 2011).

place, as part of participating in vocational rehabilitation programs, and in everyday family life? Another task for future research is to extend our knowledge of how different diagnoses come to feature in sick leave talk, especially where the predicates of the illness itself may conflict with those of the sickness benefit recipient category.[22] Answering these and other questions about potentially conflicting categorial incumbencies is important for better understanding the contingencies of being on sick leave in Sweden and how people deal with these contingencies.

The thesis refrains from making practical recommendations. It never had any such purpose, and the analytic focus on legitimacy work does not translate well to either professional training or policy. However, the analytic process has revealed the potential for subsequent studies to focus on such issues. Future CA research on different situations where sick leave is discussed could inform the development of better communication practices, to the benefit of both the authorities and sickness benefit recipients (cf., Stokoe, 2011; 2014). In addition, hardly any sick leave research in Sweden has used naturally occurring data. In light of the potential outcomes of systematically studying such data, this is certainly a very promising path for future research, CA oriented or otherwise.

Legitimacy As Work: Developing a Theoretical Concept

The social sciences have commonly approached legitimacy as an entity with beginnings and ends—as something that can be had, gained, or lost and that in more or less direct ways relies on cognitive states, perceptions, and internalized norms. Some researchers, critical of static approaches to legitimacy, have suggested a processual view that focuses more on investigating how legitimacy can be reached—that is, on legitimation, but typically, these still build on cognitive assumptions, and what counts as legitimation tends to be defined by a presumed end point: practices that lead to legitimacy in some definable way come to be seen as legitimation.

By contrast, ethnomethodology is not about processes, but procedures, which should be understood as *work* (Garfinkel, 1996). This implies a fundamentally different approach to legitimacy. In and through the empirical analyses, the examined practices have been identified as managing legitimacy, that is, as "legitimacy work." The thesis thus forms a data-

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[22] As article I showed, sickness benefit recipients' desires and motivations are oriented to as institutionally important, especially in relation to their return to work. How, then, is this predicate of "wanting" to return to work managed when the illness itself might imply an inability to feel motivated to do anything at all, such as might be the case for, for instance, severe depression?

driven, ethnomethodologically informed conceptualization of legitimacy as a collaborative interactional accomplishment. In this account, legitimacy exists in and through the situations in which it is "done" or "worked upon." This means that legitimacy is understood as a locally contingent practicality; it is not an end point in a delimited sense. The notion of accomplishment is integral to the situation itself and does not entail an enduring state that stretches beyond the local. In these respects, legitimacy work differs from the common use of the word "legitimation"; these concepts should not be confused.

This thesis has investigated legitimacy work as negotiating the legitimacy of incumbency of a certain *category*. In the empirical analyses, the category is "sickness benefit recipient." Legitimate categorial incumbency in this instance is not the same as the legitimacy of sick leave as an institution, of the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, or of medicine (although it undoubtedly relates to these and other instances). It is also not quite the same as working to establish category incumbency in the first place; it is not whether the person currently *is* on sick leave or not that is at stake, but whether the person *should be*.

By this account, legitimacy relates to concepts such as accountability, objectivity, morality, and identity. Like legitimacy, these are understood as interactional accomplishments. Managing them can also work to manage legitimacy, as the articles have suggested. However, they do not entirely overlap with the concept of legitimacy work. For something to be legitimate, it has to be accountable, but accountability alone is not sufficient for legitimacy. Similarly, accomplishing legitimacy requires accomplishing objectivity (or managing subject-object relations) but the notion of legitimacy goes beyond this accomplishment. It is not enough to be "objectively" sick and "objectively" unable to work as a consequence of illness; legitimacy also has moral aspects that impose additional contingencies. These moral aspects relate to notions of deservedness, efforts to get well, and engagement in other activities that might positively or negatively affect the illness (all of which, of course, have objective elements). Similarly, establishing morality is insufficient without establishing objectivity, too. The notion of identity, finally, is bound up with subjectivity and morality and has to do with establishing what "kind of person" one is. Establishing oneself as the kind of person who would not be on sick leave for illegitimate reasons, therefore, is a central moral accomplishment that works to manage legitimacy. This also relates to the notion of categories that may be invoked as part of such identity work, to the extent that they can be bound to activities or predicates that in turn work to manage legitimacy. It is important to point out that predicates or activities are bound to the category as they are oriented to in interaction. In this sense, the meaning of, for example, mental states, activities, or alternative

categories for the legitimacy of the sick leave is established in and for the legitimacy work.

