

Threatened by Europe?
National Identities in European Work Environment

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I want to thank the organisation which also became my work environment and where I collected data, my work supervisor who gave me permission to do so, and the people whom I interviewed

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

(Council of European Communities, Article 151 from Treaty establishing European Community)

The integration of Europe is a part of phenomenon called globalisation. The idea of world getting smaller is a trend of today. Through various communication channels people are able to interact more with different nationalities. Specifically in European context a topical discussion concerns being European and having European identity. Idea of diversity as richness at theoretical level is present. This simultaneous phenomenon of ethnorelatively respecting different cultures and also the well functioning co-operation between them is generally thought to accomplish much in the fields of management, economics and culture. It is progressive and modern.

Concepts interculturalism and multiculturalism are also part of the broad discussion about interaction across borders. The ideal picture specifically in the field of culture of a united Europe includes the image of all the diversities meeting and with respect, cultural sensitivity and accommodation interacting and mixing with each other creating something new, Europeaness. European Union is often seen as maintaining and developing force of this. EU's different organisations are founded all over in Europe and establish a massive machinery effecting in Europeans' lives. EU-institutions are miniature models of European Union as a whole, functioning as examples to European people.

EU has also a great impact on European working life and its culture. National borders lose their importance known before and people having European citizenship can work easier in any EU country. More interaction among different nationalities occur in working places, cultural diversity has become and is becoming more

evident factor in work. Work environment influences greatly in the adaptation process of a non-native. Also more diverse perspectives has to be taken into consideration than ever before. Issue of working in a multicultural work environment is sensitive: there are several possibilities of reacting into diversities. Where do all these changes leave an European person with certain nationality?

1.2. Research Setting

The goal of my research is to clarify the current situation of national identity in a context of one multicultural organisation. The two main questions concerning this are a) the nature of national identity's reciprocal relation with internal communication and atmosphere of an organisation and b) in this organisation the nature of the relation between national identity and European identity.

I will base my research on a following model:

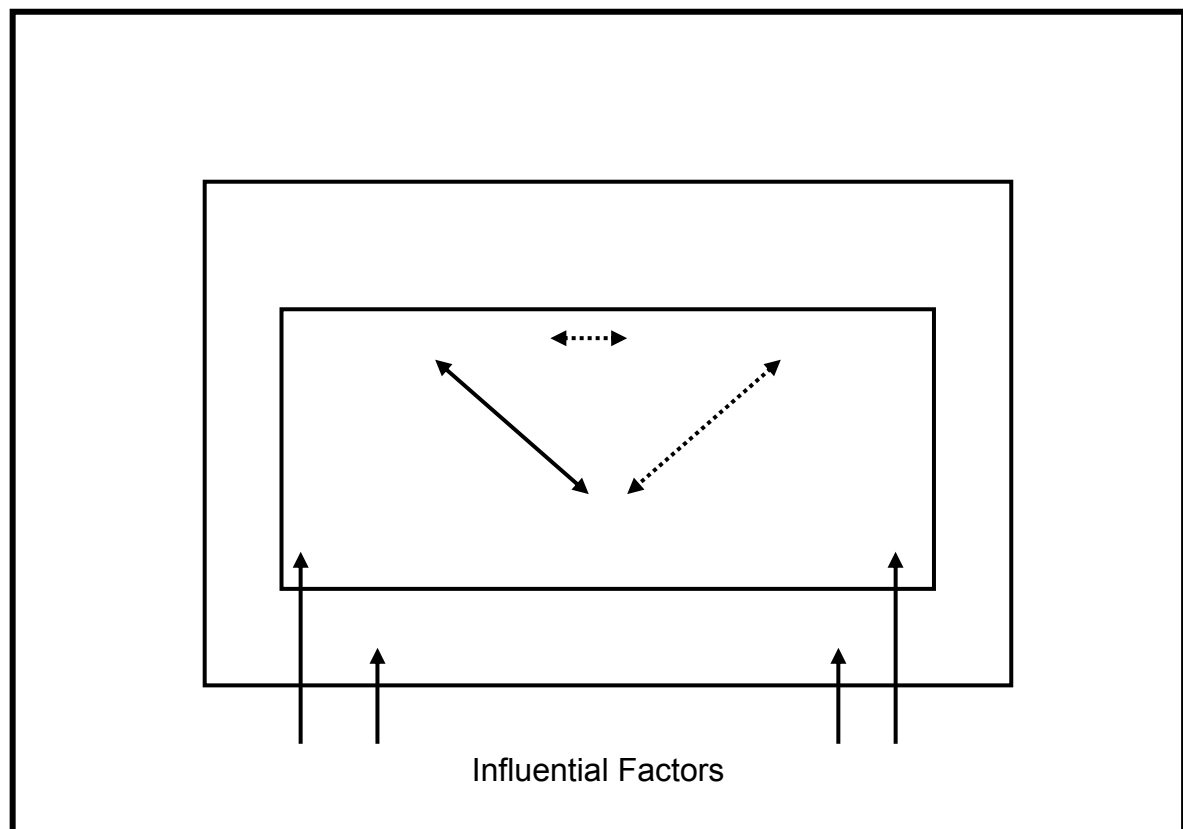


Figure 1. Connection networks in multicultural work environment

Concerning the first question the role of national identity in an organisation can be observed through its relation with every day level of communicating and interacting within the organisation. Through special focus on groups as a significant part of communication field inside specific environments I want to clarify the possible role of nationality in grounds of group formation and maintaining. The role of different nationalities will be viewed also when researching organisational atmosphere. What is the structure of different nationalities in the organisation and at daily level what kind of importance does it have in creating atmosphere of a multicultural work environment - has it become a non-problematic, transparent part of it or are cultural diversities celebrated? In addition to the idea of national identity being an influential factor in the communication and atmosphere of a multicultural working society I do not believe it is the only one. I take into consideration also other potential factors - are there any and what kind?

This brings us closer to the concept of national identity which in this research functions as a unifying key concept between organisation's communication and atmosphere, and European identity. With assistance of the concept national culture I want to research what it is believed to include and what is its significance in a multicultural work environment. More specifically I will find this out through researching communicational options of emphasising nationality or accommodating, misunderstandings based on nationality and role of national stereotypes in communication.

Through the discussion of national identities in especially organisational communication and atmosphere I want to clarify the concept of European identity. This fourth dimension I will examine by its significance in general and the possible impact of the work environment. This will lead to a discussion of the relationship between national and European identities - do they exclude each other from existing or not? Has new ethnogenesis, multicultural culture, developed to replace national identity? I want to find out what is the level of "hanging on" in cultural backgrounds and how open people working in a multicultural work environment are for different cultural differences. Does European identity exist and what does it include?

1.3. Methodology

I have adapted my research methodology from the field of cultural anthropology. Firstly my approach is qualitative. My aim is not to make quantitative generalisations but to try to understand the world of my research area better through people living that life permanently. Second fundamental methodological approach includes fieldwork. For researcher this means going to the “field“, physically going to experience the studied phenomenon and the life of target culture, and this way getting a certain insider’s view from it. This is linked with participant observation that can have different degrees of influence in the actual data collected. It can vary from being clearly a person defined as an outsider by the practitioners of the culture to a person defined as part of the group, community and culture. These differences in degrees on the nature of interaction influence on the data collected by the researcher.

Third methodological approach used in this research is doing theme interviews. Here it means creating a structure of interview questions, but the willingness of informants to tell more or less about certain matters and the broad way of asking about specific things are also been noticed. That way informants got more freedom to tell the personally topical and important issues. In addition to this the researcher should be able to communicate with the people with their own language. In my case I used English that is the language of the country I did my research in and it is also the working language in the work environment I was in.

I was part of a multicultural work environment during a three months period from May to August 2001 and during that time I collected my field material. I myself worked in an organisation that is an autonomous body of European Union doing research on living and working conditions at European level and is situated in Dublin, Ireland. During that time I practised participant observation that will be reflected through the research material as a whole and gave me a certain level of insider’s view. But because of the partly abstract nature of the topic and time spent with the studied work culture I found that time too short for participant observation to be the only data source to base the validity of collected data on. But I believe being

part of the society enabled me for different level of sensitivity concerning the nature of the interviews I did.

I carried out nineteen theme interviews with subjects representing both sexes, different ages, areas of work and status grades (see appendix 1 & 2). Informants are coded (e.g. M03, W10) according to their gender and number of interview with that specific gender. I accommodated the general staff structure policy of the organisation into the selection of my informants. That meant counting the average of the amount of different nationalities, sexes, work departments and status grades. Depending on the result I selected the needed informants that would represent the average. In addition to this I intentionally interviewed people who I knew had not just arrived but had a firm experience and opinion about matters in the hand. In one interview the quality of the tape was so low that it was not possible to take as part of data for this research. The interviews were done in the work place and they lasted from approximately half an hour to one hour. The tapes are in a possession of the researcher.

In addition to this I made a supplementary questionnaire by email to the eighteen informants who were already my main data resource spring 2001. The general nature of the questions can be explained first of all by the abstract nature of the matter and secondly by the intentional will to give the informants freedom to select the issues important for them and from that to get the possibility to recognize the topical matters on broader sense. I got answers from eight informants. Answers got from the interviews and email questions I see as my main data from the field. I am going to present and analyse my field material together with some theories of main concepts I have chosen. Methodology in analysing and presenting the collected material emphasises the philanthropic perspective typical for anthropological science: by many direct quotations from the interviews my aim is to let the voices of informants to come out without intermediaries.

1.4 Research Location

The case study organisation is a research institute working on three core research areas. In addition to these the organisational structure consists of administration and information areas. As a work environment it is rather small including staff of about hundred persons. The work environment is divided into two parts: old and new part of the building. In the old part locates part of the administration and the rest in the new part. Also the new part where most of the staff works functions at two floors - research areas and "top management" in the first floor and others in the ground floor. There is no common room meant for social gathering or breaks. There is a canteen where part of the staff goes for morning coffees and lunch breaks. There is also a possibility to sit outside.

The working language is English. According to the situation at 8th of February 2000 clear majority of employees were Irish (37 %). Second largest nationality group was French (13 %). Other represented nationalities from one to seven per cent of the staff were from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom. I do not see any major changes in division of nationalities concerning summer 2001.

Gender distribution shows that majority of employees are women (66 %). Almost half (44%) of the staff was 30-39 years old and the smallest age group was under thirty years old people (8%). The work and level of wages are divided according to A, B, C and D grades A-grade being the highest level. In the organisation the distribution is following: 26 per cent of A-grades, 31 per cent of B-grades, 43 per cent of C-grades and 0 per cent of D-grades. Nature of employment was permanent with 73 per cent of the staff and non-permanent with 27 per cent. (European Foundation Survey on Working Conditions, 2000.)

1.5. Previous Research and History on Multicultural Work Environment

The area of multicultural work environment is wide and deep. Here I will give a survey introduction and perspectives on the topic. When looking at the development of this area in history it must be remembered that the general way to perceive things including making theories is always depending on the political, national, multinational and social situations happening in the world. Here it would be impossible to represent the topic in its entity because of its multiple backgrounds.

First of all the varying academic history concerning the comprehension of different cultures meeting and the level of mixing has to be acknowledged. Historically the originally American concept of 'melting pot' was developed in the beginning of the 20th century by assimilation theoreticians. With this concept they understood the assimilation of people and their cultural backgrounds as a result of interaction with different people and their different backgrounds. According to their perception minorities would always and without any exceptions assimilate with the majority. It was seen as a battle of strong and weak where the Darwinian law of nature would come true. But it should be noted that at the same time there were also supporters of cultural plurality (e.g. Horace M. Kallen and Randolph S. Bourne). (Hautaniemi 2001, 27-28, 33-34.)

