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ARE THERE SWEDISH PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION?

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1. What are patterns of communication

An increasing number of people, sometime during their lifetime, have contact with people from different cultures than the ones they are best acquainted with. A very common phenomenon in such contacts is that misunderstandings arise because one has, in some way, projected expectations which are based on one's own culture on the behaviour of others. In order to avoid unjustified projections of this type but also to gain better insight about differences and similarities between different cultures, in general, it is interesting to try to provide better descriptions of different patterns of culture. Especially interesting is to try to provide descriptions of what we could call the pattern of communication of a particular culture. After all, differences in communication are among those things that one immediately is confronted with in contacts with people from another culture. This paper is intended to be a contribution to the description of patterns of communication by describing Swedish patterns of communication, and has three main goals:

1. To give a suggestion for an operational analysis of the concept "patterns of communication" which would be able to function as a framework for the description of patterns of communication also in other cultures than Swedish.

2. To discuss some of the problems which are confronted if one wants to investigate culture dependent differences in communication.

3. To present some speculations concerning the nature of Swedish patterns of communication. This is important not least to become more aware of what status the pronouncements of Swedes on other cultures has.

The concept of "patterns of communication" is fairly general and does not imply very much more than repeated traits of, or aspects of the communication of the members of a certain social or cultural group. There is a very large, perhaps infinite, number of such aspects and traits and what is at stake is, therefore, to focus on aspects and traits which have turned out to be interesting. This is, however, not easy since some form of communication is related to most sides of cultural life, i.e., to the thoughts, behavior and artefacts (artificially made objects) which are characteristic of the lifestyle of a certain group of people. Regularities and patterns in communication can be found when it concerns all these three main aspects of cultural life and the relation between them.

One way of approaching the patterns is through the study of the different activities in which a culture is manifested.

What is communication like in activities such as agriculture, fishing, industry and commerce or within more small-scale activities like visiting the doctor, quarrelling, writing letters, buying food or relaxing?

However, an investigation of this type is not so easy and some sort of analytical framework is needed to guide one's study. Below, I will therefore make a suggestion for such a framework concerned primarily with direct spoken language communication. This framework can also be regarded as an operational analysis of the concept of "patterns of communication". This means that it is an analysis which connects this concept with certain observable empirical phenomena without claiming that these phenomena necessarily are the only ones which would be possible to consider, or that the concept, operationalized through this type of analysis, has been given a sufficient theoretical analysis.

2. A Framework for the study of spoken language communication

The following factors have turned out to be important in many types of direct interpersonal communication:

2.1 Purpose

The purpose determines the nature of an activity and the communication within it, for example, to negotiate, to buy or sell, to relax, etc.

2.2 Roles

In many activities there are definite roles which are partly determined by the purpose of the activity. The roles are connected with certain rights and duties, also when it comes to communication. A teacher or an officer, for example, have completely different rights and duties when it comes to communication than a pupil or a private soldier. A customer has other rights and duties than a shop assistant.

2.3 Overall structures and procedures

Besides purposes and roles, there are also, in many activities, some type of overall patterns concerning the interaction between speaker and listener, which are typical for the communication within the activity. They can, for example, concern the following:

1. Typical sequences of events
2. Turntaking
3. Feedback
4. Spatial arrangements
5. Topics or what is talked about

The expression "typical sequences of events" is intended to refer to the fact that what happens in a conversation often happens in a certain sequence. One starts and ends in distinct ways, depending on if it is a telephone call or a formal meeting. For example, we have special routines for greetings, introductions. and farewells. The concept of

"turntaking" refers to the distribution of the right to speak which is related to such phenomena as how long one can speak and if one can speak simultaneously with other speakers. "Feedback" refers to the fact that speaker as well as listener, in a conversation must know how the other party is reacting. The speaker must know whether what he is saying is perceived and understood by the listener, and the listener must know whether he has perceived and understood correctly.

The spatial position of the speaker and listener can sometimes be conventionally determined as, for example, it is in a classroom or in a shop and can influence the communication. It is, for example, easier for a teacher to control the students if they all face him/her than if they don't. Finally, there can sometimes be restrictions on what kind of content or topic is possible in a particular type of conversation. All topics and ways of expressing them are not equally adequate in all situations. What topic I may take up and in which manner I can express it is usually different if I am in a post office than if I am at home sitting at my kitchen table.

2.4 The communicative behavior

Besides patterns in the interaction between speaker and listener, there are also patterns in the communication behavior of a single speaker or listener. Many of these patterns have long been studied in traditional linguistics. This is particularly true for those patterns which one can observe in written language. The following types of patterns have turned out to be especially interesting and fruitful to study:

a) Nonverbal behavior, i.e., the manual and facial gestures and other bodily movements that convey information.

b) Phonological patterns, i.e., the sounds which are used when one speaks. It is important here to notice both the properties of isolated sounds and properties of longer sequences of sounds, for example, such properties of an utterance which are sometimes called intonation, stress or melody.

c) Vocabulary, i.e., the words and expressions which occur in different types of communication. In the vocabulary of a language, we find some of the differences between cultures codified, but we also find big differences within a language between the types of professional language which are connected with different activities.

d) Grammatical patterns, i.e., differences in word order and types of linguistic construction which exist between different languages and between different ways of using a language.

Since speech and writing, in most cultures. are associated with different conventions, the two latter types of patterns should be separately studied for written and spoken language. Nonverbal behavior and phonology does not occur in writing so therefore they can only be studied in connection with speech. For writing one could instead consider the use of graphics, e.g. font size or the use of hyphens, quotation marks, etc. Both speech and writing depend on situation but the way in which they are dependent follows slightly different principles.

2.5 Interpretation and understanding

If one wants to communicate with somebody it is mostly not enough to be able to speak, one must also be able to understand and interpret the communication of other people. One must be able to perceive and interpret nonverbal communication, the sounds that are pronounced as well as the words and the grammatical patterns that are used. One must be able to draw inferences and connect what is being communicated with presupposed information which one already has available. Through understanding, a perceived message receives a meaning which goes beyond the discrimination and perception of the message. Understanding requires stored information in order for it to take place. A major part of this information consists of culture specific background information, i.e., beliefs which all persons in a particular cultural community share and take for granted. Since this information is presupposed in most conversations and precisely because it is taken for granted and appears self-evident, is not overtly expressed, it is likely that lack of insight concerning this type of information can be a basis for prejudice and misunderstandings between people from different cultures.

Therefore, it is important to try to gain insight into those factors which influence our interpretation and understanding of other people.

What has been described in sections 2.1 - 2-5 above constitutes a framework of description for a "pattern of communication". However, it is not an operational analysis in a strict sense but it is all the same sufficiently specific to make possible a first approximate operational definition of the concept "patterns of communication" To describe a "pattern of communication" or the "patterns of communication" of a certain culture is then simply to describe the communication of a particular group of people according to sections 2-1 - 2.5.