While people engage in legitimacy work, the concept focuses on practices rather than individuals. Lexical choice, emphasis, invocations of activities or mental states, etc., are resources for doing legitimacy work, and this is true regardless of who the speaker is. This is not to say that the person does not matter, but rather that any presuppositions about the person whose legitimacy is at stake come to matter *in* the interaction, as far as they are oriented to, or made relevant. Similarly, that people do legitimacy work does not necessarily entail that they are aware of it or that it is a conscious strategy on their part. That legitimacy is "accomplished" also does not mean that co-participants "think" that the person is a legitimate incumbent of the category in question; nor does it mean that they do not. Rather, the concept is about observable practices, and does not assume a particular relationship between those practices and people's inner states. While cognition in this sense is analytically bracketed, however, legitimacy work may be cognitively *oriented*. This means that accomplishing legitimacy may, at least partly, depend on cognitive constructs, so that legitimacy work involves orienting to mental states (e.g., what one "wants").

In suggesting an understanding of legitimacy as work, the thesis makes a theoretical contribution to sociology more generally. To summarize, the empirical analyses, which are informed by ethnomethodological theory and related analytic frameworks stemming from Sacks's (1992) approach to analyzing interaction, suggest that legitimacy has the following properties:

1. *It is a collaborative accomplishment*. This means that legitimacy is actively worked upon, managed, and constituted in interaction.[23] This does not, however, entail or presuppose a once-and-for-all obtaining of legitimacy such that "accomplishing" legitimacy would mean that the work is "done." On the contrary, legitimacy must be managed in any situation where it is, or could be taken to be, at stake.

2. *It is locally situated*. Legitimacy work contributes to giving the situation meaning, and vice versa. Legitimacy is thus integral to the situation. It is setting-specific on a detailed level, in the sense that the stakes, the available resources, and other aspects of the situation provide for legitimacy work to be done in locally specific ways. Drawing on radically different types of interactional data has made visible how, for example, textuality and anonymity provide for certain forms of legitimacy work, whereas face-to-face meetings provide for others.

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[23] Approaching legitimacy as an interactional accomplishment brackets the ontological side of the basis for category incumbency. This means that people's interactional contributions are not evaluated in relation to some notion of how well they "actually" seem to fit in the category.

Similarly, legitimacy should not be understood as steered by social structures, asymmetries, or cultures in a way that is external to legitimacy work itself, but such contextual aspects enter the analysis as they are brought into the local situation by the participants themselves. That there are local specificities on a detailed level does not mean that legitimacy work is restricted to certain settings or domains. On the contrary, the thesis shows that legitimacy work takes place across settings that are fundamentally different, supporting the claim that the concept of legitimacy work should be understood in more general terms.

3. *It is action oriented.* Legitimacy work is inherent to action; it is done in and through people's actions. This means that legitimacy work is observably done in the course of asking questions, complaining, making assessments, and so on. While some previous approaches to legitimacy have drawn attention to accounts, which in more explicit ways orient to legitimacy being at stake, legitimacy work as conceptualized in this thesis is wider and also includes more subtle features of delivery across a range of actions. This entails that legitimacy work is done in and through the sequential structure of talk- or text-in-interaction, which means that there are sequentially based constraints on how legitimacy work can be done.[24]

I have here summarized the key features of legitimacy work as a theoretical concept. This description is not intended to be exhaustive, but suggestive of different dimensions inherent to the concept as it has been developed based on the particular data analyzed in the thesis. This means that the conceptual framework constitutes a first theoretical step, but that there is a potential and further need for empirically driven specification and elaboration to determine the concept's applicability and usefulness across different empirical settings and categorial relevancies.

The thesis has touched upon a few topics that appear to be especially important for future studies to explore in more detail. First, the notions of epistemic status, stance, and authority, which have received a great deal of attention within CA in recent years, are likely important for how legitimacy work gets done, calling for empirical examination of such relationships. Second, the relationship between the legitimacy of categorial incumbency and the legitimacy of institutions, organizations, etc. should be investigated further as this relationship is talked into being.