Acculturation as including different possible levels of adaptation (Jargon, 7) was presented as alternative to assimilation in the 1960's and also the melting pot theory started to suffer from reliability. In the following decade multiculturalism was approved as a fact that led to academic and society level discussions. Now when thinking about the concept of 'multicultural' it has been and can be recognised as politically labelled term and also in every-day use so loaded with values and meanings that in the scientific language its value has decreased. (Hautaniemi 2001, 35; 43-44). Worth mentioning is that the concept of 'melting pot' has been replaced by 'salad bowl' in the United States and 'mosaic' in Canada (Hautaniemi 2001, 47) - it is easy to recognise the difference in their symbolism.

Multiculturalism and diverse cultures can nowadays be easily comprehended as part of work environments. The development to this started in the 1980's because of the increasing competition between nations and contact with people from other nations. This helped to understand culture as an explanation of organisational behaviour. (Francesco & Gold 1998, 7.) The discussions of multiculturalism and internationalism have reached also people from several fields concerning working life and working conditions - the topicality has been acknowledged for example in the fields of sociology and economics. Also in Finland this issue has been taken into consideration in wider academic discussions. Perspectives in an example seminar (Kansainvälistyminen, haaste työlämälle - seminaariraportti, 1999. [Internationalism, challenge for working life - seminar report, 1999]) were various including e.g. new competence demands, health at work, management, money economy and the situation especially in Finland. So it can be seen that there are many fields that are conscious of the changes currently happening (see also Lehtinen et. al. 1991).

One of the most quoted researchers influencing intercultural communication area that can be and has been applied to studying organisation behaviour is Geert Hofstede, a professor of organisation anthropology and business influencing from the 1970's. His main contribution to the field has been the development of the following four cultural dimensions concerning national differences: individualism - collectivism, feminism - masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and power distance. (Hofstede, 1997). These dimensions are based on his wide research on in IBM companies so the emphasis is in organisation environment. Although he has made a notion of possible differences within national, his conclusions of national cultures can be said to lack of sensitivity and cultural diversity acknowledging perspective that is currently needed in culture research.

In literature Hofstede's dimensions have been widely presented/applied, but the increasing development of the dimensions going further away from too black and white-thinking or not trying to control more than one of the influential factors can be seen (e.g. Francesco & Gold 1998; Cushner and Brislin 1996, Gudykunst 1998). For example as a reaction to Hofstede's Westernised picture of cultural dimensions,

Michael Harris Bond developed Chinese Value Survey with his Chinese colleagues (Francesco & Gold 1998, 27). Also one earlier way of categorising cultures have been made by e.g. anthropologist Edward T. Hall and his division cultures into low- and high-context (Francesco & Gold 1998, 30). Francesco's and Gold's (1998, 31) understanding none of these theories as correct and better from others it worth remembering. But they do show that the differences in cultures' "average" do exist - although it must not be forgotten that exceptions also exist in averages.

One example of researchers studying the communication among diversities is William B. Gudykunst (1998) who in his research studies efficient communication with "strangers". "Strangers" he defines as people not belonging to an in-group. He has developed Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory that explains the influential background of effective interpersonal and inter group communication. The basic assumption of the theory includes the risk of greater feelings of uncertainty and anxiety when communicating with strangers and with managing them do raise the level of effective communication (Gudykunst 1998, 18-26).

It can be concluded that the situation in research of multicultural work environment has developed to include the idea of culture. Also according to Francesco & Gold (1998, 32) "the cultural frameworks can help one understand how culture relates to organisational behaviour". According to Handy (1985) the factors varying in organisations and relevantly influenced by cultures are level of organising the work, authority, amount of planning and consideration of time, how rewards, reinforcements and control should be addressed, physical setting of work place, degree to which conformity and initiative should be carried out and level of feeling the control of situations or individuals.

So it seems obvious that culture does have a relevant impact on the organisation especially today when diversity of employees is already as significant as it is. 'Salad bowl' exists in multicultural organisations. In a work place there is a possibility for different people to come together and because generally workers cannot control with whom they will work with, many expected interpersonal and intrapersonal differences occur (Cushner & Brislin 1996, 280).

Cris Shore's and Annabel Black's (1994/1996, 275-298) pioneer research related also to multiculturalism in work environment concerns the employees of European Commission and their feeling of identification of European identity. Interesting results have been represented concerning identities, cultures and work environments. It could be assumed that people working in the core of (European) multiculturalism would have clearly different view on their cultural backgrounds and multiculturalism. Although the feeling of Europeaness have increased among many EU civil servants in Brussels it was not acknowledged as an identity but more a feeling of solidarity, "going native" because of that multicultural environment.

This shows the deep relativity of the experience of culture and the feeling of identity. Excellent example of post-modern way of thinking is Stuart Hall (1999) who has done significant work on identities. His general aspect of cultural identities is that each person has many of them at the same time and their never ending process is influenced by the context, experiences, background etc. This very relative perspective gives the possibility to think of cultural identities and cultures in a more flexible and not form-like way. Although there are patterns behind cultures the expressed forms of them are continuously changing and developing, they are not absolute.

1.6. Criticism of Sources and Data

It must be remembered that my research is qualitative and the data material used is from people of one specific work environment. Because I was part of the work environment it is essential to understand that also my own perspectives from that work environment have had an influence in having certain perspectives and making conclusions.

The theoretical perspectives presented in chapter 2 are the framework for my research. I emphasize that my choice of bounding the selected concepts is essential here; I do understand there are various theories and perspectives from which to

choose from. Because of the general nature of the concepts, I have chosen theories from a variety of possibilities that best suit for the purpose of my research.

Although my research is anthropological I do use also theories from another academic areas of study. This is simply because I strongly believe the co-operation and exchange between different fields makes the research richer in perspectives. To have perspectives suitable for my purpose I have chosen to combine anthropological and communication sciences. This combination I see very fruitful because of both of their essential character of the object of my study. When representing the key concepts especially when dealing with identities the emphasis is on anthropological perspective. Communication sciences are emphasized on the other hand when presenting the concept internal communication and atmosphere of organization. Especially when presenting the concepts culture, communication and intercultural communication/interaction and also when presenting and analyzing the collected case study material I tend to show the close relatedness of these objects of studies.

The name of the organisation is not been released in this research. The names used are generally 'organisation' and 'foundation'.

* * *

The order of my research report is following: In the second chapter I will introduce the main theoretical perspectives of the research. In the third chapter I will start presenting and analyzing the data I got from my case study, focusing on the communication and organisational atmosphere of the work environment influenced by national identity and also other influential factors. In the fourth chapter I will handle the role of national identity in that work environment especially from the perspective of communication. The fifth chapter deals with the role of European Identity. In all these chapters from three (especially starting from chapter 3.3) to five I will discuss the findings in the light of theoretical perspectives presented in the second chapter. In the sixth chapter I will present conclusions of my findings in a broader context.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

2.1. Culture and Communication

There are various possibilities to define culture. I will base my research on few chosen definitions that emphasise activity and behaviour of cultural participants. The same emphasis has been made by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) who have defined culture as transmitted patterns of values, ideas and other symbolic systems (norms as standards, ideologies justifying or rationalising) that *shape behaviour*. When emphasising behaviour in culture they say:

“The logical construct, culture, is based upon the study of behavior and behavioral products. It returns to behavior and behavioral products in that the concept of culture makes more behavior intelligible and, to an appreciable extent, makes possible predictions about behavior in particular areas. But culture is not behavior nor the investigation of behavior in all its concrete completeness.” (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 189)

If culture is not behaviour, what distinguishes these two? Relatively typical perspective is to see behaviour as a form of culture. This idea of “splitting culture“ can be based on already Edward T. Hall’s argument about culture that it is “complex series of activities“ (1970, 57), not one whole entity. Hofstede’s (24, 1997) layers include values, rituals, heroes and symbols: three last ones can be noticed by outsiders but their cultural meaning is not necessarily understood. Here rituals can be thought to include behaviour in general. Moreover and related to this Edward T. Hall continues with dividing cultural behaviour into three levels including formal (usually learning through mistake), informal (through observing) and technical learning (logic of learned). These levels are fluid and in reciprocal relationship with each other. (Hall 1959/1981, 63, 87.)

We learn the forms, levels or layers of culture in the process of socialisation – through that we know what is the “right“ way to think, act and express ourselves to become a successful members of the society. Culture is a collective creation and socially constructed in interaction. (Cushner & Brislin 1996, 5.) Here we come again

closer to the concept of behaviour and now also interaction. Inside culture the amount of interaction is smaller because there is no need for explaining and talking about everything when you share a common knowledge - culture fills the blanks in a society. The lesser amount of communication concerns also the topic of culture itself – it becomes something so natural, invisible and lacks vocabulary because of its “secret nature“ that it makes it difficult to talk about (Cushner & Brislin (1996, 7-8).

Behaviour in itself does not include meaning but it derives through culture. Geertz (1973, 89) sees culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life“. I agree with what Griswold (1994, 9-10) argues about this definition: it is more precise when compared to “entire-way-of-life“-definitions - its emphasis is on ways of thinking and feeling affecting the forms of symbols and behaviour.

The perspective of the role of culture as forming meanings and symbols that affect behaviour is relevant for this research because understanding culture as something functioning and influencing at different levels is an essential part of the question setting here. To show how complex the issue of culture is, a good example from anthropologists Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck can be represented concerning variations of values orientation. According to them there are different ways in different cultures to cope with problems, dilemmas and other issues. They are connected to relation to nature, time orientation, basic human nature, activity orientation, relationships among people and space orientation. (Francesco & Gold 1998, 20-23.) This gives the need also to take into consideration the dimension of differences between cultures.

These differences between cultures can naturally also be seen in behaviour, more specifically in communication. There are various possible ways to approach communication and its relationship with especially spoken language. Oksaar’s (1999, 17-18) definition of language is that it consists of verbal communication, paralinguistic elements (written form), non-verbal communication, extraverbal (time,

space, social relationships etc.) elements. A more general way to understand language is more narrow than the definition presented by Oksaar, meaning to see it as a “set of words and the rules that govern the connection of those words“ (Redmond 2000, 84). In this research more common term ‘communication’ as a general term of verbal (language) and non-verbal communication will be used.

Generally there are various well functioning definitions of communication emphasising different perspectives. One of them includes linguistic knowledge, interaction skills and cultural knowledge (Saville-Troike 1982/1989, 24). According to Redmond (2000, 41-42) communication contexts include the following from inside to outside: Psychological context (psychological qualities and personal characteristics), relational context (behaviour depending on the communication partner), situational context (purpose or reason for the communication defined by individuals), environmental context (factors outside the individuals affecting communication: time, location, sounds, furniture, presence of others) and cultural context (culturally defined factors: values, norms, beliefs - these also exist in psychological context and they are enacted in interaction). It must be remembered that individuals are unique in the way contexts affect and that the contexts are not isolated but affect also each other.

Because of the minor significance of non-verbal communication in the responses of the informants, the main focus of this research is not in that area of study although they are part of the broader discussion. This is the reason for defining this communication area as including kinesics (body movements), oculusics (eye contact), haptics (use of bodily contact), proxemics (use of space), chronemics (use of time), chromatics (use of colours) (Francesco & Gold 1998, 60; see also Redmond 2000, 92). Also verbal communication can be divided into language usage (differences in use of words) and verbal style (differences in directness, quantity of talk, intimacy and orientation) (Francesco & Gold 1998, 58).

Clyne represents functions of language as an instrument of human communication expressing emotion, ideas, attitudes, prejudices etc., as a means of identification of group members and group boundaries, as a cognitive development tool for children

and conceptual development for adults - languages are learned (Redmond 2000, 84) - and as an instrument of action (Clyne 1996, 2; see also Sapir 1921, 7). It should be noted that some of these acts can be expressed only linguistically. (Clyne 1996, 2.) According to Redmond (2000, 85) language is a tool to achieve goals and satisfy needs.