3. Problems connected with a description of culture dependent patterns of communication

Before we use the framework which has been described above in trying to describe the Swedish patterns of communication, I would like to discuss a few problems which a description of this type very soon runs into - problems which do not only concern the description of "patterns of communication" but also of most other aspects of the culture in a certain group of people.

3.1 Problem 1. Which traits of communication are interesting and significant in a particular culture?

The first problem concerns what traits of culture are interesting and significant in a particular culture. To a considerable degree this is dependent on what the culture in question is compared to. What appears as Swedish for a Frenchman, e.g. eating herring, does not necessarily have to appear as very Swedish for a Norwegian, since in Norway they eat perhaps even more herring than in Sweden. Another example of the role of perspective is the following: A Japanese who we interviewed thought that Swedes do not work hard. They always sit around, drink coffee and only talk. A Latin American who was interviewed, on the other hand, thought that Swedes are always hurrying and very rarely have time to stop and talk. These two people could

have been in contact with different Swedes but it is also possible that they have experienced roughly the same situations but experienced and interpreted them from different perspectives.

To handle the problem of the spread and uniqueness of cultural traits, we could construct scales; starting with such traits which are shared by the majority or perhaps by all human cultures, for example, in my opinion rationality, sexuality, and the occurrence of some sort of system of food production and ending with cultural traits which are shared by no or very few cultures. In my opinion, for example, legal systems are often of this latter type. One could also make comparisons of the following sort: Japanese people believe that their pace of work is faster than that of Swedes, while Latin Americans believe their pace of work is calmer.

Different cultural traits can also vary as to how interesting they are from different perspectives (a Japanese person perhaps sees other things than a Norwegian as interesting). This can also be true for the people whose culture we are concerned with. It is perhaps more important to show cultural uniqueness if one's cultural identity in some way is focussed, for example, by being questioned. We may, therefore, expect that people will exhibit cultural traits in their communication to a different degree in different situations. In some contacts with strangers, cultural identify is stressed, while in other contacts it is toned down and is replaced by an adjustment to the culture of the other person.

3.2 Problem 2. How big is the variation in patterns of communication within a particular culture and what does it depend on?

A point of departure for what, so far, has been claimed about "patterns of communication" is that one can best study the regularities of a culture by studying the system of activities which is distinctive of the culture. In such a study, one of the problems which soon becomes apparent is the problem of how to treat the variation which always exists in a culture because of differences between different individuals, between different groups of individuals and between different types of situations. On the one hand, it may be asked how should one best describe individual, situational and group dependent, i.e., sub-cultural variation? On the other hand, it may be asked, how one in describing variation should avoid getting lost in details, losing sight of more general trends. This problem is not easy to solve if individuals or distinct sub-groups are very different or the culture which is studied is so similar to another one that the two cultures are hard to separate as, for example, might be the case when comparing Sweden and Norway.

The most common "solution" to these problems is to forget them and proceed as if they did not exist. Culture is then connected to a national state or a national language and a description is given of French, Chinese or Swedish culture on a national level. Obviously, there are many reasons to question this "solution" since it often leads to an oversimplified normative result where the researcher is creating rather than discovering culture and the product of the research really is only a contribution to national political ambitions.

Some of the most important factors behind cultural variation in patterns of communication are the following:

Occupation: Shoemakers express themselves differently than do university lecturers.

Age: Children express themselves in a different way than middle-aged people do.

Sex: Women express themselves in different way than men.

Region: People from Gothenburg express themselves differently than people from Stockholm.

Position and status: Subordinates express themselves differently than their boss.

Religion and politics: Jehovah Witnesses express themselves differently than members of the Communist Party who, in turn, express themselves differently than members of the Environmental Party.

Individual traits: Hitler expressed himself differently than Churchill

Purpose and situation: We express ourselves in a different way when we are flirting than when we are quarrelling and we talk differently in a trade union meeting than at an academic lecture.

In order for claims concerning cultural patterns of communication to be meaningful, it must not be the case that the differences in communication within the culture are so great that, by keeping factors such as the ones mentioned above constant, more features which are common to several cultures can be found than can be found which are distinctive to a particular culture. In other words, if the communication of shoemakers anywhere in the world, shows more similarities than the communication of Frenchmen, it is perhaps more meaningful to study how communication depends on activity and profession than how it varies between national states.

The possibility of finding common traits within activities and professions is greater if one studies communication in the wide sense, we have described above, and smaller if one studies communication in a more narrow sense focusing on the very clear differences which exist between different languages with regard to phonology, morphology and syntax. Perhaps keeping the above mentioned factors constant will lead to a realization that cultures depending on national states are a myth which, with the aid of a national "standard language", partly maintained by force, is used to maintain and strengthen national unity. At least problems of this type make it relatively clear that membership in a certain national state, in a more exact description, only becomes one factor among many others which decide the nature of a pattern of communication. However, it is also clear that one cannot disregard this factor since it serves to connect the other factors to each other and has the effect that these factors within the nation state are confronted with each other and have to interact. In fact, the more they have to interact within a certain geo-political unit, the greater is the likelihood that certain common patterns will evolve. An effect of this is that patterns of culture, specifically culture dependent patterns of communication, usually are the result of an evolutionary process involving many influences.

Because of Sweden's relatively long political centralized government and geographic isolation, it is likely that this type of process has taken place here, and that it should be possible to find common patterns at least for certain groups and regions.

3.3 Problem 3. Insufficient research

In any case not much research has been conducted about Swedish patterns of communication in a wide sense. In particular, there is no research concerning how different types of activities and factors like occupation, age, sex, region, status and power, etc., influence patterns of communication. The only thing that exists are a few speculations concerning some of the phenomena which were mentioned above in the suggested framework for a study of patterns of communication (sections 2.1 - 2.5).

Below, we will now consider some of the phenomena which are of interest if one wants to understand Swedish patterns of communication. What will be said is based on the rather scarce literature about Swedish patterns of culture and a number of in-depth interviews which were made with immigrants of different cultural background in Sweden. Since the number of interviews is not sufficiently great for statistical significance, I will also be using my own observations and speculations.

4. Speculations about Swedish patterns of communication

4.1 Is there anything unique?

A basis for the reasoning in this paper is that communication is an essential part of all human activities and that patterns of communication primarily are created as a response to those requirements which are created by these activities. A first way to find out if there are patterns of communication which are specific to Sweden will be to investigate whether there are activities or traits of activities which are unique or specific to Sweden.

If one disregards such phenomena as the festivities surrounding the distribution of the Nobel Prize, or the solemn opening of the Swedish Parliament with the traditionally dressed Carolinian soldiers (soldiers of Charles XI), there are not many candidates. Not even such national holidays as Midsummer or the December celebration of St. Lucia (which both are characterized by emotions, nonverbal behavior and songs more than by spoken communication) are unique to Sweden but are also celebrated, for example, in Finland. If there is anything unique, it can probably rather be found in specific traits of activities and in the spread of such features than in single complete activities which are unique.