Theoretically and empirically extending the notion of legitimacy work in these and other ways would make it possible to more deeply explore

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[24] For example, a question imposes certain assumptions upon the questioned, and the form of the question constrains the form that the answers should take, which means that responses that resist the assumptions of the question or that are nonconforming in terms of format, typically require additional work.

connections with traditional sociological approaches to legitimacy as such connections play out in interaction. The thesis is a first step in this direction. Legitimacy seen as work does not exclude a focus on authority, institutions, interests, and so on, just as it does not exclude notions of cognition, context, action, or morality. On the contrary, the approach taken here means respecifying such matters as situated accomplishments to provide for empirical analysis of them as a part of people's everyday lives. The thesis's focus on legitimacy in relation to social categories—a focus originating in data rather than theory and, as such, a result rather than a presupposition— evokes questions about the extent to which legitimacy work contributes to social order and stability in a way that goes beyond the organization of social interaction, yet is integral to that organization.

Sammanfattning

Huvudbudskapet i den här avhandlingen är att sjukskrivning innebär legitimitetsarbete. I samspel med andra människor förhandlas sjukskrivningens legitimitet bland annat genom de ord vi använder, hur de orden levereras och hur de koordineras med andras i interaktion. På så sätt framträder den sjukskrivna som sjuk, arbetsoförmögen och så vidare.[25] Det innebär att legitimitet åstadkoms i varje enskild situation och i samverkan med de personer som deltar där, oavsett om det är ett institutionellt sammanhang (till exempel hos läkaren eller Försäkringskassan) eller ett vardagssammanhang (till exempel hemma med familjen eller i diskussionsforum på internet).

Avhandlingen undersöker hur sjukskrivningslegitimitet hanteras och förhandlas i talad och skriven interaktion. Genom att utgå från ett övergripande etnometodologiskt ramverk med särskild inriktning mot samtalsanalys, diskurspsykologi och medlemskategorianalys, bidrar avhandlingen med ny, detaljerad kunskap om situationen som sjukskriven i Sverige. Samtidigt bidrar avhandlingen med en empiriskt driven teoriutveckling av legitimitet som sociologiskt begrepp. Den här sammanfattningen redogör i tur och ordning för de teoretiska och metodologiska utgångspunkterna, beskriver de empiriska delstudier som avhandlingen bygger på, sammanfattar de analyser som redovisas i de ingående artiklarna, samt diskuterar avhandlingens bidrag med avseende på det empiriska fältet—sjukskrivning i Sverige—och det teoretiska begreppet "legitimitetsarbete" som avhandlingen för fram.

Interaktion, samtal och institutionella kategorier

När vi interagerar så etablerar vi vilka vi är i förhållande till varandra och samtidigt producerar vi världen som observerbar och igenkänningsbar. Detta

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[25] Detta innebär inte att sjukskrivningens legitimitet eller sjukdomens autenticitet ifrågasätts i avhandlingen. Utgångspunkten är snarare att den sociala verkligheten och vad som i interaktion med andra framträder såsom "sant" eller "verkligt" inte är en direkt avspegling av en fysisk verklighet i ontologisk mening. Det innebär att kategoriseringen av en person såsom "sjuk" beror på hur personen framträder (bl.a. genom hur kroppsliga symptom framstår som relevanta), vilket inte är något neutralt eller givet. Detta ska alltså inte heller förstås som att sjukdomars ontologiska existens förnekas.

är grundläggande för etnometodologin såsom den utvecklades av Garfinkel (1967; 2002; 2006) och medför ett analytiskt fokus på de metoder genom vilka detta åstadkoms i faktiska situationer. I jämförelse med sådan sociologisk teoribildning som ser social handling som styrd av normer, värderingar, kulturer, institutioner eller sociala strukturer, så innebär det etnometodologiska perspektivet en betoning av det praktiska, ordnade sätt på vilket mening och ömsesidig förståelse skapas. Det innebär att social ordning finns i handling, i interaktion—sociala strukturer, exempelvis, konstrueras och upprätthålls i, genom och för handling. Den sociala ordningen är därför direkt observerbar och gripbar i detalj. Trots etnometodologins betoning av det lokala så ska inte perspektivet ses som individualistiskt. Tvärtom finns en kritik också mot den kognitivistiska underbyggnad som är synlig i en del sociologiska analyser, där individens tankar eller känslor blir en variabel i en förklaringsmodell. Istället betonas att individen och hennes inre konstitueras i interaktion.