Clyne (1996, 144-145) argues there are five possible outcomes from communication act: (1) Communication that is successful from the start; (2) Potentially unsuccessful communication where communication breakdown evolves but after negotiation of meanings it comes to be successful; (3) Resolved unsuccessful communication where the resolution of the communication breakdown is solved and communication successful; (4) Unsuccessful communication which cannot be solved and (5) Unsuccessful communication whose resolution has not been attempted.

Communication breakdown can be identified by one individual in the interaction situation, both of them or another person who acts as a mediator (Clyne 1996, 150). Here I understand breakdown as a communicative misunderstanding. Gudykunst (1998, 27-28) gives six possible reasons for misunderstandings in communication to occur: (1) The way of forming message is unclear and that way not understood (2) Different communication rules are present in an interaction situation (3) Inability to speak the language properly (4) Not understanding the social context of the situation (5) Errors in attributions because of false expectations or group identity and (6) The topic is not familiar for the speakers.

The essential connection between culture and communication and their importance together is easy to recognise when doing research concerning culture, society, relationships and/or meanings. This linkage has been noticed also in linguistic anthropology which is one of four main areas of anthropology. Linguistic anthropology has three emphasis areas and one of them is ethnolinguistics meaning the relationship between culture and language and what is the role of language in shaping the world. (Jargon 1994, 89.) One of the most influencing theories have been linguistic relativity, also called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. According to it people of a society create their depending on the language. This represents the idea of

unique logic behind language (Whorf 1956) and this can be seen as a dominating factor in forming the way we see the world and how we construct the culture. Also like Sapir (1921, 221) noted “again, language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives“.

Like it was mentioned meanings are part of the relationship of culture and communication; in this research meaning is understood as included in communication through culture. This causes the “illusion“ of believing that because language itself have a meaning, it has also power (Redmond 2000, 85). But of course it must be taken into consideration that although culture is the one creating the meaning, language is the concrete expression of creating these meanings into words and creating that way the perception of the world like has been acknowledged in Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Although Redmond defines the meaning being enhanced by race, regionality, sex, age, ethnicity etc. (Redmond 2000, 83) he does notice also the cultural factors influencing human - always when communicating you express your culture (Redmond 2000, 40). When thinking more widely across cultures this is easy to connect with Gudykunst's (1998, 8) perception of the relationship between a symbol and its referent in a language which is arbitrary and varies from culture to another (and also within cultures). This brings us to the issue of intercultural interactions.

Although the argumentation here has included the idea of communication being an expressive form of culture, their also reciprocal and essential relationship should not be neglected. To put it simply like Edward T. Hall (1959/1981, 186) does: “Culture is communication and communication is culture“ (see also Carbaugh 1990, xv). Oksaar (1999, 15) represents four principles of language (understood as spoken or written “formal“ language): language works in the frame of culture, study of language has to be examined through understanding it's context, language speakers do not live in a homogeneous group but “social, cultural and linguistic differences make the groups heterogeneous“ and language use is always a process.

These principles and the connection between culture and language show how reciprocal the relationship is in the end. Cultural communication system consists of cultural identity, cultural frames and forms and structuring norms. Each part is in reciprocal relationship with each others, learned, historically grounded, dialogical and managed interactionally and locally. (Carbaugh 1990, 166-168.)

2.2. Intercultural Communication/Interaction

So far it has been defined that language is part of culture. From that it can be concluded that always when communicating you have to deal also with the culture behind the language. Because cultures are not similar with each other the differences are one of the reasons for misunderstandings in intercultural communication (Oksaar 1999, 17) and these differentiating differences are the focus area of this research. The basic question in the background is: How do I notice that I am different and what does it say about who I am?

Intercultural communication can be defined as “communication between people from different language and cultural backgrounds“ (Oksaar 1999, 17; see also Francesco & Gold 1998, 56). This includes the idea of at least one of the participants being multilingual meaning a person expressing her/himself understandably with other language. Usually when talking about intercultural communication the cultural aspect, differences in cultural background has been taken into special consideration. But also it is essential to consider the impact of the role of language, the logic behind it like it is argued in Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and also already presented here.

Differences in communication affect cross-cultural communication process at two levels. First of all when (1.) the sender of the message encodes the thought in the way s/he has been accustomed and (2) when the receiver of the message decodes and understands the code the way s/he has been accustomed. (Francesco & Gold 1998, 63.) To cut the issue of differences even into smaller pieces there are major

expressed differences in language usage, verbal style and non-verbal communication (Francesco & Gold 1998, 56-60; see page 18 of this research).

It must be understood that all these differences based on basic features of culture and interaction itself are defined by its context. These differences in cultural values, the basic definer of culture, are influenced by the situations, the duration of the interaction situation and the degree of importance the interacting parties attach to their encounters. (Kuada & Gullestrup 1999, 172.) People can react very emotionally when their cultural values are ignored or violated. The possible reactions can vary from trying to avoid similar intercultural situations in the future because of the feeling of being upset and not knowing the reason (culture has a secret nature), judging and making false assumptions of agendas hidden behind behaviour to cultural learning where people start asking what is behind of the conflict and what is the viewpoint of others. (Cushner & Brislin 1996 11.)

Also Carbaugh (1990, 157) argues that there are many sources of variability in communication. They become important in intercultural interaction because they can create asynchrony by leading to “misinterpretations of intent, misunderstandings generally, a lack of co-ordination in moment-to-moment interactions, discrimination among classes of people, negative stereotyping and so on.” Also according to Redmond (2000, 40) this kind of ethnocentric communication can cause misunderstandings, confusion, stress and hostility and that is the reason for a demand of flexibility in intercultural interaction. He also argues well that “the greater the difference, the more you need to adapt your communication” – although it can be discussed how you can measure the level or amount of difference. It must be taken into notice that there might also be major differences in the deeper structures of the cultures in a situation where two cultures may seem very alike causing a mistake based on an illusion of similarity in horizontal dimension (Gullestrup 1992, 164).

This leads to understanding the enormous importance of flexibility and accommodation needed in intercultural communication. In language this is called speech convergence where modifying speech into listeners’ speech patterns occurs.

Another possible extreme end is speech divergence where the emphasis is in linguistic difference. (Gudykunst 1998, 194-196.) Redmond (2000, 187) associate flexibility and adaptability with effective interaction with wider amount of people – the more accommodative you are with the greater amount of people you get along with.

An example of accommodation concerns intercultural friendships where there is a greater possibility of having differences in language, cultural norms, customs etc. – this implies also to the fact that there must also be a great commitment, understanding and flexibility towards cultural differences. Also it is interesting to see how these differences are not only the problem causing factor but also part of the attraction. But according to Redmond (2000, 168) this is not enough in the end, but requires shared interests or similarity. Redmond (2000, 187) also guides to find the balance in between maintaining your own sense of identity and considering also the needs of others - he argues it is possible to lose your sense of identity when being too adaptable. Also Hautaniemi (2001, 27) represents a perspective of hybridity occurring when cultural change is so strong that the original culture is not recognisable anymore. The issue of losing and maintaining cultures and identities will be dealt in later chapters.

Flexibility and accommodation in communication can be associated with changing the modes of speech. Saville-Troike (1982/1989, 58) has defined two possibilities for change essential here: code-switching meaning change of language within a communication event (see also Gudykunst 1998, 197-198) and style-shifting change of language varieties depending on cultural and social dimensions. These “strategies“ can be related to the issue of identity because they function as strengthening group identification and solidarity, excluding other people and to avoid them and they also help to redefine a situation, soften or strengthen a request or a command and repair an interaction situation if needed (Saville-Troike 1982/1989, 68).

This ability of switching relates closely to communicative competence and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism can be seen in an individual when s/he has the ability to behave according to the rules defined in the cultural system and when

needed switch it to another Oksaar (1999, 17). The same emphasis is in a definition of communicative competence: it does not only include knowing the language code but also the cultural and social knowledge of what to say to whom and the way to say it appropriately in a specific context. (Saville-Troike 1982/1989, 21-22.) Very positively Saville-Troike emphasises the importance of being aware of bringing the whole cultural background into every communication situation.

2.3. Work Environment

I see work environment as a community. Other definitions could be for example work society or work place. There are some possibilities to define a community: first of all within a society it can be any group having something significant in common (e.g. occupation), physically bounded unit with possibility of expressing different roles (e.g. politically organised tribe or nation) or a collection of similarly situated entities having something in common (e.g. multinational organisations) (Saville-Troike 1982/1989, 18). The contribution of anthropology and perspective essential to emphasise in studying organisations is to understand them as meaning constructing places and not guided by objective facts (Wright 1994, 3).

In organisational studies and also in anthropology most models have divided organisations into three components: formal system (organisational structure, hierarchy, goals, rules policies etc.), informal system (how individuals and groups are related to each other) and environment (people's lives outside the organisation). There has been a discussion of the relationships between these components but no final answer has been given. (Wright 1994, 17-18.)

According to Deal and Kennedy (1982, 13-15) there are five elements of corporate culture: business environment (products, customers, technologies etc), values (defining e.g. success), heroes (employers representing corporate values in their acts), rites, rituals (level of formality, rules in meetings etc.) and cultural network (informal communication, roles) It is interesting to compare this especially with already mentioned Hofstede's (24, 1997) components of culture including values,

rituals, heroes and symbols because of their similarity. From this example it is easy to see the connection between an organisation and a cultural community.

A relevant division of organisations is from Cox (1993, 225-230) because it focuses on relationships and communication dynamics (see also Frank & Brownell 1989, 4-5). In a monolithic type of organisation minority of people represent different cultural backgrounds and the size of foreigners is limited, minority adapts rules governed by majority, members of the minority culture usually do not participate in informal events and activities and also prejudice and discrimination are common. In a plural organisation on the other hand the amount of minority people is greater and there is an effort of including them into the organisation. But minority usually is not represented equally in different levels and practices of the organisation although they are more active in informal events. There can be high amount of conflicts between groups but still less prejudice and discrimination.

Third type of organisation is a multicultural organisation where the problems of plural organisation has been overcome and diversity is valued. Majority and minority adopt some of each others norms, distribution of positions is balanced and active participation in informal activities can be recognised. All employees identify with the organisation and there is no discrimination. Cox saw that this third model has been very rare in practice in the 1990's but a valuable ideal for the future.

Now it can be seen how the surface, homogenous perspective of an organisation as a society does hide many features that influence the deeper levels of an organisation. In the communicative level the focus on development and maintaining group structures as influencing and dividing force in the organisation is the perspective adapted in this research. According to Kuada and Gullestrup (1999, 168) features "making" the differences can be e.g. different generations of the society and differences in experience, business, social networks and professional culture. Especially they mention the professional culture influencing in work organisations: professional groupings do occur and you start to identify yourself strongly as part of your group, believing in its competence and accepted standards (Kuada & Gullestrup 1999, 169).

There are some matters that should be examined also in more detail when dealing with organisations. First of all the role and importance of a leader is crucial because s/he is the model of how to deal with issues and what attitude to have. According to Darling (1991, 80) leader should be aware of the organisation as an entity including shared meanings (structure, roles etc.). Leader should also have feeling of empathy including e.g. "understanding that skin colour, nationality, birth place - - are not measures of worth or worthiness". Cox (1993, 11) sees managing diversity, conscious maximising advantages and minimising disadvantages of diversity, as crucial feature of management in a modern multicultural organisation.

In the end it can be stated as an important feature of an organisation that employees of organisation should have basic knowledge of functions inside the organisation. As Alajärvi et.al. (1999, 58) argue employees need to know facts about the current situation, future plans and changes of the organisation. It is crucial to remember the reciprocal relationship between communication and atmosphere of the organisation connected with the functions of the organisation and style to deal with them. Formal internal communication has better chances to succeed when the organisational atmosphere is positive and open. On the other hand information is available and feedback is taken into consideration increasing the comfortable feeling of the work environment. It has also been stated that without good internal communication the common goals of the organisation will not be achieved (Alajärvi et. al., 52).