Some examples of such possibly unique traits are the following:
In a Swedish formal meeting a proposal or a nomination does not have to be "seconded" as is common in England or Finland. Or, to take an example from a rather different area - the consumption of alcohol at parties. In Sweden, people at parties sometimes drink the drinks they have brought themselves. but they do not start drinking until the host has proposed a common toast ("*skål*") and wished everyone welcome. Both of these customs are regarded as strange by most of the people we have interviewed. Especially the custom of bringing your own drink is experienced as a breach of the requirements of hospitality which are normal in many cultures.

Another thing which is often commented on is the Swedish way of teaching, which is considerably less authoritarian than is the case in many other cultures. Many informants also mention the Swedish way of negotiating which is connected with a

tendency to consensus and compromise as something relatively unique. Furthermore, many informants mentioned different traits in the way of relaxing, quarrelling and flirting.

Departing from the five different framework factors mentioned above, (i.e, purpose, roles, overall structures and procedures, communicative behavior, interpretation and understanding), I would now like to present somewhat more systematically some further observations and speculations.

4.2 Purpose and roles

What is characteristic of a certain type of communication can often be made clearer by being related either to the purpose of a particular activity or to the roles - i.e., the rights and duties - which typically are connected with the people who are participating in the activity.

Pupils in Sweden, for example, nowadays seem to have the right to talk to each other or to the teacher without first asking for permission, for example, by raising their hand. Since the typical rights and duties of a teacher have simultaneously changed, this has led to a change in the patterns of communication which are common in schools (towards a less authoritarian pattern) and this change is perhaps best explained precisely by looking more closely at the right and duties of teachers and pupils, respectively. In the same way, the rights and duties a chairperson has in a meeting can differ between cultures. In Sweden, it is normally part of a chairperson's duties to maintain a list of speakers where the persons who wish to speak are noted and then given the floor in the same order as they have asked for it, excepting short interchanges. In England and the USA, a chairperson is not constrained by the list of speakers to the same extent, but can give the floor to persons he or she believes can contribute to the discussions most.

It is difficult to say anything generally about the purposes and roles which characterize communication in Sweden. Perhaps one can say that the differences in behavior which are connected to power differences between different roles have decreased so that they today are considerably smaller in Sweden than in many other countries. An example which supports this view is the use of forms of address in Sweden today. The Swedish forms of address have, during a period of 20 years, gone through, what must, from a sociolinguistic perspective, be seen as an astonishingly quick development which has not, as yet, received a more precise description and explanation. In the beginning of the 1960s, Sweden had a relatively complicated system with 7 main options for addressing a single person. The translations given are literal rather than idiomatic.

1. Title alone
   Önskar kapten kaffe? (Does the Captain wish coffee)

2. Family name alone
   Vill Andersson ha kaffe?(Does Andersson want coffee?)

3. First name alone
   Vill Kalle ha kaffe? (Does Kalle want coffee?)

4. Third person single pronoun
   Vill han ha kaffe? (Does he want coffee?)

5. Passive impersonal address
   Önskas det kaffe?(Is coffee wished for?)

6. Second person plural pronoun
   Önskar Ni kaffe? (Do you wish coffee?)

7. Second person singular pronoun
   Vill Du ha kaffe? (Do you (thou) want coffee?)

As we can see, not only the choice of a form of address but also the choice of verb (*vilja ha* (want) or *önska* (wish)) is influenced by the level of formality. Today, in Sweden, there is a considerably simpler system where the number of choices more or less have been reduced to two - second person singular i.e. *du* (you, thou) or an impersonal form of address. Marginally the use of *ni* (you) and *han* (he) still exist but the use of title alone, name or name together with title, has more or less disappeared. This means that today the non use of titles differentiates Sweden from most other countries - even from England and USA, where, in spite of the fact that, for long there has only been one pronoun of address , *you*, titles are still used. (*Do you want coffee Captain Smith?)*. It is difficult to find any other general explanation for this change than the increase in material welfare combined with a change toward more equal types of interaction which have taken place in Sweden, i.e., the linguistic change seems to be connected to a change in how power differences are expressed. However, a more careful description and explanation would probably show that several other factors have also been influential in producing the result we have today.

4.3 Overall structures and procedures

4.3.1 Typical sequences

Since all human activities have to be organized in time, this is also true for conversations. They can be partitioned in a sequence of smaller activities which follow each other in time. These can then further be classified as to where in time they occur - those which are initial, those which are medial and those which are final.

(i) Initial sequences: One of the first behaviors involving communication is gaze and eye contact which seem to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for face-to-face communication. Mutual eye contact can, however, also occur separately without any further communication and seems to vary in quantity and intensity between different cultures. For example, Swedes seem, according to some of our interviews, to tolerate and expect less eye contact than Greeks if the eye contact is to be experienced as neutral. A Greek informant expressed it like this: "Why don't the Swedes look at me - is there something wrong with me?"

Eye contact does not only occur in the beginning of a conversation but also during a conversation. If it occurs during the conversation there seems to be considerable variation in the experience of eye contact. In some cultures, for example, Anglo-

Saxon and to some degree Swedish, eye contact during a conversation is seen as a sign of honesty and reliability, but in other cultures, (e.g. the cultures of the Far East) eye contact of this type is experienced as aggressive and impolite.

Greetings are another very common initial communicative behavior. Who does one greet - known or unknown persons? When are greeting use? Where are greetings used? In Sweden, greetings are normally not used among persons who are not acquainted with each other, for example, if meeting on a city street. But in the mountains or when out sailing, one often greets strangers. Further, people do not usually greet each other more than once if they are in the same place for a continuous period of time. A time interval of non-contact is necessary for another greeting to be motivated.

In what way does one greet each other? In Sweden, slight head nods are common, while in Japan it is common to bow, making use of the body from the waist up. Embraces are common both in eastern Europe and southern Europe, as well as in Latin America. In eastern Europe, embraces are used between both men and women, while in southern Europe they are constrained to women or mixed company. In northern Europe and in countries with Anglo-Saxon cultures, they are less common but embraces without kissing have started to be more common, especially between women. Handkissing - another form of greeting - is almost totally excluded in Sweden but is common in countries like Poland and Hungary.

Kissing on the cheeks is uncommon in Sweden as a greeting but is very common in eastern and southern Europe as well as in Latin America.

Handshakes occur in most places in Europe, America and Australia, but not everywhere in Asia, It is, for example, uncommon in some regions of India.

In the places where handshakes occur, they may be of different frequency and intensity. In England and USA you normally shake hands less than in Sweden, while in France one normally shakes hands more than in Sweden. Differences in manners of greeting can seem small and unimportant but are often misinterpreted, for example, it is easy for a southern European to interpret the Swedish lack of embraces and kisses (used as greetings), as signs of coldness or unfriendliness. Likewise, people from countries with a higher frequency of verbal greetings than what is common in Sweden, for example, people from England or USA, can interpret the lack of verbal greetings as a sign of nonchalance or lack of respect, while from a Swedish perspective a large number of greetings can be viewed as ridiculous, ingratiating or intrusive.