Etnometodologins grundprinciper vidareutvecklades och specificerades empiriskt i Harvey Sacks föreläsningar (Sacks, 1992), vilka kom att ligga till grund för ett utvecklat fokus på interaktion—och särskilt tal-i-interaktion—som samhällets sociala grund. Samtalsanalysen undersöker härvidlag hur samtal är systematiskt ordnade—hur vi turas om att tala och hur handlingar länkas samman i sekventiellt organiserade samtal (se t.ex. Sidnell and Stivers, 2014). I sina föreläsningar intresserade sig Sacks också för hur kategorier (t.ex. bebis, homosexuell, raggare), som knutpunkter för samhällsmedlemmars kunskap om samhället, kan fungera som resurser i samtal. Forskning som följt detta spår (s.k. medlemskategorianalys) har studerat kategorier som något lokalt—något som görs relevant i och för samspelet med andra, som förhandlas och hanteras, och som relateras till andra kategorier, egenskaper eller aktiviteter (se t.ex. Fitzgerald and Housley, 2015). Till stor del med avstamp i dessa två relaterade angreppssätt, men också i relation till bland annat diskursanalys och retorik, har också diskurspsykologin etablerat liknande ståndpunkter rörande språk, interaktion, kategorier och inre processer och tillstånd, framför allt i relation till kognitiv psykologi och socialpsykologi (se t.ex. Tileaga and Stokoe, 2015).

Även om betoningen av vardagslivet och den vardagliga interaktionens grundläggande principer har varit betydande för forskningen inom det bredare analytiska ramverk som etnometodologi, samtalsanalys, medlemskategorianalys och diskurspsykologi tillsammans kan ses utgöra, så har det också funnits ett intresse för institutionella tillämpningar (se t.ex. Heritage and Clayman, 2010). Samtal ses som institutionella om deltagarna orienterar till institutionella mål, uppgifter eller identiteter, och/eller det finns en speciell begränsande form för samtalet, och/eller deltagarna gör relevant en specialiserad procedur eller ramverk, t.ex. genom användandet av en viss terminologi (jfr Drew and Heritage, 1992: 22 ff.). Institutionalitet

följer därmed inte automatiskt av att interaktionen äger rum på en viss plats och på samma sätt är institutionella kategorier och identiteter inte givna, utan upparbetas, görs relevanta, etableras, förhandlas och hanteras i och för interaktion. Kategorin "sjukskriven" kan förstås både som en del av den institutionella interaktionen där den figurerar och som ett resultat av den institutionella bedömningsprocessen, och därmed något som ges en definition som har bäring även utanför den situation där denna kategorisering formellt sker. Detta innebär dock inte att en sådan överföring av kategoritillhörighet är automatisk; snarare är det något som deltagarna i ett samtal tillsammans aktivt etablerar i varje ny situation där kategoritillhörigheten görs relevant.

Två empiriska delstudier

Avhandlingen analyserar interaktion i två skilda kontexter:

1. En "tråd" i ett internetforum. I tråden interagerar sjukskrivna personer med varandra och skriver om såväl vardagliga saker (t.ex. familj, vardagssysslor, julklappar, relationer) som saker som på ett mer direkt sätt rör sjukskrivning (t.ex. hälsotillstånd, ekonomi, läkarbesök, samtal med Försäkringskassan). Den aktuella tråden består av 3331 inlägg under en tremånadersperiod. De totalt 38 deltagarna presenterar sig som sjukskrivna kvinnor, använder alias och känner inte varandra utanför forumet.
2. Avstämningsmöten som handläggare på Försäkringskassan håller med långtidssjukskrivna och där också deras husläkare deltar, samt i vissa fall någon från Arbetsförmedlingen och/eller en representant för arbetsgivaren. Sju avstämningsmöten har ljudinspelats, vilket sammanlagt innebär ett dataset som består av cirka 5,5 mötestimmar. Dessa möten är en viktig del av sjukskrivningsprocessen, de är lagstadgade och den sjukskrivna är ålagd att delta. De syftar bland annat till att ge bättre beslutsunderlag och en snabbare och mer aktiv rehabiliteringsprocess, där den sjukskrivnas motivation och attityder spelar en central roll.

De två materialen skiljer sig åt på en rad betydelsefulla sätt. Förutom att interaktionen i det ena sker med text och det andra med tal, så är det inte riktigt samma sak som står på spel. Medan internetforumet är informellt, anonymt och enkelt att dra sig tillbaka från om man inte vill delta, så är avstämningsmötet mer formaliserat, med ett tvång att delta, och framför allt så kan det ha stor betydelse för framtida ersättning, rehabilitering, och så vidare. Eftersom analysen är starkt empiriskt driven så finns det flera poänger med att studera hur legitimitet hanteras i så olikartade sammanhang.