2.4 Communication and Atmosphere of an Organisation

Organisation life is dynamic; it is always developing and changing. According to this cultural/symbolic perspective individuals shape the organisation and not the other way around by negotiating meanings (Frank and Brownell 1989, 305). A similar paradigm is the so called linkage metaphor where an organisation is been understood as "networks of multiple, overlapping relationships" and communication is "equated with connections and interdependence" (Tompkins & Wanca-Thibault 2001, xxvii).

These perspectives emphasise the power of individuals and their communication in the production of organisation. But the relationship is clearly reciprocal - also the structure of organisation has influence in individuals and their communication. Structure of organisation influences communication through specialisation (formal basic structure of communication channels), formalisation (direct rules of communication partners and the communication styles with them, e.g. organisation chart) and centralisation (opens and closes communication channels carrying information). (Frank & Brownell 1989, 42-47.) The complexity of influencing factors can also be seen in Frank and Brownell's (1989, 305) perspective of formal and external factors having also influenced in an organisation.

Approach of this research will focus on internal communication inside a work environment especially in a form of studying diverse groups. The basic idea of this comes from Redmond (2000, 143) who defines the use of communication in initiating, developing, maintaining and ending relationships. There are different types of relationships: Relationships of choice where the decision of joining is optional and relationships of circumstance where the situation has a crucial influence. In time, when group dynamics develop there is a possibility of moving from relationships of circumstance to relationships of choice. (Redmond 2000, 144, 257.) This can easily be applied to organisation life where the contact with people you work with can develop into friendships. One causing factor for forming groups is equivocality (uncertainty) in a new situation (Frank & Brownell 1989, 60). This is linked with trust that relates to the reduction of uncertainty. Expected behaviour of others makes us to trust them and feeling comfortable with them and intimacy increases while trust has been established between members in network. (Redmond 2000, 424-426.)

Understanding the concept of 'network' is essential before discussing more about groups. Rogers & Agarwala-Rogers (1976, 110, 113) have represented three interesting possible perspectives to understand them: network as (1) within the formal system a group of individuals communicating much with each other (2) all the groups linked by communication flows or (3) personal network (individuals connected with many different networks).

The importance of network as a group of individuals is essential in this research but also the personal network of individuals has been taken into consideration. Again depending on the form of a group (formal – informal) there are different basis for maintaining network: common work task, common interest in some topic or common liking for or attraction to each other (Rogers & Agarwala-Rogers 1976, 110). Redmond (2000, 396) understands network as a group of individuals and represents several possible roles in networks: isolate (passive, not participating in network), dyad (two people), group or team (formal group), clique (informal group). Formal and informal groups is the focus area of this research.

Groups can be divided by their task and social orientation although it must be noted that no group includes only other extreme end (high – low) of the continuum. There often is tension between group goal and individual goal but participation in the group also often causes individual goals to become secondary. Highly task oriented group can be divided into policymaking, decision-making and problem-solving groups. Social groups can be divided into informal (“when developing a network of friends and family“) and formal (“established to meet people’s social needs“) groups. (Redmond 2000, 257-260). But this should not be mixed with another definition of groups: formal and informal groups.

Task and social oriented groups can easily be replaced by more used formal and informal groups (Frank & Brownell 1989, 223). In addition to that using concepts formal and informal communication functions well in an organisation environment. It has been represented that organisational communication is communication related to organisational goals (Redmond 2000, 392) and this would imply that informal communication happening in an organisation is not organisational communication. Usually when studying organisational communication the emphasis indeed is on formal communication and networks (e.g. Malkavaara 1995; Hartley 1997). But it must be noticed that formal networks are only one type of a group; the importance of informal group is great in creating structure of an organisation (Frank & Brownell 1989, 259).

Formal group in an organisation has a specific agenda or purpose (Francesco & Gold 1998, 110) and formal communication networks are defined by internal hierarchy or job functions (Redmond 2000, 396). Organisation's hierarchical structure affects directly to the information flow and efficiency of communication. In vertical structure (various levels/grades) the information flow can be slow and misinterpreted, but on the other hand in horizontal structure it can be more coincidental with the problem of some people never getting the needed information. (Redmond 2000, 398.) Redmond (2000, 427) also defines formal work teams – also applicable to work group - as functional and cross-functional. In functional team the members have the expertise, responsibilities etc. from the same area but in the cross-functional team these features of likeness does not exist but is replaced by diversity.

The nature of informal group is quite different. It has been argued that informal networks do develop often outside the formal structure where the communication is connected with task-related issues (Frank & Brownell 1989, 259) but also opposite perspectives have been presented concerning development of informal group within a formal one (Francesco & Gold 1998, 110). Also Redmond (2000, 396) defines that informal communication networks exist inside organisation but outside of job descriptions.

The complexity of informal groups has been argued to base on several influential factors: it is “a result of happenstance and members' attractions, preferences, and choices“ (Redmond 2000, 400), basing on “similar experiences, common interests, and friendship“ (Francesco & Gold 1998, 110). Frank and Brownell (1989, 259) mention examples of same hobby and the location of an office) and more generally on their members needs or interests (Frank and Brownell 1989, 223). So concerning both formal and informal communication it can be argued that “groups form as a result of mutual attraction or interests or because management assigns people to a group“ (Francesco & Gold 1998, 108)

There are some noticeable characteristics that occur in informal communication networks: inevitability (always communication outside formal structures), emergence

(interactions emerge in the organisation possibly developing informal networks), complexity and overlap (network is a “complex web“), technology (common emails for certain groups, information etc.) and functions (supplementing formal communication, talking “off the record“ etc.). (Redmond 2000, 401-402.)

By now it is clear that small group communication includes interpersonal communication among people considering themselves as a group. The members have a common purpose that gives them a feeling of group identity. (Redmond 2000, 20.) Group structure consists of rules (formal expected behaviour) and norms (informal, taken for granted, usually more effective than rules because more personal), roles (set of norms defining appropriate behaviour) and status (every role has a status grounding on hierarchical system) (Francesco & Gold 1998, 109.) When taking a closer look at norms we can see that there are social norms that everyone have learned through socialisation and group norms meaning special norms developed for a specific group. These can be implicit (never verbally agreed but still acknowledged) or explicit (discussed and agreed norms). (Redmond 2000, 267-268.) Here it is interesting to consider the importance of cultural backgrounds in forming norms.

Each group has also shared experiences forming a history of it that influences the present and future actions. There is a clear reciprocal relationship between individual and a group. It is important to know that while group develops its own culture it is still part of a larger whole, in this case the organisation. (Frank & Brownell 1989, 223.) Group functions are greatly affected by the psychological contexts of its members including “needs, personality, values, sex, age, culture, race, and ethnicity“ (Redmond 2000, 269) but the importance of them can also be seen in the formation of groups in the first place and not only in its functions. So the continuous, active and process-like perspective of groups that has been presented here includes also the idea of continuous change of group itself through member interaction (Francesco & Gold 1998, 112).

Group boundaries are overlapping and fluctuate and maintaining boundaries involves maintaining already mentioned, important group identity (Poole 1998, 96-

97). Interesting is to notice that these overlapping boundaries can be related to possible overlapping of roles in different groups causing a role conflict. Also when dealing with group boundaries the issue of what is behind the boundary is essential. Stereotype has been defined as “a category in which we place individuals on the basis of some attribute or quality“ (Redmond 200, 54), and these categories usually are in opposite pairs (good-bad, easy-hard, smart-dumb, black-white). But stereotypes are not entirely bad but help to organise the perceptions we make. People do not fall into these categories in reality (Redmond 2000, 54-55) and that should be remembered also when thinking about group boundaries and the distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in a work environment.

Even though stereotypes can be said also to be positive, structuring force in life, in working environment it has been represented to be a feature influencing into negative working environment. In total it consists of rigid thinking (stereotyping, black and white-thinking.), poor attitudes (blaming, lack of trust, closeness) and stress. (Frank & Brownell 1989, 329.) In a way or another, stereotypes do affect on atmosphere of a working society. But it must be seen that it is not listed in features constructing positive working environment which are “trust, openness, supportiveness, a collaborative orientation, constructive conflict management and empathy“ (Frank & Brownell 1989, 317-318).

In the literature there are many definitions of ‘climate’ of work society and I understand the concept I have chosen to use, atmosphere, in relatively similar way. The reason to use this concept instead of more widely used ‘climate’ is because the definitions are not quite what is meant in this research. That is why I have decided to combine and develop two perspectives from Reichers and Schneider (1990) and James, James and Ashe (1990). First of all Reichers and Schneider’s definition of climate as “the way things are around here“ is fine but emphasising its meaning in this more specific definition “shared perceptions of organisational policies, practices and procedures, both formal and informal“ (1990, 22) does not function well here. Atmosphere is in reciprocal relationship with organisation functions but the way things are does not entirely derive from policies and procedures.

This leads us to the definition of James, James and Ashe (1991, 41) as they argue that climate is a product of personal values and does not work at the level of collective. I agree with the human perspective but on the other hand I do believe atmosphere works also in the collective level and that happens in interaction and communication. And again agreeing with Reichers and Schneider (1990, 23) climates (here atmosphere) are shared by people with common perceptions. They also argue that many of them exist in one organisation. When thinking about networks and group formations I tend to agree with this but concerning this research it is relevant to think that there is an atmosphere shared by everyone included in the work environment.

Frank and Brownell (1989, 317) have defined communication climate, which I believe can be transformed into organisation atmosphere, in the following way: “the feeling that employees have about their work environment“ (see also definition of organisational climate by Rogers & Agarwala-Rogers 1976, 73). The feeling about work and people themselves can be positive, negative – or maybe something in between. In addition to stereotypes there are naturally many other factors influencing atmosphere of an organisation. The emphasis of this research is on its relationship with especially internal communication and identities acknowledged in an organisation. Again the reciprocal relationship has to be noticed.

2.5. Identities: National and European

2.5.1. Identity

The issue and concept of identity is a hot debate of the day. According to Stuart Hall (1999, 21, 245) there has been a lot of criticism in many academic fields against it during the last years. The thought of having whole, original and perfectly functioning identity inside the human being is not valid anymore - like for example it was and strongly dominated in the time of Enlightenment.

When talking about groups “having“ certain identities the issue of difference is also present. Strong group feelings are thought to be based on the existence of the

“Other“ or the “Alien“ (Wicker 1997, 143). Indeed, like Hansen (2000, 97) puts it “difference can be said to constitute identity’s partner term in that all identities are constructed through a process of differentiation between, for instance, ‘self’ and ‘other’, ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘Swedes’ and ‘immigrants’, ‘Europeans’ and ‘non-Europeans’[sic!]“. But it must be also noted that the difference *in itself* is not essential but the significance attached to it is (Makkonen 2000, 16-17).

There are several possible parts of identity to outline. For instance human identity can be seen to include two parts that help the separation of yourself from others: social identity and individual identity. Social identity tells us how we differ from other groups. Individual identity on the other hand makes the distinction between me as an individual: how do I differ from the others in the group? (Liebkind 1996, 11.) To give an example Leimu (1996, 57) argues that the list of collective (here: social) identity can be based on national or spatial difference, age, gender, race, social class, language, religion, ideology, education or even tribal. Liebkind (1988, 66-67) also presents other valuable possibilities of defining identities when thinking of our main identity concepts ‘European’ and ‘national’. They are given (not voluntary, “natural“ got already in your birth), gained (optional choices later in life) and adopted identities (quite stable, learned styles of communicating that person has adopted from interaction).