Introductions are a third important initial behavior. Introductions are a ritual whereby one is assigned a social identity in a certain situation.

The first problem concerns when one should introduce oneself. All interactions of a social nature do not require that one introduces oneself in Sweden. You can, for example, have a long conversation with someone in the dining car of a train without introducing yourself. The Swedish rule seems to be that one introduces oneself when

one can predict and suppose that the other person can expect that there will be a period of joint interaction with a particular purpose.

The way you introduce yourself in Sweden is usually that you introduce yourself personally to the person who you want to get to know and shake their hand.

An alternative to this type of introduction sometimes occurs when a third person takes care of the introduction by informing the other person of your name while you yourself shake the hand of the other person, muttering a phrase along the lines of *angenämt* (delighted). This type of introduction is the dominating form of introduction in many other countries like the USA. The fact that one normally introduces oneself personally in Sweden often leads to problems for immigrants in Sweden from cultures where one does not introduce oneself. The person who is not introduced often remains standing around waiting for some person he is acquainted with in a particular conversation to introduce him or her to the persons who are unknown. To a Swede in the same situation, it is less of a problem since he can either introduce himself or choose to take part in the conversation without being introduced, a possibility which seems not to exist in many other cultures.

These are the two most common types of introduction, but still other types occur. According to our interviews, there are places in Indonesia where persons who are going to interact, neither get access to each other's names directly nor through a third person, who in their presence introduce them to each other. All names must instead be conveyed indirectly to them via a third and a fourth person. A further method is the one which was used earlier at official receptions in Europe where an official announcer announces the name of the person as he/she enters the room.

We can also study the sequences which occur in the spoken interaction which is part of a particular activity or occurs under special circumstances. An example of this type can be found in telephone conversations. Normally a telephone conversation starts by the person who receives the call saying something. The telephone signal seems to be experienced a summons and by saying something you are responding to the summons and opening the contact. However, in Swedish culture more than this is expected. We expect that the person who receives the telephone call should identify him/herself by giving their number (according to the Swedish telephone company) or their name (first and last name or either). This behavior is comparatively unusual. In many other culture and language communities, for example, in Anglo-Saxon or Spanish culture, the person who receives the telephone call mostly expects that the other party should identify themselves and may therefore respond by saying only "*hello*" (England), or "*diga*" (Spain) initially.

Another activity which in many cultures is initiated by a special sequence is the consumption of food - meals. The persons who are eating are, in some cultures, expected to start eating in a certain order, often that everyone starts simultaneously using some sort of ritual formula like "guten Appetit" (good appetite) or the prayers (grace) which earlier was common in Sweden.

In many language communities there are also expressions which are used when you are troubling another person. In English one can distinguish between, for example,

"excuse me" which is used before the trouble has occurred and "sorry" which is used afterwards. In Swedish we have words like "*ursäkta*" (excuse me) and "*förlåt*" (pardon) which can be used both before and afterwards. However, our interviews indicate that these words in Sweden are used considerably less than is expected by our informants from southern European and Anglo-Saxon countries.

A less important activity which often is organized behaviorally as well as linguistically is the passing through doors. In many countries it is a rule that women go first and it is also common to utter a phrase like "after you". In Sweden at the present moment there does not seem to be any clear customs in this area.

(ii) Medial sequences

Medial sequences can be found, for example, surrounding talk connected with the primary purpose of a conversation. Such sequences can therefore concern how one approaches a sensitive topic, how one asks someone for a favor or how one give someone an invitation.

In all of these cases, one often in Swedish culture feels a need for some sort of softening transition. There are, for this reason, several preparative phrases such as: (translations are literal rather than idiomatic) "*du, jag vill tala med Dig om något*" (you, I would like to talk to you about something) "*skulle jag kunna få tala med dig om något"* (could I speak to you about something), "*det är något jag skulle vilja tala med Dig om*" (there is something I would like to talk to you about), "*får jag fråga Dig något*" (may I ask you something), or connected with an invitation "*vad gör Du på lördag, etc*" (what are you doing on Saturday, etc.).

What is sensitive and what requires softening transitions, varies from culture to culture and from situation to situation within a culture. While one would hardly ever initiate interaction in a Swedish city shop with questions about the general well being and health of the shop assistant, this would be the natural and prescribed way of doing things in Morocco or in a Swedish countryside shop.

In some circumstances, softening transitional phrases are used less in Sweden than, for example, in Anglo-Saxon or south European cultures. One such situation is the fairly common use of direct imperatives in order to have things passed to you at the dinner table. Swedish does not have a good word corresponding to the English word "please" or the German word "*bitte*". Constructions of the type "*var god"* (be good) "*var vänlig"* (be nice), are sometimes used, but the softening is more often indicated with modal verbs of the type "*kan du*" (can you), "*skulle du kunna"* (would you be able to), etc. Phrases of the type "*var så god*, please" (be so good), have a much more restricted use and are mostly used initially when one wants, for example, to invite somebody to have some food.

(iii) Final sequences

Final sequences have a lot in common with initial ones but to some extent differ from these. I will illustrate this through a discussion of a number of examples concerning final sequences:

Contrary to what one might expect, a telephone call in Sweden is not terminated through an exchange of farewells. Normally, one must before one gets to the farewell, in some way summarize the conversation and this is often done through phrases of the type, "*vi säger så*" (we will say so), "*vi säger det*" (we will say that), or OK. Only after a summary of this type has occurred the exchange of farewells can take place.

More generally there are, concerning leavetakings, roughly the same types of bodily contact that we discussed above in connection with greetings. The rules for the use for the different types of leavetakings are also similar to those for greetings. Possibly there is a tendency in Sweden to make a greater use of greetings than farewells. Thus, it seems to be more common to go home after finishing a day's work without saying goodbye, than to arrive in the morning without saying hello. Sweden here is different from many other culture and language communities and the lack of leavetakings is probably experienced as cold and perhaps even hostile by many non-Swedes.

There is, however, a fairly special final sequence which is common in Sweden and it is the use of phrases which express gratefulness. In Sweden, "thank you":s are due in all sorts of circumstances. In shops and even sometimes on the telephone, "thank you" phrases replace farewells. Strangely enough, both parties in a transaction of this type say "thank you" and sequences of the following type are very common: "*Ja tack då"*, "*tack tack*", "tack", "*tack, tack*", (Yes, thank you, thanks thanks, thanks, thanks thanks). The "thank you" phrases which follow on the initial "thank you" are perhaps best explained as showing gratitude for having been shown gratitude.