För det första handlar det om att olikheten gör det möjligt att säga något om legitimitetsarbetets generalitet och omfattning—*att* det sträcker sig bortom den formellt institutionella kontexten, där det kanske är mer väntat att legitimitetsarbete ska vara centralt, är en poäng i sig. Men det handlar också om att de stora olikheterna gör det möjligt att se skillnader på en detaljerad nivå, vilket synliggör legitimitetsarbete som situerad praktik.

Sammanfattning av analyserna

Analysen presenteras i tre artiklar som utforskar hur sjukskrivningens legitimitet hanteras i relation till olika aspekter knutna till kategorin sjukskriven. Den första artikeln undersöker hur den sjukskrivnas inre görs relevant, medan den andra och den tredje artikeln båda fokuserar på vardagsaktiviteter som sjukskrivna gör. Den tredje artikeln undersöker dessutom hur kön görs relevant i detta sammanhang. Utifrån Sacks (1992) begreppsapparat kring kategorier kan analyserna därmed sägas handla om kategorins predikat, kategoribundna aktiviteter, samt relation till andra kategorier.

Mer specifikt så handlar den första artikeln (I) om hur explicita formuleringar av vad den sjukskrivna vill i avstämningsmöten hanterar sjukskrivningens legitimitet. I beskrivningar av hur sjukdom förhindrar återgång i arbete formuleras att den sjukskrivna "vill" tillbaka till jobbet, och genom bland annat modalitet ("skulle vilja"), låg specificitet (vill börja "något") och reducering av omedelbarhet (jämför "vill börja jobba" med "vill jobba") etableras den sjukskrivna såsom en "sån som vill jobba" utan att förbinda sig till något omedelbart eller specifikt. När de professionella deltagarna tar upp vad den sjukskrivna "vill" lägger det ut en riktning mot tillfrisknande och rehabilitering, men kan också användas för att ställa sjukskrivna till svars om utfallet inte överensstämmer med vad de tidigare sagt sig vilja. De professionellas användning av de sjukskrivnas vilja visar därmed både risken med att uttrycka vilja i detta institutionella sammanhang, och vikten av att göra det på "rätt" sätt. Artikeln drar i detta avseende paralleller till Parsons (1951) sjukrollsmodell, där den sjukas vilja till tillfrisknande ses som en förutsättning för att komma i åtnjutande av de fördelar som sjukrollen för med sig (t.ex. sjukskrivning). Parsons sjukrollsmodell har varit grundläggande för medicinsk sociologi, men har utstått avsevärd kritik och har åtskilliga gånger dödförklaras. Artikeln, liksom andra samtalsanalytiska studier, visar dock på dess fortsatta relevans. Snarare än att se sjukrollsbegreppet som en förklaringsmodell eller en del i ett funktionalistiskt teoribygge närmar sig artikeln sjukrollen utifrån empiriskt drivna analyser av interaktion och synliggör på så sätt detaljer i hur sjukrollen hanteras och hur "vilja" på intet sätt är enkelt att uttrycka, utan kräver ett omfattande arbete. Ytterligare en poäng är att kontextuella,

biologiska eller psykologiska aspekter lyfts in i analysen baserat på om/hur deltagarna själva orienterar till dem. På så sätt omspecificeras mycket av den kritik som tidigare riktats mot modellen, och frågan blir inte om modellen tar tillräcklig hänsyn till exempelvis skillnaden mellan olika sjukdomstillstånd, utan om och på vilket sätt deltagarna själva gör det.

Den andra artikeln (II) analyserar hur aktiviteter, dvs. sådant som sjukskrivna gör om dagarna, beskrivs i en internetforumtråd. Beskrivningar av "för mycket", "för lite", "för rolig" eller "för tråkig" aktivitet kan undergräva sjukskrivningens legitimitet. Analysen i artikeln visar hur deltagarna i forumtråden balanserar mellan dessa spänningspunkter och gemensamt hanterar sjukskrivningslegitimiteten genom de språkliga detaljerna i beskrivningarna. Det handlar till exempel om att relatera till synes njutbara aktiviteter till sjukdomens begränsningar ("om jag orkar") eller till terapeutiska effekter ("när man har roligt mår man bättre"). Andra exempel är minimering av aktiviteter ("pyssla med små hobbygrejer"), externalisering eller utsuddande av agens ("…så att återgång till arbetet kunde ske") och ironiska beskrivningar ("tur att man har så mycket fritid!"). Genom dessa språkliga resurser hanteras sjukskrivningens legitimitet i relation till olika aktiviteter, samtidigt som de är tillräckligt subtila för att hantera risken att ses som subjektivt motiverade, överlagda eller strategiska, vilket också skulle kunna utmana sjukskrivningens legitimitet.