Hall (1999, 19-39) differentiates identities to old and new ones. At the moment old ones are decaying and the new ones are taking more space. This might cause what he calls “identity crisis“: larger process of change of the end of twentieth century modern society that undermines the founding elements and traditional corner stones in people’s social life. The difference with traditional societies is that the changes are coming and influencing quickly, they are continuous and the consequences are permanent. To him identity is nothing stable either, rather it evolves in time in unconscious processes and these processes are never ending. People have many identities at the same time and they can also be in conflict with each other. (see also Liebkind 1988, 40.)

Also concerning the impact of rapid changes in identities this case more connected with communication Georg Elwert (1997, 258-289) introduces the term “polytaxis“ as ability to master different roles in different situations. According to him people have several modes of belonging and identities and this he sees as a basic character of a human society. This is called switching and there exist two kinds of it: individual (or situational) and collective switching performed by central persons of the group. An interesting comparison can be made with this and communicative switching that has already been discussed.

In identity negotiation we negotiate with our environment what/who we are. This can happen between individuals or groups and it is a negotiation not only about the content of one’s identity but also the value of it. (Liebkind 1996, 11.) This practical, active and communicational perspective of identities exists also in this research and it has been presented by Antaki & Widdicombe (1998, 1-2): Identities are “part and parcel of the routines of everyday life, brought off in the fine detail of everyday interaction“. But it must not be forgotten that in the process of identity negotiation stereotyping has an essential role (Makkonen 2000, 17).

Now we can notice we have made a full circle in the issue of identities - starting from the notion of difference and ending to it. Liebkind (1988, 76) presents a general concept of stereotyping in social psychology as something generalising and connected to observing. She addresses that classification - making differences between groups of people - creates a natural, necessary category to make order in our lives (Liebkind 1988, 80-83).

2.5.2. National Identity

There are some concepts we have to take into consideration when discussing national identity. The requirement for its existence is first of all the concept of ‘nation’ that we have to understand. Nation can be defined as a “cultural construction, a product of collective imagination and identification“ (Anttonen 1996, 68; see also Wicker 1997, 1). Hall emphasises that it is not just a political unit but a

system of cultural representations. Referencing to Schwartz he argues that in this way it influences to the feelings of identity and loyalty. (Hall 1999, 46.)

National identity is linked with and also essential concept here of national culture. It is argued to be one of the central sources of cultural identities of the modern world. National cultures constitute from cultural institutions, symbols and representations. This includes certain meanings of issues influencing the way of acting and thinking. These meanings about the nation people live in have helped to identify themselves with it throughout the history. It must be emphasised that national identities are based on a metaphor because the basis of it is not in genes. In more general level Hall also argues that in identities there is always something imaginary.

Hall (and Wicker 1997, 3) discusses also about the timing of the development of the national culture: it can be understood as a phenomenon of modern time. In pre-modern time the emphasis was in the feeling towards religion, tribe etc. The development of standard in reading skills and the one common language came to be the basis for homogenous national culture and created cultural institutions like school. This had a direct affect on industrialisation and modernity. (Hall 1999, 39, 45-46.) But it must be noted that also divergent opinions do exist (e.g. see Llobera 1994/1996).

Anttonen (1996, 69-70) argues that national cultures are a product of national integration: territory of the state homogenises local cultures, legal systems, customs, market networks, communications etc. But it can also be seen as a product of transnational integration through maintaining force of national symbols. From these he mentions e.g. national anthem, flag, song, epic, dress, dance, instrument, flower, currency, museum, parks and festivals. For example through these symbols transnational integration happens also in the form of international comparison and competition (e.g. with national symbols). According to Van Gennep (Llobera 1994/1996, 99) you could add to this list the material culture (architecture etc), customs, traditions, rituals, writing, language, territory and the name of nationality.

Hall presents five possible elements that constitute national identity: The story of the nation (from history, literature, media etc.), origin and tradition (characterising feature in people's personality within the group), inventing tradition (in many cases tradition is fairly new), the myth of establishing a nation (time of the establishing in a mystical, not real time) and the idea of pure, original nation. (Hall 1999, 47.) Again we can notice that Hall emphasises identities as a power giving meaning and a source of identification in people's lives. But a critical perspective is good take into account: Wicker (1997, 44-46) argues that homogeneity in nation-states is in the end very rare. It has also been noticed elsewhere that many modern nations constitute from many status classes, gender and ethnic groups, and also racial [sic!] difference exist inside all e.g. European nations (Hall 1999, 53-54).

When talking about national identities these diversities should not be neglected although they are not the focus point of this research. There is still existing an idea in national identity that in it there is a hidden agenda that makes people "belong" together. It has been argued that national identities are not based on geo-social terms but as an 'imagined community' including a constructed culture, heritage and a feeling of belonging (Anderson 1991, 1-46.) Also Delanty (1995, 5) gives us another possibility to see national identity: for him it is a tool of political ideology. This is because national identity is anchored with authority, the state.

There is a wide discussion going on of the future of national identities that is closely connected with European identity. Most commonly two opposite sides have been presented. On the other hand it has been said that through EU's political power national symbols are disappearing and that way causing also the disappearance of cultural units (Anttonen 1996, 76-77). Hall (1999, 60-64) presents also two possible angles concerning the future of national identity: according to the first prediction when national identities are exposed to external factors they will weaken. In this case there is a conflict between locality and globality. All this can be linked with Zigmunt Bauman's (1996) notion of the idea of postmodernists: according to them nationalism is not relevant anymore because of the emerging of new identities.

On the other hand there can be said to be a trend of thinking national identities making a strong come-back when threatened (Anttonen 1996, 76-77). Ålund (1997, 91-97) argues that the search for roots is widespread today, implying also to national identities. She says that the growing uncertainty caused by globalisation has caused a cultural panic. This can easily be connected to the idea of national symbols and the increasing importance of them when their independence is threatened. Also Hall (1999, 60-64) has said that globalisation does not have to destroy national identity: they can function side by side. According to his opinion globalisation can produce new global and local identities. But to be able to discuss more about the situation of national identity we have to look deeper into the concept of European identity and its companions.

2.3.3. European Identity

There are various theories about the development of Europe. Delanty (1995, 1) has argued following about 'Europe': that it is an idea as much as a reality. In this he obviously emphasises that 'Europe' is a social construct. Mikkeli (1994, 185) argues that Europe can be understood at different levels. At mythical level it was already existing in the period of classical antiquity. Europe at geographical level has been discussed throughout the history - now it can be said to make a move towards East after the cold war. At political level on the other hand it was born in the Middle Ages, associated with religion. According to Delanty (1995, 150-158) the idea of Europe differentiated from the Christian world-view during the Renaissance and interestingly enough was associated with the idea of nation-states (see also Mikkeli 1994, 186).

So in history there has been many attempts to unify Europe. You can see that clearly already when thinking of the objectives of Roman empire, Napoleon and Hitler (Shore and Black 1994/1996, 277; see also Mikkeli 1994, 185) - periods and leaders of time that were not so successful in the end. But it must be remembered what Mikkeli (1994, 188) argues: that all the ideologies of Europe in the history have shared the same basic goals: securing peace in Europe (leading to increasing of wealth) and preventing external threats.

There has also been an interesting presentation of differentiation between personal and collective identities concerning European identity. According to it at least as part of elite culture collective European identity has been existing since 16th century, but the existence of personal European identity has developed only since late 19th century - although it has gradually been developing since the time of Enlightenment. This has been proved by individuals' personal histories and also in larger movements in history. Delanty also describes European identity as "a collective identity that is focused on the idea of Europe, but which can also be the basis of personal identity" (Delanty 1995, 5-6, 13). One of the aims in this work is to find out the level of personal European identity.

In the 20th century there has been a division of two perspectives concerning Europe: the belief in progress and the crisis of progress (the myth of progress). The crisis of Europe was acknowledged after the world wars, it was thought that there was no ground for European values and idealism anymore. For example Friedrich Nietzsche influenced towards this kind of thinking. (Mikkeli 1994, 185.) Also especially after the second world war Europeans had seen a lot of brutal destruction and also change of situation in world politics, e.g negative implications of the cold war, effected on the raising of nostalgic thinking. The source of power shaping European tradition was thought to be religion, the Christian tradition or science. But still it can be said that the development has been positive in the last decades. Now for the first time the issues of common law, economic district with common currency and common defending politics are topical. (Mikkeli 1994, 185, 187.)

So what are the characteristics or ingredients of European culture and that way identity? At general level it could be said that the basis for European identity is laying on the concepts of reason, justice and mercy (Mikkeli 1994, 161). This aspect strongly emphasises the ethical perspective. The "official" European culture has also been presented including Christendom, civilisation, the West, imperialism, racism, fascism, modernity - and Delanty (1995) is right when commenting that also these descriptions have little to do with real life. But on the other hand he says that the idea of Europe should be seen as an "higher degree of abstraction than the national model". But it must be remembered that Europe is also a geo-political unit and the

history of it has been about colonialism and conquest (Delanty 1995, 4, 7, 9) which have been very concrete and influencing factors in many people's lives. Connected to this by the fact of colonial national powers he also sees that Europe is not alternative to nationalism but it is meaningless without it (1995, 150-158).

It is true that we cannot discuss European identity without referring to national identity. According to Delanty (1995, 7-8) they share the same interpretation of community: "a fantasy homeland" that is in harmony with its history and geography. In this the origin and destiny are in key roles. Difference with nationalism is that there is no real tradition, "no mystique of civilisation" of Europeanism like there is in nationalism. It lacks the similar emotional connection that nationalism has although it tries to create a common form of communicating through media that can be seen in life styles and technocratic ideologies.

It has also been seen that nationalism is relevant for European integration because they are both based on "imagined communities", because observing the formation of nation-states gives perhaps a model for understanding the same process at European level and because it is seen as an obstacle to development of EU (Shore and Black 1994/1996, 277). Defining European identity has been found problematic especially because of its possibility of causing conflicts between national cultures and cultural identities (Delanty 1995, 3).

Now when thinking of Europe and its identity and culture it seems that the concept of it is quite unclear. Question arises: can it then be treated as a unit? Goddard, Llobera and Shore (1994/1996, 23-26) seem to agree that especially in the latter half of 20th century defining Europe and European has been important because of the increasing importance of EU. They also understand that it can be seen as a unit when thinking of increased economic interdependence between European states, information change - global media - and political level emphasising all the time EU. But the differences in Europe cannot be neglected either in religions (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox Christianity) and languages (Romance, Germanic, Slavonic). Now it seems quite obvious that Europe and European identity really is not a neutral concept but always depends on the chosen perspective. In this research Europe is

seen as a unit especially in a sense of creating “new“ European identity ordered by European Community during recent decades.

Anttonen (1996, 74) sees that - being part of globalisation - the internalisation of capital, production, consumption, information etc. of today do have an affect on cultures. At European level this is closely connected to the growing importance of EU. Delanty (1995, 156, 158) points out perspective of today’s Europe and EU being all about exclusion; he says that “the very concept of European Union makes little sense if something is not going to be excluded“. Here we go back to the issue of difference. This can be seen also from Hansen (2000, 98): he argues that EU’s approach to difference in theoretical level has been positive: it should be “preserved, included and negotiated - but what are these differences? In actual EU policies only national and regional differences has been acknowledged to be positive and included in the Maastricht Treaty - in addition to that a sense of unproblematic character of them is present. This theoretical level and also a beautiful picture of Europe as a basis for a feeling of family can be seen in the following document:

European culture is marked by its diversity: diversity of climate, countryside, architecture, language, beliefs, taste and artistic style. Such diversity must be protected, not diluted. It represents one of the chief sources of the wealth of our continent. But underlying this variety is an affinity, a family likeness, a common European identity. Down the ages, the tension between the continent’s cultural diversity and unity has helped to fuse ancient and modern, traditional and progressive. It is undoubtedly a source of greatness at the best elements of our civilization (Commission of the European Communities, 1983:1)

Hansen (2000, 95) makes a reference to Shore to emphasise that already for the “founding fathers“ of European Community the aim has been to remove the nation state as a primary source of identity formation. But it was not until 1973 when a formal statement of European Identity was made and only 1984 the discussion took shape by Committee on a People’s Europe, chaired by Pietro Adonnino. His aim was to strengthen European image and identity, creating a sense of belonging

'through cultural exchanges and the creation of new symbols of 'Europeanness' (Shore & Black 1994/1996, 285-286 according to Adonnino 1985: A People's Europe: Reports from the Ad Hoc Committee, Luxembourg).