In Swedish culture, there is furthermore a duty to say "thank you" in situations where such a duty does not exist in any other cultures. It is, for example, almost obligatory to say "*tack för maten*" (thank you for the food), something which is not at all true in Anglo-Saxon or southern European cultures. There it is instead more common to praise the food during the course of the meal which is not at all obligatory in Sweden. One also says "*tack för sällskapet*" (thank you for the company), for example, after a conversation with a stranger in the dining car of a train, something which seems to be unknown in other cultures where, instead, some phrase, like, "nice talking to you", is used to show appreciation of the company.

Another unusual Swedish thanking duty is the custom of "*tacka för senast*" (thanking for the latest). This duty seems to hold with varying strengths for different persons in Sweden. Some persons phone you up a few days after an invitation and thank you. Other persons wait until they run into the host and then utter their "*tack for senast"* (thanking you for the latest), even if sometimes up to a year has elapsed since the time they last met.

4.3.2 Turntaking

Besides the sequences which occur in a conversation, the turntaking (i.e. the organization of the right to the floor) of the conversation is also important. In all the cultures of the world, the goal of communication is at least to convey information from a sender to a receiver. In a conversation this is facilitated a lot if the speaker can catch the attention of the listener. The means which are used to reach this goal varies

considerably among the cultures of the world. There seems to be two main strategies, (i) direct competition for a listener's attention by speaking simultaneously with other speakers and (ii) indirect competition for a listener 's attention by, instead, competing for the floor. The first strategy is fairly uncommon but, according to Reisman (1974), occurs on the island of Antigua in the West Indies where conversations are apparently conducted in such a manner that several persons talk simultaneously and repeat the message they want to convey until, facial and other gestures from the listeners indicate that they have perceived the message. The speaker can thereafter start on a new message.

The other strategy involves trying to guarantee that a speaker has a listener, by making sure that only one person speaks at a time. To have the floor, in this way, becomes a valuable resource. This is the norm which in most situations holds for Sweden, and seems to have led Swedes to have a low tolerance for interruptions which they try to prevent through the use of phrases such : "*Avbryt mig inte"* (don't interrupt me), "*låt mig få tala till punkt*" (let me talk until a full-stop), "*jag är inte färdig än*" (I am not ready yet). Often people seem to be personally insulted if they are interrupted.

Most cultures seem to be somewhere in between the patterns which are common in Antigua and in Sweden, respectively. For example, in southern Europe there is a much greater tolerance for interruption than in Sweden. Interruptions are among the things which are characteristic of a lively and interesting discussion. One informant from Hungary even thought that it was impolite not to interrupt, for example, when someone has difficulties in terminating an utterance or is saying something which is clearly inappropriate or self-evident. She said that she had often in vain waited in Sweden to get help in terminating such utterances. So, in opposition to the Swedish requirement of being able to terminate on one's own, we have the requirement of getting help when one has got stuck. Another informant, from Argentina, thought, however, that it was a nice change to be able to talk without being interrupted.

A related question concerns how long the period of time can be between speakers in a culture which values the right to the floor. If we consider a discussion which is conducted in a slightly official setting, there seem to be differences between the USA, Sweden and Finland, which all three are language communities which respect the rule that one person should speak at a time. In the USA the pause between speakers is very often minimal, while it is somewhat longer in Sweden, and in Finland tends to be even longer. It should perhaps be stressed that this claim so far is based on my own observations and interviews rather than on a systematic investigation of informants from the three cultures in question.

A further question which is made relevant through the study of turntaking is the question of who usually gets the floor. In order to briefly answer this question one can say that in Sweden there seem to be three main cases:

(i) Exchange of speech which is regulated by an institutional procedure for turntaking

(ii) Exchange of speech between speakers who are not equal in status.

(iii) Exchange of speech between speakers who are equal in status.

In the first case, for example in formal meetings or in the classroom, there are rules which in principle, are known to all involved and which prescribe that a certain person has the right to distribute the word and also how this should be done.

In the second case, there are no such generally accepted rules but the type of turntaking which occurs rather depends on how different speakers relate to the different types of inequality which exist between people. Mostly, the people who have the greatest social status through their position, knowledge or personality, speak first. In particular, it seems to be almost universally true that persons who have a higher social position have the right to speak first and that they also can speak longer, speak about any topic and mostly escape being interrupted. However, they may themselves often interrupt others (especially in cultures where interruption is more common than in Sweden). What has been described here is, thus, nothing specifically Swedish but seems to occur universally in connection with inequality. Possibly, one could say that all conversations in Sweden, as a result of political and other attempts to increase equality, tend to be regulated by the norm holding for exchange of speech between persons who are relatively equal in status, "first come first served". That is to say, the person who starts to talk first when a possibility of speaker change occurs, for example in the silence following a preceding speaker, has the right to the floor and the other speakers should be silent until the next opportunity for a speaker change arises. Possibly, the spread of this equality based norm has meant that certain power wielding persons in Sweden today, for this reason, sometimes prefer to talk less in order to make so-called "heavy contributions" towards the end of an interchange which, in turn, shows that it is very difficult to find behaviors which always, under all circumstances, indicate important social relations, like power relations.

Other questions in connection with turntaking are: How does a speaker signal that he/she wants the floor and how does he/she maintain the floor and how does he/she show that he/she is about to stop speaking. The patterns that can be found are, to some extent, universal but there are also certain differences, for example, concerning the choice of means of expressions to keep the floor. If you hesitate about what to say, you can prolong syllabic vowels or use expressions of the type "*öh", "m", "ääh*" (eh, m, eh) or repeat whole words. Most languages, in fact, have preferred ways of indicating hesitation, for example, by repetition or by use of special words or phrases like the Finnish-Swedish "*det där, det där*" (that there, that there) of the Spanish "*este, este*" (this, this) . A well-known trick for keeping the floor which seems to successfully to be used by certain politicians is to pause on a conjunction as in the phrase "I believe that ...." .

When it comes to giving up the floor this seems universally to be indicated by letting all gestures return to a neutral position while simultaneously focusing the next speaker with one's gaze. Other indications of a finished utterance are provided by the fact that intonation, grammatical construction and content together make up a complete unit, or that the rhythm and length of utterance which have been established in a conversation enable speakers to predict the approximate duration of contributions.

4.3.3 Feedback

Feedback is a third important organizing element in conversation. Every conversation can be regarded as a type of system with two control units , namely the speaker and the listener. The speaker needs to know if the information he is trying to convey to the listener really is perceived and understood. He also needs to know how the listener reacts to what is being said. The listener, in his/her turn, needs to know if he has really understood the speaker in the right way.

Every language community has therefore created a number of linguistic aids to make feedback possible. There are two types of such aids, feedback givers and feedback elicitors, i.e. behavior and linguistic expressions which give an elicit feedback to and from listeners or speakers. Typical expressions which the speaker can use to elicit feedback are "*va"* (what), "*eller hur*" (or how), "*eller*" (or), "*la, väl*" (eliciting tags), a questioning facial expression or raising the hand. In English we know that there is a somewhat different system with so-called tag questions where the feedback question negates a positive expression or affirms a negative expression: "you smoke, don't you", "you don't smoke, do you".