Den tredje artikeln (III) bygger vidare på analyserna i artikel II, men fokuserar särskilt på beskrivningar av hushållsarbete där kön görs relevant. Artikeln föreslår att de sätt som detta görs på hanterar könade, heteronormativa aspekter av sjukskrivningslegitimitet och misstanken att sjukskrivningen för kvinnor är ett sätt att spendera mer tid med familjen eller få ihop vardagslivet med städning, matlagning, osv. Förekomsten av sådant ifrågasättande har tidigare rapporterats i intervjustudier med sjukskrivna kvinnor. Analysen visar hur sjukskrivningens legitimitet hanteras i rättfärdigande förklaringar (accounts) av hushållsarbete ("min man gör saker hela tiden så nu får jag dåligt samvete") och i humoristiska, könade kategoriseringar i relation till hushållsarbete ("vilken husmor, va!"). Det är med andra ord inte bara kön som på detta sätt förs in i interaktionen i samband med beskrivningar av hushållsarbete, utan mer specifikt fördelningen av hushållssysslor i en heterosexuell relation. Jämställdhet fungerar härvidlag som en interaktionell resurs: genom att göra gällande ett brott med en traditionell uppdelning av hemarbetet kan sjukskrivningslegitimiteten hanteras. Denna analys får stöd av att det enda avvikande exemplet, där en traditionell uppdelning synliggörs ("det är mina sysslor om dagarna, att ha maten färdig när gubben kommer hem!"), leder till ifrågasättande av en annan deltagare ("han hjälper väl också till?"). Sammantaget utvecklar artikeln en praktiskt orienterad förståelse av könade aspekter av sjukskrivningslegitimitet såsom den hanteras i interaktion.

Avhandlingens empiriska bidrag: sjukskrivningslegitimitet

Legitimitet är en central fråga både för den politiska utformningen av regelverket och för Försäkringskassans beslutsprocess och handläggning av sjukpenning, då en av socialförsäkringssystemets viktigaste uppgifter är att särskilja personer som är berättigade till ersättning från personer som inte är det. I den offentliga debatten under de senaste två decennierna har sjukskrivningslegitimitet också fått stor plats, där omfattningen av "fusk" och överutnyttjande har diskuterats, liksom frågan om en glidning i befolkningens "attityder" till sjukskrivning (se t.ex. Frykman and Hansen, 2009; Johnson, 2010; Palmer, 2006). Parallellt har forskningen om sjukskrivning i Sverige till stor del handlat om att hitta förklaringar till vad som oftast setts som höga sjukskrivningsnivåer samt till variationer av olika slag (t.ex. i relation till variabler såsom kön, ålder, etc., till systemförändringar, eller till geografiska områden). Forskningen har på detta sätt anknutit till frågan om legitimitet och forskningsresultat har också flitigt använts i den offentliga debatten om sjukskrivning. Däremot finns väldigt lite forskning som analyserat legitimitet explicit. Ett antal kvalitativa studier har lyft fram att sjukskrivna personer misstänkliggörs och som en följd av detta måste tänka på vad de ses säga och göra, för att inte riskera att deras sjukpenning ifrågasätts (t.ex. Lännerström et al., 2013; Vidman, 2007; 2009). Även om dessa studier indikerar att ifrågasatt legitimitet är ett problem för sjukskrivna personer så visar de inte *hur* legitimiteten hanteras, förhandlas, ifrågasätts eller upparbetas. Genom att detaljerat beskriva hur legitimitetsarbete konkret går till i verkliga situationer bidrar avhandlingen med ny kunskap till sjukskrivningsforskningen, som också är en ny *sorts* kunskap. Avhandlingen har därmed stor relevans för en utökad förståelse av sjukskrivningens sociala dimensioner.