The Committee of People's Europe elaborated on the creation of Euro-symbols aiming at increasing the feeling of European identity among its citizens. European passport, driving license, anthem, flag and different kinds of theme years e.g. European Road safety year, European cinema year and European sports events came into being - even Euro-lottery was in the plan. In 1988 Commission concluded that "a sense of European identity has begun to take shape" but 1989 it was still acknowledged that more work have to be done to make people more aware of their European identity. (Shore & Black 1994/1996, 286- 287.)

So what is the state of Europeanness and its spirit today? Mikkeli (1994, 182) introduces two noteworthy possibilities: According to the first one it is still doing just fine, surely built on diversity and common value ground as always before. Other possibility is to think that western idealism is dead for the simple reason that there is no common values that could be used as building blocks of new Europeanism. Supporters for both perspectives can be found. For example Wicker (1997, 35) sees that development of euro-consciousness is more rooted than it is commonly thought. He believes this has been proved to be correct in strong fights for maintaining national identities and conflicts in issue of Euro-meanings - these would not emerge without a real threat. Also Shore & Black (1994/1996, 279) introduce the 'neofunctionalist perspective': broadly speaking it refers to economic and institutional change that does have an affect in the identification with Europe. Ålund (1997, 102) on the other hand sees that societies without traditional boundaries already exist for example in cities of Britain, Paris suburbs and Berlin.

Mikkeli (1994, 188, 192, 194) asks if the political development is the only development that has happened and that way doubts the existence of spiritual feeling of belonging among Europeans. He sees periods of history closely connected to feeling of belonging. He cannot find anything that could keep Europeans spiritually together and as a consequence he asks if the direction is

towards national traditions. Giving Finland as an example he argues that that really is the direction - spiritual belongingness at European level is still far away. The reasons for this has also been introduced as complexity of procedures and institutions, distance and lack of communication (indirect channels) (see also Ward

1999, 139) and conflict in objectives (economic - humanitarian) (Shore & Black 1994/1996, 289-292). Like Delanty (1995, 8) puts it in a very good way "Europe has been united, but those elusive citizens, the Europeans, have yet to be invented". Now it is time to start looking if this is the case in one essential part of European life, life in European work environment.

3. Communication and Atmosphere of the Work Environment

There are various possible perspectives to choose from when studying a work environment. My perspective focuses on communication especially in the aspect of group formation and in the atmosphere inside the work environment. The reason to choose these aspects is that I see them not only as a crucial indicator of the functioning and structure of organisation as a community but especially of organisation as a multicultural society. Communicative interaction and general atmosphere is a channel to see what kind of role the national backgrounds do carry in the organisation in the every day level. .

In the first chapter 3.1 informal and formal communication of the studied work environment will be researched focusing especially on verbal and extraverbal communication, but also noticing the non-verbal dimension (see Oksaar's definition of language page 17). This will include a special study of the canteen, which based on collected material is the most important place for social, informal interaction. In that space it is easy to realise different social group formations that are developed and recognised by informants and also in my study noticed. Communication focusing on formal matters is also included in my study (3.1.3) but because of its obligatory nature I will not emphasise it very much. But I will give a presentation of its nature in general also including places and different divisions of groups to give a whole picture of the communication actions in the work environment. It must be remembered that although I have made the distinction between informal and formal communication, I do think they cannot be seen as completely separated from each other. This distinction I have done to clarify the presentation of the data.

Secondly I will analyse the atmosphere of the work environment especially in the context of different nationalities in chapter 3.2. Here will be more discussion about the structure of national groups and the ways to emphasise cultural background in a concrete way that would have an impact in the atmosphere. To give a deeper perspective also on a more abstract level of information will be presented from the collected material of the matter.

Thirdly 3.3 I will present some influential factors concerning the group formations and atmosphere and through the light of data and these themes the role of nationalistically diverse backgrounds of employees will be presented. These factors will be the notion of seeking similarities in group formations, structure of the organisation, functioning of the internal communication, language and social activities outside working hours. It must be noticed that in some of these chapters nationality is not seen clearly influential but because some of these background factors are obviously influencing in the communication and general atmosphere, they have been included to the presented data.

3.1. Communication

3.1.1 Place and Time of Informal Communication

Generally it can be said that the canteen at morning coffee breaks and at lunchtime is seen as an important place for social communication. As a space it is located on the ground floor in the old house. It is not next to anyone's office and a clearly space of its own. The room is quite lengthy with many chairs and tables from another end where you enter the room to the other but people have tendency to sit in the end of the room where they can pay their food and where the coffee and tea facilities are. This area is also near to large-scale windows and there is also a possibility to eat outside. The tables are usually for four people, but when sitting outside it is not that structured because of the long benches.

Clear majority of informants first of all went to the canteen at least once a day only with exceptions of two (M04, M06). But the use of the canteen cannot necessarily be the tool to measure its high importance. Most of the informants experienced it communicatively important because "*you might see a little bit of, slightly different side of something*" (W09). This different side usually means knowledge of and that way participation in the unofficial side of colleagues' lives:

And so it's a good framework for people to meet each other and maybe discuss things which are related to private lives you know... things like holidays or plans for to do things and so forth. (M01).

It was also expressed to be a good place for getting needed information in practicalities for a newcomer and a foreigner (W04).

Generally the distinction of social communication happening in the canteen and work communication in the office is difficult to make and divergence do occur. It was clear that for some people there was also a possibility for work related communication through this informal setting; you got information about “*what's going on work wise with colleagues or developments or like that*” (M03; also M05). On the other hand there existed a principle of making the separation between work and social communication and willingness to have a break not related to work (M02, W01, W06, W02, W04).

In some cases the canteen was more seen as a “chatting” place and not a meeting place with friends – the communication with a friend could happen in his/her office where you could intentionally go to ask about the news or to set a date for some activity together outside the working hours (W03, W08, M02). Overall chatting was generally seen as a positive matter belonging to the nature of a break from work but sometimes depending on communication partners it was not seen very satisfying: *With other people you just talk about... nothing... weather you know!* (M02).

The canteen is not the only place for social interaction although it is an important and only place inside the work environment where people having recess from work usually would go to eat. It must be noticed that there are also people who tend always to go out from the work environment. This is usually the case if they live nearby.

Because of all the time present and that way also transparent nature of social communication it is very demanding to determine what kind of role it has in general interaction during official working hours. General attitude was that socially you would not seek for anyone's company by intentionally going to his/her work area but you

would have also social interaction with the people you are in contact with work-wise so when it comes naturally through work. This can be linked with Redmond's (see page 23) definition of the possibility of relationships of circumstance to develop into relationships of choice. Concerning places and time informal communication was said to happen all the time during the workday - it can happen in your own or the others office or work area, in the corridor, lunches outside the work place or inside but not in the canteen (M02, W02, W03, M04, M05, W04, M06, W08, W09).

An interesting and only example concerning social time outside the canteen but inside the work environment was a case of having breaks in the publications stores. This space is separated from the canteen and also the office spaces in the old and new part of the work environment. This was the only case where there was a clear choice in making a difference between the social time spent separately from the rest of the staff inside the organisation. This was made by a few employees and varies from having two tea breaks and one lunch for having only tea breaks (M04, M06). So it is not a rule that everyone would be there at the same time and you could be there also alone. It was obvious that for the rest of the staff it was not felt needed and so they would not try to get into that space to have a break with the people usually going there.

3.1.2 Different Groups and Informal Communication

At this stage it is clear that there can be divisions between people, gathering together and forming groups. Now when considering this especially from the informal communication point of view, it must be remembered that the knowledge of the informants comes mainly through their experience in the canteen but possibly also from general knowledge about groups who tend to see each other also outside the working hours or social group interaction outside the canteen. I will take into consideration the groups defined by non-members and also the possible definitions of the informants' own social groups. When thinking about time and place I will focus here only on the time during the working hours and inside

the work environment. I will present the groups defined by informants and I will analyse them through their classification grounds in the chapter 3.3.

One of the groups that have been clearly noticed by other staff (M01, W07) and the members themselves (M04, M06) derives from the difference making concerning space between the members and other staff. This happens by gathering outside the canteen during recess and it is the group of usually four persons, with same nationality. About other groups it must be emphasised that in most cases there existed a notion of people forming a group with their closest colleagues because you *“have a lot in common, your timing is always the same”* (W09). Some noticed groups developed within closest colleagues or your own work unit were recognised to be from the IT section (M02, W07, M05, W02), a subgroup of the translators (W12, W07), a subgroup of the accounts in administration section (W01, W10, W07) and subgroups inside research area (M03).

The reasons for this kind of division by work responsibilities are easy to label as understandable but it can also be seen from another perspective - a less neutral approach of dividing people according to their status in the work environment, grades.

But otherwise I'd say it's the general hierarchy that is in a way determinant of the who goes to lunch with who for example. -- But if you see like people sitting quite often you see that it's either the sections, like some how the language people work together so it's easier to go together for lunch. Or then it's really like C-grades, B-grades. It's terrible to say because it's so artificial but it's true. (M03.)

This striking and surprisingly relevant fact about the social interaction in this work environment emphasises the hierarchical structure of the organisation and the possible willingness of the employees to go with it. In the light of collected material this idea seems to include some negative implications and it has been recognised also by some people in a high grade (M02, M03, W03, M06, W05). Especially the passive role of research managers in social activities was recognised and criticised by persons belonging to a high grade themselves:

Very very few research managers would be interested get involved socially. You've noticed your self, very few research managers would have coffee in the mornings. (M03.)

I think it's very funny if you have a Christmas party here, none of the research managers go to the Christmas party. -- They have to keep that, especially A-grades I have to be honest. They have to keep that a bit of a difference. So you don't see A-grades in Christmas parties. (W03.)

This way it can be concluded that some research managers form a passive group of their own defined by their behaviour.

Age and similar life situation is seen as another influential factor in forming groups, for example younger people like stagiaires or people with small children (W03, W08, W05, W01, M03, M05). Widely noticed group was a group of people who started working in that specific work environment at the same time around twenty years ago (W01, W11, W12, W06).

Nationality is seen as one dividing factor as well but generally its importance is not clearly the most crucial one. Usually because of the native language spoken it is one of the possible grounding factors in many cases. Clearest and the most general division can be done between natives and non-natives. Also a division of Irish people into two groups influencing the behaviour towards foreigners was made: who have and have not lived abroad (M02). The most frequently recognised example group concerning nationality and language other than Irish was a group of French people (W01, M03, W03, M05, M06). Other, more rare example groups of Portuguese (M03), German (W03, W06), Spanish (M06), Austrian (W10) and Danes (W06) were mentioned as well.

When thinking about national backgrounds and their importance in social interaction it must be emphasised that there is no common rule of it. People are individuals and emphasise different factors important to themselves and that is why there are various possibilities to make distinctions between groups. This was clearly expressed in some interviews (W08, W01) and it was also easy to recognise in the nature of them: they would or could not give only one-way answers. I believe this

means an understanding the complexity of the matter - for the interviewed too the issue was not black and white but includes many perspectives influencing each other. This can be seen for example in one division of foreigners connected to the level of adaptation depending on life situation: a marriage with an Irish and a settled down life with a family was expressed to be a deepening factor in the level of adaptation with Irish people (W06, W01). This implies to the fact that there are many different possible grounds for social interaction like in this case life situation and nationality.