The listener can instead as a feedback elicitor use an expression like "*menar Du*" (do you mean) or by use of a questioning intonation repeat a shorter or longer part of the preceding utterance, where the expressions which are repeated are the same or more or less synonymous to expressions in the preceding utterance.

When it comes to feedback givers, they can be used both by the speaker and the listener. The most common feedback giving expressions in Swedish are: besides nods and shakes of the head, small words like "*mm*" (mm), "*ja*" (yes), "*umhm*" (umhm), "*jaha*" (yes, really, well). An interculturally unusual way of giving feedback in Swedish is the habit of answering "yes" or "no" using inhalation. Many non-Swedes in our interviews report that when they heard this the first time, they got an impression that the person was either suffocating or subjected to shock. It should perhaps be pointed out that the Swedish way of nodding or shaking one's head are not universal signs for *yes* and *no*. For example, in south-east Europe and parts of the Middle East, a head movement backward is used to indicate "*no*" and in some regions of India a head movement from side to side ("slightly reminiscent of the west European ways of saying "I don't know") is used to indicate "yes".

Feedback in connection with communication occurs everywhere but it does not always occur in the same way. We give different types of feedback in formal meetings and in informal conversations. In Sweden, feedback at public performances are mostly given through facial gestures and applause. In other countries, whistles and loud shouts are common even in parliament.

In informal situations, verbal signals are used in Sweden, perhaps to a greater extent than in other cultures. This trait of Swedish communication, however seems to be surpassed by the Japanese. It is important in Japan, and to a somewhat lesser extent in Sweden, to continuously indicate attention and respect and one has therefore developed a large number of feedback expressions which give this type of information. On the other hand, there also seem to be cultures where one, in many

situations, gives less feedback than in Sweden. Preliminary interviews and observations indicate that this would be true, for example, for conversations in Mediterranean and Latin American cultures. In these cultures, there is instead more eye contact and direct observations of the other's facial gestures which can give the necessary feedback information.

The effects of being exposed to differences in types and frequency of feedback can, for example, be that representatives of a culture, where more feedback is expected than is provided, will be unsure whether the other party has understood, while the other party might find a large number of feedback utterances ridiculous or irritating. In some of our interviews, precisely this difference in interpretation of frequency differences in feedback has been noted between Swedes and Latin Americans.

4.3.4. Spatial arrangements - bodily contact

A further aspect of how patterns of communication develop, can be obtained by studying spatial arrangements and bodily contact in conversation. Generally, we can say that in Sweden, as in all of north-west Europe, one tends to stand comparatively far away from each other without much bodily contact, in comparison to southern Europe, the Middle East or South America. Particularly this claim holds true of adult men. However, the claim must be modified to take into consideration situational requirements, not least physical ones, (such as standing in a crammed bus). If such modifications are made, the claim seems to be well attested by many researchers. (See, for examples. Argyle 1975). The taboo against bodily contact between adult men in Sweden can be relaxed in certain situations, for example, in a football match or in certain ceremonial greetings. This taboo also seems to be slightly weaker in Sweden than, for example, in England.

In general, in studying spatial arrangements it is important to consider the influence of different situational factors. It will otherwise be very easy to falsify most claims that can be made about spatial arrangements. Some such considerations are present in a study by Ingham (1973) who found that Swedes preferred to sit directly opposite to each other when conversing with friends, while English people and Americans preferred to sit at a 90˚ angle to each other in the same situation. Perhaps this result can be explained by the greater need which Swedes seem to have for feedback in conversation. Perhaps feedback can more easily be conveyed sitting opposite to each other than if one sits at a 90˚ angle to each other.

4.3.5 Topic of conversation

Besides the behavior which occurs in a conversation, the possible topics of conversations are also an important element of the analysis of a pattern of communication

What does one speak about in different situations in different cultures? Are certain topics connected with certain styles of conversation? Are there topics one is very willing to talk about and other topics which are taboo?

In the interviews we have made we found the following tendency. When it comes to personal circumstances and economy, informants from England felt that Swedes are more open and direct than in England, while informants from eastern Europe

concerning the same topics think that Swedes are less open and direct. Possibly there is also a tendency to generally think that it is easier in Sweden to talk openly about sexual matters than in many other cultures.

Another question which is related to the topics of conversation, is the question of how emotions are expressed. A part of this problem concerns whether there is any emotional attitude which can be said to be neutral in a certain culture. In east Asia, especially in Japan, it seems to be true that a friendly smile is required in many more situations than in Sweden. Many informants in our interviews say that in Sweden, particularly during the winter, instead a slightly depressive expression is common. This is also connected with the view that there is in Sweden a social pressure toward consensus and non-aggressiveness, at least if there is no alcohol in the situation.

Further, it seems fairly certain that cultures differ according to the intensity and size of the gestures which are used to convey different emotions. If we, for example, compare Swedish gestures with Italian gestures, it seems clear that Swedish gestures normally have smaller size and lesser intensity than Italian ones. The picture which our interviews give of Swedes as communicators of emotion is, thus, of persons who are slightly depressed (at least in the winter), willing to reach agreements and who do not use very big facial or other gestures.

If we leave the emotional content of a conversation aside and instead again consider factual content, one way of studying this area is to ask whether one in Swedish culture has developed specialized linguistic expressions to codify conceptual domains which for different reasons have been especially relevant within Swedish culture. A well-known example, is provided by the many distinctions in Swedish between different forms of snow. For example, "*nysnö*" (newly fallen snow), "*snö"* (snow), "*skare*" (crust), "*slask*" (slush"), "*driva*" (drift), "*tö*" (melting snow), "*kornsnö*" (frozen coarsely granulated snow). Another example, can be found in Swedish nature based metaphors, see Allwood (1981). There are many other examples of a similar type. Thus, words and phrases can be another source of information about what topics and concepts are distinctive of Swedish culture.

4.4 The communicative behavior

Since this paper is about patterns of communication in a wide sense, I am not here going to treat, in any detail, the properties and structure of the communicative behavior itself. With the exception of nonverbal communication and prosody, this is the main object of study of traditional linguistics and has been thoroughly investigated. Despite the foregoing, it is necessary to mention a few examples. It is well-known that Swedish has a number of phonological traits such as a characteristic intonation, word tones and a great number of vowels, which make it phonologically an interesting language. If we consider vocabulary and word inflection, we find two grammatical neutral genders for nouns (neuter, uter) as a rather unique trait. Syntactically, in Swedish there are unusually good possibilities for moving words to sentence initial positions in order to highlight them. Orthographically, the Swedish writing system contains the additions å, ä, ö which helps to give Swedish written language a character of its own.

4.5 Interpretation and understanding

Closely connected to the question of which status certain topics and contents have in a culture, is the question of what is required in order to understand the messages which are conveyed. As we have seen above, interpretation and understanding are processes with many different features. One must learn to discriminate, perceive (for example, read, listen or see), recognize, apprehend, infer and connect a particular content with already stored information and when all this is accomplished, one must through further processes form an attitude to what one is trying to understand. Not least important in this set of processes is the ability to infer and connect new information with already stored information. It is this ability which enables a message to convey a content which exceeds the content it could have, if it were merely discriminated and perceived. New understanding, thus, requires already existing preunderstanding in order to be successful.