Avhandlingens teoretiska bidrag: legitimitetsarbete

Baserat på de empiriska analyserna utvecklar avhandlingen det teoretiska begreppet *legitimitetsarbete*. Traditionellt har sociologisk legitimitetsteori i huvudsak framställt legitimitet som en entitet med början och slut, som direkt eller indirekt anknyter till kognitiva tillstånd, normer eller värderingar, och som framför allt relaterar till institutioner eller auktoritet och status (jfr Bensman, 1979; Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Izzo, 1987; Johnson et al., 2006; Jost and Major, 2001; Luckmann, 1987; van Leeuwen, 2007; Weber, 1978 [1924]; Zelditch, 2001). Till skillnad från dessa förståelser sätter begreppet legitimitetsarbete kategoritillhörighet i fokus och legitimitet ses som något som personer "gör" i interaktionen med andra. På så sätt förstås legitimitet som något som framträder, eller åstadkoms, lokalt i och för den

specifika situationen. Legitimitet blir med detta ett praktiskt orienterat begrepp, såtillvida att social praktik står i fokus, och varken förutsätter eller är beroende av någon externt bestående slutpunkt. Dessutom innebär det att exempelvis normer, strukturer, kulturer, och biologiska eller psykologiska tillstånd och processer inte lyfts in i en befintlig orsaksmodell utan snarare ges analytisk betydelse utifrån hur de av deltagarna själva tas upp och ges en innebörd som en del av sekventiellt ordnade sociala handlingar. På detta sätt ses sådana aspekter som viktiga men inte nödvändiga delar av hur legitimitetsarbete utförs. Genom att konceptualisera, definiera och analysera legitimitetsarbete utgör avhandlingen ett första teoretiskt steg i utvecklingen av en vardaglig, språknära förståelse av ett av sociologins mest centrala begrepp.

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Appendix A: Transcription Key

[	Onset of overlap
]	End of overlap
=	Latch
(0.5)	Silence, tenth of seconds
(.)	Silence, shorter than 0.2 seconds
↑	Shift into higher pitch
↓	Shift into lower pitch
<u>word</u>	Stress
wo:rd	Prolongation of immediately prior sound
>word<	Faster than surrounding talk
<word>	Slower than surrounding talk
WORD	Louder sound than surrounding talk
°word°	Softer sound than surrounding talk
°°word°°	Whisper
word.	Falling intonation contour
word?	Strongly rising intonation ('questioning' intonation)
word,	Slightly rising intonation ('continuing' intonation)
wo-	Cut-off
£word£	Smily voice
~word~	Wobbly voice
word	Creaky voice
.shih	Wet sniff
.hh	Inbreath
hh	Outbreath
wo(h)rd	Interpolated particle of aspiration

Sources: Hepburn, 2004; Hepburn and Bolden, 2014; Jefferson, 2004.

Appendix B: Information Letter

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Försäkringskassans avstämningsmöten vid sjukskrivning: ett forskningsprojekt om villkor, gränssättande och kategorisering

Du får det här brevet eftersom du för närvarande är sjukskriven och inom kort kommer att delta i ett avstämningsmöte på Försäkringskassan. Jag har med ditt godkännande fått dina kontaktuppgifter av din läkare. Anledningen är att jag vill komma i kontakt med sjukskrivna personer som kan tänka sig att delta i ett forskningsprojekt genom att göra det möjligt för mig att ta del av samtalen under avstämningsmöten som de deltar i.

Projektet är en del av en doktorsavhandling och beräknas vara klart 2014. Jag som genomför projektet är doktorand vid Uppsala universitet. Projektet syftar till att svara på frågor om hur deltagarna på mötet talar om sjukskrivning och sjukdom. Det handlar om att utforska samtalets villkor och gränser för hur sjukskrivna personer kommer till tals, men också om att undersöka hur sociala kategoriseringar (t.ex. kön, ålder etc.) påverkar kommunikationen under dessa möten. Genom att olika professionella grupper finns med vid dessa möten så blir det också intressant att undersöka hur de deltar i och påverkar samtalet. Ytterst vill jag undersöka frågan om lika villkor under sjukskrivningsprocessen.

Mer konkret innebär medverkan i projektet följande:

- Eftersom jag är intresserad av att undersöka själva samtalet under avstämningsmöten så är det viktigt att få möjligheten att ta del av dessa samtal. Jag kommer därför att spela in samtal där samtliga deltagare på förhand har godkänt att detta görs.
- Om du kan tänka dig att delta så tar jag med ditt samtycke även kontakt med de andra personer som kommer att delta i mötet (handläggare, arbetsgivare, facklig representant eller andra) för att också de ska kunna ta ställning till att delta eller inte.