Like it has been seen nationality is not necessarily the only special character of a group. One group inside the organisation is known to especially critical towards management of the organisation.

You would hear sort of undertones at meetings of “typical of management“ or “typical of this“ and “typical of that“. But nothing positive, only the negative bit. Nothing to sort of say “well, I think it could be improved by doing this, this is my opinion how things could be better“. You only get the negative, you never go beyond that. (W02.)

This is easy to combine to the existing attitude in general towards forming and maintaining groups - it reflects some informants' way to approach his/her own belonging to a group. The answers about groups can be divided into two categories based on attitudes: 1. People who prefer to stay with certain people in a social interaction situation with whom s/he has closer relationship and can possibly define to belong in a group and 2. people who prefer not to belong with the same people when socially communicating but to interact with different people. It must be noticed that here the definition of belonging to a group is also connected with groups developed through work.

Majority of the informants (eleven out of eighteen) belong to the first category – they either could identify themselves to belong in a certain group or/and they prefer social interaction with people they know better. In the canteen this can be seen for instance in the order of preference in with whom to sit with. Here it must be emphasised that belonging to this category does not mean belonging to a exclusive

group, according to some interviews the borders of the groups are usually flexible and generally there is an open attitude for other people to participate as well in the communication situations. Especially interesting this is because of opposite experiences: in some cases there were examples given about groups of people with whom you would not tend to have social interaction with because of some uncomfortable situation that has left a feeling of an outsider (W03, M05, M02, W07).

Rest of the informants did identify themselves more like *“floating in many different groups”* (W01) or as a person without an own group but friendships with individuals. Also among some of these informants you could sense a negative attitude towards groups in general, like belonging to a one would be a negative or too labelling matter (W02, W07):

I try not to become a part of a group, that's a bit closed. – I don't like the feeling that you get sometime, you see a little group together and you think “I better not try them”. Because they look like too closed so I try, I wouldn't like to keep that impression. (W07.)

Although someone would not like to participate in a group still the general impression expressed in most of the interviews is that belonging to a group something normal and expected to happen in an environment like a work environment. It is a natural process that people create networks because of different reasons important for themselves as individuals. *“But that's the same in everywhere!”* (M03).

3.1.3 Formal Communication: Place, Time and Different Groups

By work related communication I mean communication concerning work responsibilities and interactions based on them. Like it has already been noticed the line between social and work related communication is fairly overlapping and this should be remembered. This can be understood also in the already discussed matter of work related communication in an unofficial setting (M03, W04, W12, M05).

Work communication depends completely on work responsibilities – you interact with people you have something to do with work wise. Everyone has a work group although the nature of the work can be very independent. All the informants do have group meetings, and depending on your status you can have more than one meeting you are expected to participate in (W08, M03). The frequency of the meetings can vary from once a week to once in six months.

The nature of nationality based differences among work groups is quite clear. The research sections are clearly the most nationally diverse areas. The administration and human resources sections are nearly hundred per cent Irish. In the information department the division is also not so clear and the staff is more mixed.

In addition to work related communication in meetings there is naturally communication in a more informal setting again depending on work duties. This varies from mostly communicating in your own office or work area to more physically active behaviour changing places and moving more in peoples' offices and other work areas. Also related to work duties the amount of communication with a great or a small amount of people varies enormously. Usually the spectrum of the people you communicate with comes to be a routine depending on with whom you need to be in contact with.

3.2 Organisational Atmosphere

In a multicultural work environment the issue of employees' cultural background is essential. The ideal picture can be imagined to include an emphasis of them as a positive source of strength and new perspectives for the benefit of the company. Another extreme end would be to suppress the national diversities - and between these two ends there are various other possibilities. Here I want to examine what is the role and relationship between different national backgrounds with this specific multicultural work environment. This will lead us to a broader question of diversities and their importance in the atmosphere – are they celebrated or not?

3.2.1. Role of Different Nationalities

Atmosphere as a product of personal values but shared by everyone, a general feeling about the work environment (see page 30) has been transformed here to imply especially the role of different nationalities. Discussing about “the way things are” concerning this matter with the informants of course is based on personal perceptions like it has already been noticed. But through these opinions it is possible to get a general view of the matter that in the light of collected material can say to exist also in the level of community.

I suppose that you cannot overcome the fact that we are in Ireland, that's to start with. And you cannot overcome the fact that nearly half of the staff of the Foundation are Irish colleagues. -- I say that of course this is a multicultural, multinational organisation. There are people from different countries and I think it's very important of the major elements of this institution. It is made of people from all over Europe or member states of the European Union. But it has a Irish feature as well. (M01.)

The matter of nationalities and whether or not the situation is balanced between them must be seen as complex. First of all it should be noticed that several informants realised the situation not to be in balance in “*terms of numbers*” (W12) and “*equality of the presentation*” (W06) of nationalities in the organisation as a whole. The unbalanced situation was also referred to prevent a multicultural nature of the organisation “*it's not politically, it's not multicultural at the moment, at the present it's very unbalanced*” (M02).

When observing the nationality situation and it can be seen through most of the interviews that there is an unbalanced situation. The clear majority nationalities are Irish (37 %) and then French (13 %). Another notion of not nationally based but area based unbalance is the general heavy weight of Northern European countries leaving the Southern countries without the same amount of possibilities to influence:

So I think we should encourage good mixture of north and south in the Foundation. I feel that it's not quite balanced. (W08, also W01.)

Generally although the situation was seen as unbalanced and it was realised that a different nationality structure of the work organisation would make a difference in the atmosphere, the Irish majority was not generally seen as a crucial negative factor in the atmosphere. This is because of a simple reason of location of the organisation. So in theoretical level the situation is seen as unbalanced and *“well obviously it’s something you have to try to change if you think that we are European Union’s organisation”* (M02). But on the other hand because of the practical reason, - the organisation is based in Ireland - it is more accepted and understandable. Here existed no great differences in opinions between natives and non-natives. (M02, W06, M06, W09, M02, W01, W08.)

Exploring reasons for unbalanced nationality situation was also seen unnecessary among some Irish informants: the situation was generally balanced and not an issue to be thought about – that is just the way it is (M04). A perspective based on pure coincidence does also exist::

It just happens and maybe to outsiders it looks if we all click together because we’re all Irish. It just happens that we all happen to work in the same area with the same boss and most of us happen to be Irish! (W02.)

Like it has been discussed there is a clear connection between communication and atmosphere. Both the members of the group and outsiders of the group do influence also on the atmosphere. This is why a mentioning the clear division between Irish and “the rest“ is essential to present. There were opinion of both sides: that there is nothing negative in relationships between Irish and the others and the group of Irish people was not thought to be exclusive in a negative way (W05, M01). On the other hand the clear separation and its influences can also be seen in a different light:

I think Irish people very much are amongst themselves. I don’t think they really socialise, they’re many really nice Irish people working here but they just seem to think in a way that it’s the foreigners and then there’s the Irish. (W03, also e.g. M02.)

This perspective is relative by its nature and can thought to characterise one possible approach. There was also a perspective of minimising the importance of

nationalities in general atmosphere and possible problems in it and focusing on other matters (M03, W03). In these cases the multicultural atmosphere has relatively non-problematic nature.

Also another possible approach towards the role of different nationalities includes the idea of non-problematical attitude but emphasises the general positive attitude towards matters concerning atmosphere or to see the situation as balanced (W06, W11, W10).

I mean when you have a group of people I think it's always a bit of a hick up here and there. But generally speaking I think people blend and mix quite well. (W06.)

I mean there are different ways of doing things. You do notice it around the place. For instance – French standing in the corridor and you could hear them from miles. Or different things that you notice, attitudes. But it's nice. I like that. (W10.)

3.2.2. Are Cultural Diversities Celebrated?

So what are the main characteristics of this multicultural work environment concerning cultural backgrounds? Have they been put on view, are they seen as something enriching in the atmosphere of the organisation? In the light of my research I can say this is generally not the atmosphere. According to my findings cultural diversities are not intentionally been put to label the whole organisation internally and this is well expressed in the following:

For me working with different nationalities is normal, it's ordinary, it's day to day. Makes no difference really. (M04.)

How could I put this? It's not a problem, it's not an advantage or any. It's just normal! (W12.)

This interesting transparency concerning cultural diversities seems to be a feature recognised by many people in the organisation (also W02, M04, W09, W04, W05, W07, W12). It was defined as something so normal and usual that it was even

irrelevant what nationality you represent in the organisation. To notice the differences it needed someone from outside of the organisation to come and remind:

I suppose if somebody came here from an Irish company and worked here for couple of months they would find the place very different. When you work here every day you forget the differences. It's only when an outsider comes to remind you...probably there are differences but you are just not aware of them. (W02, also M04.)

In this matter it is clear that generally there is no conscious effort done to emphasize cultural diversities. Nationality is something that is known to exist but there is no conscious effort made to make use of it or work with it. So it is also a matter that is been put aside and left to the background:

I don't think anyone is saying that you've been thinking about it all that much (W07).

There has even been a feeling of suppression of your own nationality. The general feeling was that individuals are put to belong in the same mass, to a situation where there is "*a tendency to create one big melting pot*" (W12, also W05). The context of this mass, this melting pot can work wise be identified as the work environment:

I'm taking myself as neutral. I don't identify myself with those people who come for, to the meeting because I'm one from the Foundation. I'm not supposed to show my identity to the people. I'm not representing my country, I represent the Foundation. So I have to forget my identity at that time (W08.)

But it must be noticed that different or even opposite images of the matter can and do exist. Here I refer to my own experience from for example the Open Day where all organizations and other directions interested in the work done by the organisation could come and visit the place (16.05.2001). The ideal symbolical level of European Union in general can be said to exist in the atmosphere of the Open Day emphasizing class, well functioning, high importance based on diversities co-operating together. Also I participated in another event where there were guests from outside the organization and including in the general introduction of the

organisation it was listed how many nationalities from which country are represented. So in theoretical level and expressed for the outside world of the organisation the cultural diversities can also be seen as something that creates a positive, modern and interesting image of the work environment.

But going back to the matter of general atmosphere of the organisation concerning cultural diversities it is easy to make an assumption that it does not encourage the employees to bring their cultural backgrounds to the view. One noticed exception can be found from a new custom of celebrating different national days in the canteen. This idea was introduced and put into practice year 2000 and it includes possibility to have lunch typical in the celebrating country and also the employees from that country can bring something extra for others to experience from their cultures: something more to eat or drink, music, books about the country etc. Generally it was seen as a very positive – and only – concrete way to emphasise your own background:

It's also a little bit of special day for who ever national day is been celebrated (W06).

I suppose these national days in the canteen have helped a bit to sort of define peoples' own nationalities, to show their nationalities (W12, also W09).

When putting these observations into a broader context they can be looked through different existing organisation types. Well functioning division has been made by Cox (see page 23-24) where he divides organisation into three possible categories based on relationships between majority and minority among employees. Based on this theory this case study organisation can be defined to be a plural organisation. The reason for this is first of all that in this organisation there is no clear discrimination and prejudice and there is an effort to make minorities as part of the organisation. Although minorities are also more active in informal level there is still no equal representation of them as total. Also there can be some conflicts between some (national) groups in the possible form of exclusive group formations or negative attitudes. All this can be said to be valid in this organisation.