Let us therefore take a look at some of the relevant culturally given background information or preunderstanding in Sweden? What we are looking for are beliefs which are shared and taken for granted by most people but which are difficult to be aware of and express in words. To have insight into such beliefs could make it easier for a newcomer to Sweden to understand Swedish communication. Since it is difficult to express beliefs of this type in words, what follows below, needless to say, must be somewhat speculative.

In Sweden a difference is often made between a person's private life and a person's public life. This difference is more strictly upheld that in many other countries. As long as one does one's duty in one's job, nobody interferes with what one does in one's private life. It is, for example, very rare that events in a person' s private life will lead to a public scandal, something which is common, for example, in political life in many other countries. It is also uncommon to engage members of one's family in one's public job. Work and private life are not mixed. Friends at work often do not become friends in private life. Often in private life, one socializes mostly with family or old friends. Holidays, especially Christmas, are usually reserved only for the family. This seems to have the consequence that it is difficult for a newcomer to Sweden to have a rich private social life - there is not a readiness to integrate strangers in private life. The impression an immigrant may get from this is, of course, one of coldness and that it is almost impossible to get contacts outside of work. Good contacts in work are often not followed by contacts in private life in a manner which would have been common in many other places. For a further analysis of this problem, see Phillips Martinsson (1981). and Boholm (1984).

To the extent that what has just been claimed is true, it is possible to historically connect it with Martin Luther's doctrine of a distinction between "Person und Amt" (personal life and official duty). cf Sander (1984). Connected with what we have said above about the distinction between private and public life and with the influence of Martin Luther, is also the fact that Swedish bureaucracy is experienced as relatively service-minded and honest by many of the interviewed persons from Latin America and south and east Europe. Phenomena such an nepotism and corruption which are often based on relations in private life, have perhaps to some extent been prevented or constrained by the Swedish requirements of duty-bound service, free of private life considerations. However, in present day Sweden there seems to be a change

underway toward a lesser degree of the traditional focus on "millimeter justice" and impartiality. If this increasing flexibility will be for the good remains to be seen.

Another phenomenon which in our interviews seems puzzling to many non-Swedes, is the Swedish need of "*göra rätt för sig*" (behaving correctly and doing one's full share) and not being a burden on others, especially economically. Some of the cases which have been reported as puzzling are the following: To offer to pay for the gasoline after a car trip, to offer to pay someone who buys you one of the many cups of coffee that are drunk in Sweden, to only pay for one's drink in a bar without inviting others, or to bring one's own drink to a party, to offer to pay for the meal when visiting friends or offer to pay for a cigarette one has been offered.

It is difficult to find a general explanation for all of these examples. Possibly we can again find something associated with Martin Luther, we could, for example, combine Luther's teaching that every person has a calling with popular Swedish beliefs that a good man can always take care of himself and that one should always do one's share. These doctrines seem, in fact, to be the basis for the Swedish form of individualism in which it sometimes, somewhat paradoxically, seems that one takes care of oneself best and does one's share satisfactorily by referring to and demanding action from the government in many situations where in other cultures a person would have been expected to show more individual personal engagement and responsibility.

Perhaps we can also connect the separation of public and private life as well as the Swedish need of doing one's share and not making a fool of oneself to the traditional anthropological distinction between "shame" and "guilt" cultures. In a shame culture, one is dependent on the opinions of other people. It is important not to lose face. In a guilt culture, one is driven more by one's own conscience, one's own opinion of what is right and wrong, than by other people's reactions to one's behavior.

We can connect the distinction between shame and guilt cultures with the separation of private and public life in traditional Swedish culture by relating shame to public life and guilt to private life. To the outside world what matters is not to lose face - to do one's share whilst not making a fool of oneself, something which might happen, for example, if one starts to believe "*att man är något*" (that one is something), to quote one of the traditional Swedish ways of condemning someone who appears conceited or wants to be different from the ways people usually are.

Public Swedish life is distinguished by the evolution of a behavior characterized by calm, lack of aggressiveness and emotions, moderation, compromise, rationality, "*lagom*" (neither too much, nor too little) and by not publicly appearing to be more than others "*inte tro att man är något*" (not beleieve one is something). This behavior has been strongly reinforced by the attempts to achieve social equality during the last 60 years.

However, privately to the inside world, there is only one's own conscience and to be more traditional - God. In private life, we find the emotions which are not shown to the outside world - aggressiveness, sorrow and love. It is perhaps symptomatic that more violence seems to take place inside Swedish homes than outside, according to recent criminal statistics.

The border between the public maintenance of face and the emotions of private life is also manifested in the Swedish way of establishing friendships. The Englishman, Paul Britten Austin (1968), has described it in the following way: "The Swede is like a bottle of tomato ketchup. One shakes and shakes but nothing comes out. One shakes again and nothing comes out. Then one shakes once more and everything comes out" (translated from Swedish). What is claimed by the quotation is particularly true in connection with the consumption of alcohol, according to Austin.

In other words, there is a sort of gap between the public and the private level and not a gradual transition like, for example, in Anglo-Saxon countries. This gap has traditionally meant that there is a certain social stiffness in the establishing of social contacts in Sweden. On the other hand, the Swedish system perhaps means that a contact can be more long lasting and trustworthy when it has been established.

External behavior in Sweden, if what has been said is correct, is thus characterized by a low degree of personal emotions and by a high degree of impersonal rationality. Gustav Sundbärg already in 1911 in his book about the character of the Swedish people makes this one of his main points and says that Swedes in everyday interaction, compared to, for example, Danes, lack understanding and interest for emotions and psychology. Instead, they are focussed on external phenomena and practical action. Perhaps it is this which explains why one can talk in such an open and relaxed fashion about sexual life in Sweden. The talk is characterized by a matter of factness and practicality. Sensuality, lust, enjoyment and a strong personal connection to emotions, which, in other cultures, it would be hard to turn one's back on, are in Sweden to a great extent left out.

Swedish public debate often clearly manifests the traits which have been mentioned. There are not many cultures which place as much weight on impersonal ethics and justice as is commonly done in Sweden. In radio, TV and newspapers, social shortcomings of different types, both within and outside of Sweden are often described and debated and they are almost always treated without the cynical superficial gaiety which often is common when similar topics are treated in other countries. The style is instead naive and serious. However, the fact that shortcomings are focused in this way does not mean that a humble attitude is common. On the contrary, most Swedes seem to be proud and convinced of the positive qualities of the Swedish welfare state. They are, after all, taking care of themselves and doing their share.