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- När det är dags för själva avstämningsmötet så kommer jag att placera en liten bandspelare i rummet, men jag kommer inte att sitta med under själva mötet.
- Efter mötet kommer inspelningen att skrivas ut och alla deltagare kommer att anonymiseras så att identiteten inte framgår. Det insamlade materialet kommer att förvaras på ett sådant sätt att ingen obehörig kommer att ha tillgång till det.
- Det är frivilligt att delta i studien, vilket också betyder att du eller någon av de andra deltagarna när som helst kan välja att avbryta deltagandet.

Återigen vill jag betona att mitt fokus ligger på själva samtalet och dess former, och att jag inte kommer att analysera handläggningen av ditt specifika ärende. Mina resultat kommer inte heller att påverka handläggningen av ditt ärende på något sätt.

Har du frågor eller vill ha mer information så kontakta gärna mig! Du är också varmt välkommen att kontakta min handledare, docent Maria Eriksson.

Vänliga hälsningar,

Marie Flinkfeldt (doktorand, Uppsala universitet)
Tel: 018-471 1169
E-post: Marie.Flinkfeldt@soc.uu.se
Adress: Sociologiska institutionen, Box 624, 751 26 Uppsala

Maria Eriksson (docent, Uppsala universitet)
Tel: 018-471 1501
E-post: Maria.Eriksson@soc.uu.se
Adress: Sociologiska institutionen, Box 624, 751 26 Uppsala

Appendix C: Consent Form

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Etikprotokoll: En studie om Försäkringskassans avstämningsmöten vid sjukskrivning

I detta forskningsprojekt undersöks avstämningsmöten som Försäkringskassan håller med sjukskrivna personer, och där nyckelpersoner såsom läkare och/eller arbetsgivare m.fl. också deltar. Projektet är en del av en doktorsavhandling och beräknas vara klart 2014. Jag som genomför projektet är doktorand vid Uppsala universitet. Projektet är godkänt av Regionala Etikprövningsnämnden i Uppsala (Dnr 2008/385).

Studien syftar till att svara på frågor om hur deltagarna på mötet talar om sjukskrivning och sjukdom. Undersökningen fokuserar på *vad* som sägs, *hur* det sägs samt vilka effekter det sagda får i den pågående interaktionen. Det handlar på ett övergripande plan om samtalets villkor och gränser för hur sjukskrivna personer kommer till tals, men också om hur relationen mellan de olika professionella grupperna ser ut. Studien avser också undersöka om (och i så fall hur) *kategorisering* – eller tillskrivande av grupptillhörigheter såsom exempelvis kön, åldersgrupp, eller etnicitet – påverkar samtalet.

Studiens fokus ligger alltså på själva samtalet och dess former. Inga journaluppgifter eller liknande kommer att efterfrågas, och ärendets övriga handläggning kommer inte att undersökas.

Medverkan i projektet innebär att:

⇒ Under avstämningsmötet så placeras en liten ljudinspelningsapparat i rummet. Forskaren kommer inte att sitta med under själva mötet.

⇒ Efter mötet kommer inspelningen att skrivas ut och alla deltagare kommer att anonymiseras så att identiteten inte framgår. Samtliga mötesdeltagare ombeds att upprätthålla anonymitetsskyddet för de andra deltagarna.

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⇒ Det insamlade materialet kommer att förvaras på ett sådant sätt att ingen obehörig kommer att ha tillgång till det.
⇒ Det är frivilligt att delta i studien, vilket också betyder att alla deltagare när som helst inför eller under avstämningsmötet kan välja att avbryta deltagandet. Om någon deltagare i efterhand ångrar sitt deltagande kan detta dras tillbaka upp till en månad efter att inspelningen ägt rum.

Inspelningarna kommer bara att användas till forskning, inte på något annat sätt. Det är forskaren som är ansvarig för analysen och presentationen av materialet.

Jag har tagit del av ovanstående.   Jag har informerat om ovanstående.

Datum: Datum:

…………………………………   ……………………………………
Underskrift   Underskrift

…………………………………   Marie Flinkfeldt
Namnförtydligande   Uppsala Universitet
                                              Box 624, 751 26 UPPSALA
                                              Marie.Flinkfeldt@soc.uu.se
                                              018-471 1169

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