It is difficult to say what is characteristic of private life in Sweden. One reason for this being that it is precisely that - private. But without any doubt emotions are of great importance, possibly also guilt and confessions. Swedish swear words provide a certain clue, since they, in comparison with what is common in many other cultures, to an astonishingly small extent are inspired by sexual life and genitals. It is not in these areas that Swedes seek support for strong emotions. Instead, the swear words bear witness that the really tabooed areas in Sweden are or have been of a religious nature, particularly concerning everything connected with the devil and hell. In other words, if my speculation is correct, precisely the areas which in Sweden traditionally

were connected with private life - a person's relationship to God and questions of guilt and punishment.

There seem to be ways in Sweden to bridge the gap between public life, where one must not make a fool of oneself, and private emotional life, without a long period of transition, namely, through the use of alcohol. Swedish attitudes to alcohol constitute a topic which is very hard to understand for most representatives of other cultures. On the one hand, alcohol represents something forceful and manly and, on the other hand, it is seen as something sinful and dangerous. This complex of attitudes has probably been produced by a combination of traditional attitudes with views which are inspired by religious revival and temperance movements. This combination of attitudes is similar to that which in many other cultures is directed toward sexual life, but definitely not toward alcohol. I believe, as I have hinted above, that the explanation for these attitudes lie in the fact that alcohol has become an almost officially recognized symbol for breaking down the borderline between what is allowed in private life and what is allowed in public life. In Sweden, it is, if one is intoxicated, acceptable to do things which in many other places would lead to loss of face. However, the change of behavior which in Sweden is connected with the use of alcohol, is hardly of a purely physiological nature. It is also conventional and social. This is shown, for example, by the fact that people in other countries do not behave like Swedes after they have been drinking. It can also be shown by psychological experiments where one has given people who believe they are drinking alcohol, colored and flavoured water. The changes in behavior toward more emotions and less control which, in Sweden, typically occur with the use of alcohol, also occur in these situations. (Personal communication Prof. Bernt Bremer, Dept of Psychology, Uppsala).

To conclude, one can perhaps say that at least an important part of the understanding of what has previously been and still is taken for granted in Sweden, has to do with a set of phenomena which can be related to the distinctions between private and public life.

It should also be said that the borders between these two spheres are gradual so that at present there seems to be an expansion of official life. This is indicated, for example, by the new legal prohibition against corporal punishment of children which is also valid for parents and teachers. We also experience this in the renewed demands for a tougher legislation concerning alcohol. The use of alcohol, in Sweden, is ever present as a partly socially sanctioned threat against orderly and rational society.

On the other hand, we also experience an increase of private life features, in such phenomena as general demands on a small scale, increased flexibility in bureaucracy and administration, more personal engagement and perhaps a lesser degree of "millimeter justice" in public benefits. The increases in social equality and justice have made certain phenomena, which earlier were reserved for private life, generally accessible through the fact that social habits today are much simpler in comparison with earlier habits which were constrained by official demand for stiffness and formality. As we have already seen, this was, for example, manifested in the earlier Swedish forms of address. But these increases in social equality have also meant that family life has become less separated from public life through day-care centers,

preschools, a system of social benefits and not least the legal prohibition against corporal punishment is also valid for the home.

If we try to combine some of the background traits which I have somewhat speculatively claimed are distinctive of Sweden, one can see, firstly, that there really are certain patterns and, secondly, that the difference between Swedish patterns and other patterns could lead to problems of communication in contacts with persons from other cultures. One example of this is the slowness to integrate strangers in private life. Another example is a high degree of self sufficiency which leads to personal independence, but also to a lack of contact. A third example is given by the general attitudes of rational tolerance for other people which are not always connected with a personal interest in these people. A further difficulty probably can be found when strong manifestations of emotion in private and public life are to be interpreted.

5. Possible explanations

If the patterns of communication, I somewhat speculatively have pointed to, should turn out to be real one can ask why they have evolved in just this way and no other way. A satisfactory answer to this question would demand that we have a better insight than we actually do into how cultural phenomena such as patterns of communication, can be changed or maintained as a result of the interaction and mutual influence between a very large number of factors. The only thing I can do here is to list some of these factors and hope the future will give us a better understanding of how they interact in different ways. The factors given are, thus, not independent of each other.

Some of the relevant factors are the following:

1. Genetic - it is very difficult to point to any clear cases where there are genetic differences behind differences of communication.

2. Climate - the climate is no doubt of importance to communication. It influences directly the choices of places to communicate in and to some extent how one can communicate in these places. More indirectly, it can influence the atmosphere and emotional moods which are commonly found in communication.

3. A third factor is constituted by the agricultural and other material resources of a certain area. These will have an influence on the kind of activities which can occur.

4. A fourth factor is, therefore, simply constituted by the activities which occur in a society. The patterns of communication of a society can, as I have claimed above, to a great extent be seen as a response to the requirements on communication which are present in different activities

5. A fifth factor, which is not independent of what has already been mentioned, is the density of population and habitation and the degree of urbanisation. Probably one develops a different type of communication if one is continuously meeting other

people than if one is not. This can also, for example, influence forms of politeness and what kind of conversational topics are taboo.

6. A sixth type of factor, also not independent of the other factors, is made up by social economic conditions and the type of education which is provided. This will, for example, play and important role for the kind of activities and communication which can be developed in a certain society and is on the individual level mirrored in, among other things, vocabulary and style.

7. A seventh factor is constituted by religious, political and other ideological phenomena which lead to different kinds of norms and expectations. These will obviously play an important role for the kind of patterns which evolve. It is in this area most of the speculations I have been engaging in above concerning what is taken for granted in Sweden can be found. Nevertheless, one can see that, for example, the demand of doing one's share also can be connected with other than ideological factors such as the fact that Sweden is a country with a hard climate and traditionally few resources.

8. As an eighth factor, we must also consider the development of different types of communication technology. This technology is clearly important for what patterns of communication will appear. It is easy to point to the roles that the art of printing, the telephone, TV and radio, have had.

Finally, it should also be stressed that the factors which have here been mentioned as possible influences on patterns of communication and culture, are, as are the patterns themselves, dynamic and continuously under change. Swedish patterns of communication have, during the last 20 years. gone through a number of noticeable changes, for example, concerning forms of address, types of greetings, and probably also concerning the show of emotion publicly. The causes of these changes are not clear but must probably be sought in a combination of many different factors like political reforms, increased material welfare, increased immigration, changes in communication technology, and a greater participation of young people and women in political movements, etc.

Since the study of how patterns of communication change, and of what factors that influence this change so far is rather underdeveloped, it is difficult to do anything else than what has been done already, namely, to give a list of some of the relevant causes, with the hope that not only the study of how patterns of communication in a wide sense have changed, but also the more traditional study of language change, in the future, will be able to consider such factors.

To conclude, it perhaps worth pointing out that if anything in this paper is correct it might be a consequence of something which the German philosopher, Hegel, earlier has pointed out (Taylor 1979) - namely that one can never understand a society or a cultural pattern before it is on the way to change into something new.

Bibliography

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