The main reason for this organisation not to be so called multicultural organisation is that diversities seem not to be celebrated and possible problems of plural organisation have not been overcome. This type of organisation also includes a great amount of adaptation of norms and values from both majority and minority, there is no discrimination at all, distribution of positions is balanced and everyone strongly identify themselves with the organisation which can be seen in high level of activity concerning informal level. I agree with Cox in defining this third model as a great ideal for the future but very rare today and at least not valid in this case study organisation.

3.3. Factors Influencing Communication and Atmosphere

3.3.1. Seeking for Similarities

In the chapter 3.1 a presentation and discussion about different group formations in the case study organisation has already been done. This included both informal and formal communication but the emphasis was on the social communication because of its nature based on free will. The place and time for interaction was also studied, and I also presented data of the observed different groups by informants. Here I will gather this information into a larger context and ask what are the grounds for forming and maintaining groups.

It was presented through data that there are many different social groups inside the organisation. The complexity of influential factors was understood and many characteristics presented. Some of the groups were characterised to relate with the common work field of the members: the distinction was made by the defining it as the same working sections, grades and/or responsibility level. This was the most common ground but not the only one. Nationality and language groups were seen as a part of the whole picture of social interaction, like also age, the time been working in the organisation, similar interests and hobbies outside the work environment. All these are grounds of the surface level when researching group formation. Now I ask what are the deeper level reasons to interact socially with some people? Why intentionally choose the company of some people?

A major influencing matter that came through the data was that there are different levels of feeling comfortable. With certain people you do feel more comfortable than with others and this was put into words in many interviews as a crucial characteristic (M01, M02, M04, W01). “*You just feel comfortable to talk to people. To laugh, relax, there is no formality*“ (M02). The communication is easy and there is no need to act within a certain role. In this case a phenomenon called reduction of uncertainty has occurred by increasing of expected behavior of communication partners (see page 26 theory from Redmond). Related to this is Gudykunst’s concept of ‘strangers’ in his Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (see page 11). Communicating with people you define as not strangers anymore creates trust and comfortable feeling of communicative interaction influencing to the higher level of effective communication.

A common feature in every group characteristic expressed by all informants was the fact of similarity. We can conclude that feeling comfortable with some people supposes a feeling or knowledge of similarity with your self. These similarities can be seen as the characteristics of a group – that is the glue that makes a group of people a group. Whether it is the research managers, French, people interested in golf it does not really matter as long as there is something in common for all of the members.

This fundamental ground for people to be in contact and create networks has also been acknowledged by many theoreticians (e.g. Kuada & Gullestrup 1999, Rogers & Agarwalda-Rogers 1976, Redmond 2000). Depending on the form and function of a group the feature common for every member of the group can be work or socially related feature connected with common interest, attraction or choice (see pages 22, 24). This emphasis does not exclude the idea of difference being a problem causing factor but can be part of the attraction like Redmond has argued (see page 22) but in the light of collected material and according to Redmond there has to be enough similarity for establishing a functioning relationship, only the difference is not enough.

Generally personality was seen closely connected with having something in common. You need to have something in common in your own characters that

results a comfortable feeling. Here when talking about similar personalities it is a matter of

how you click. I think that would be the most important. That you are in the same wavelength I suppose, things you have in common. (W02)

Similarities of interests are intertwined with personality. This implies to the fact that similar kind of people seek for each other's company creating groups. Groups affect on the communication and atmosphere in both positive and negative way. For the members of the group belonging to a group makes them feel more comfortable and secured and the experienced similarity among members makes the group identity, the feeling of Us stronger.

Different groupings inside a work environment also create possible distances between the group and the people who do not belong to it, Them. Similarities create "easiness" among its members but on the contrary also the differences with outsiders can be intentionally or unintentionally emphasized. This can cause many barriers to the communication and atmosphere of the work environment:

Okay you feel that you are, or you belong to a group, to your unit but that creates... not communication, uncommunication. Because you say "okay I'm part of this and you are not" and that's all. So you belong to a group but that's it. You don't belong to you know bigger, the whole working environment. (M02.)

Also according to Frank and Brownell (see page 29) being part of a group inside of an organisation should not make the fact of being part of the bigger entity, the organisation, be neglected. This phenomenon derived from the structure of organisation can have a deteoring impact on the atmosphere and internal communication of the organisation.

3.3.2 Structure of Organisation

Here I will present issues concerning formal system of an organisation that was discussed in approximately half of the interviews. The amount of notions about the

matter derives from the form of question. I did not ask directly about the structure of the organisation but more broadly about the issues related to “how things work“ in the organisation and what were issues relevant at that time. Half of the interviewed did not mention at all or directly the issues related to management or structure of organisation as an influencing matter so I will focus on those who gave me answers concerning the matter. I will represent only perspectives that came through interviews although I do understand the various possible meanings that the concept organisational structure can include.

First of all when considering an organisational structure and the amount of staff, it was noticed that the small amount influenced the communication and atmosphere especially from the cultural point of view. It was expressed that there is a clear Irish feature – like it has already been concluded – and because the small amount of staff the non-natives have no possibility to establish their own nationality groups. (M01, M06). This has a direct influence to the role of nationalities in the atmosphere: *“Here it’s a different thing. It’s like, it’s part of the landscape that there are people from different (countries) but the landscape, the background is green“*. (M01.) This brings us back to the conclusion that cultural diversities cannot really be said to be a matter of celebration in an abstract level.

The structure of work responsibilities had changed much in the year 2000 (interviews done 2001). This was explained to be the case after the naming of new director. He did many changes in the organisation and one of them connected with the communication and atmosphere was the very centralised structure of the organisation meaning closing most of the formal communication channels related to the management (see Frank & Brownell 1989, 26). Like it has been argued (see page 25) structure of organisation does have an impact on the communication and not only vice versa. According to collected material this high level of centralisation can be seen as a significant factor in the increasing interaction based on hierarchy and closing some communication channels functioning in the organisation. (M02, M03, W03, W08.)

One of the main changes in this centralised model is to keep certain people very close to the management (M03). Concretely this was done by creating co-ordinators to every research team as a new layer between the director and the staff. A co-ordinator is a person *“who monitors the work of the team, tries to coordinate the work in projects and so on”*. (W08.) Although the change has been done orderly “by the book” in some cases it has had an increasing impact in creating bad atmosphere in a work group because some would not want to accept it (W08).

From the cultural point of view it is interesting to observe whether people think director’s nationality is an influencing feature in his management style. In this case stereotypical image of French way of managing does match very well and it does seem to matter in the eyes of some bystanders:

-- the French way of dealing with things. Just bang bang bang you do it that’s it. Previous director (English), he was open to negotiation and that was kind of a down fall somewhere because in negotiating so much that nothing really, everything was very slow to happen. – Now things are happening so quickly that it has left people with their mouths open and we can’t believe there’s no negotiation. It’s a difference, complete difference. It’s almost the opposite style of management. (W02, also M02.)

In this matter the complex nature of personality and nationality was also taken into consideration (W01). In other cases nationality as an influencing factor was not felt to be an issue at all and so not worth mentioning or its importance was assumed to be acknowledged by the interviewer (e.g. M03).

But although the relationship between personality and nationality is complex, occurred linguistic difference was clearly expressed without any hesitation about its nature. It must be noted that here I will present the issue of differences in more official language usage and not differences in internal communication in more broad sense. I do understand the intertwined relationship between the new management style and its affects in communication but that will be dealt in the next chapter for the sake of clarity.

Since the director came there has been a strong change in French language use. Some of the meetings are held in French nowadays and that has caused a reaction not so fruitful for the general atmosphere:

And then it's been told that "Okey now we're going to speak French!" Then we might as well walk out. – So there's that culture, that bit of culture that has come in now recently. (W03.)

Most probably also connected to the biggest minority role of French people working in the organisation a frequently mentioned general "French influence" in the atmosphere do seem to exist. My impression is that with many informants it has been understood to have become even stronger since the new director and this has also been connected with the amount of French people working in the organisation. But this impression seems not to be correct in the level of staff working there because there have been more French people even before the new director (W05).

Another change performed by the director in this work environment is a physical change of structure in the form of location of offices. The impact of this change is naturally individualistic when comparing the situation now and before but generally the majority of informants with whom the matter was discussed felt the change had not been positive. It had had a disabling impact on the atmosphere making the place more serious and quiet with less interaction with people (W01, M03, M05, W06). So it can be seen that the management change has had a great influence in different perspectives of the organizational structure, as hierarchical structure, staff structure and physical structure.

The role of a leader is crucial in the functioning of an organisation. This has been acknowledged by Darling (see page 25) who emphasizes leader's significance in understanding organisation as a whole entity including shared principles of it. In this case the leader has made a conscious effort to change the used way of understanding the organisation and ways of functioning in it by changing the hierarchical and physical structure of it. Like it was presented earlier in this chapter this new phase of transforming the structure of the organisation had been noticed with different reactions during the time material was collected. Still when basing on definition of an organisation being dynamic and constantly changing it must be

noticed that the present situation – main data was collected summer 2001 - hardly still includes a similar state of confusion and “missing its tracks“ anymore.

3.3.3 Functioning of Internal Communication

As it was expressed in the beginning of last chapter 3.3.2 these two chapters are closely intertwined and can't be completely separated from each other. Functioning of internal communication is a result of the change of the new level of hierarchical structure of the organisation. It must be noticed that this is a matter that came through from general discussions concerning “how things work around here“. This way it was easy to see its importance and it seemed essential to focus more on the matter because of its reciprocal relationship with the atmosphere and communication in broader context.

With a clear majority of answers it is generally easy to realize that the internal communication does not work as well as it could. The main problem seemed to be the lack of needed information and “-- *the internal communication has to be improved because you have people complaining that they don't get the relevant information they will need to perform better and this is something should be addressed*“ (M01). The communication that would be needed to get concerns information from outside your own unit or work area. There is a tendency to think that a general picture of the organisation as a whole is missing.

The level of functioning of internal communication is essentially connected with the atmosphere of the organisation like Alajärvi et.al (see page 25) have argued. This is the reason for employees to know about the current and future plans and changes of the organisation as a whole. According to Alajärvi et.al. fluent internal communication enables positive atmosphere of organisation. This creates stronger sense of group identity of the whole organisation. Also internal communication has better chances to success when the atmosphere is positive. It is easy to recognize that in this case study organisation internal communication does not function in a

expected way causing a negative implication to the whole atmosphere of the organisation as something that should be improved.

The lack of information has been realized in different areas. First of all there seems to be communicative passiveness inside the three research areas (M02, M03, W08). This can be seen as a deteriorating fact also work wise *“because we have different expertise here that we could all value. And I find that everybody is working in his own area and I find it very useless“* (M02). Also in more broad sense the communication between all different sections working inside the organisation should be addressed for instance between research and the information (W12, W08), research and the people responsible for PR (W03), publications stores and other departments (M06).

Communication between different sections was not the only issue seen as problematic in internal communication. Other factors connected with it was for example the confusion of some official procedures that should be followed (W04) or confusion of different regulations not informed to the employees (W12). Also more generally a need for defining and presenting the functioning of the organisation was felt needed especially for newcomers (W12).

There are some implications that this internal communication observed to be insufficient would be a conclusion from the high level of hierarchical structure of the organisation (M02):

I mean there should be more transparency to start with. And there should be a democratization of the communication process“ – “I don’t think the position you have in your organisation should be a terminant factor in order to get some information because you all need to get the basic information of the policies of the organisation, the trends and the highlights which are given. You feel that you are not getting the whole picture. (M01)

High level of hierarchy in the organisation implies of a vertical structure of organisation. This has been presented by Redmond (see page 27) and it includes the problem of information flow often to be slow and misinterpreted. According to the collected material it can be concluded that this does happen in some cases at least

when concerning the speed of information flow between sections. But interestingly enough Redmond defines never getting the needed information to be a problem especially in a horizontal organisation and this seems to be bigger area of possible conflict also in this organisation.

It must be said that this division does not function well in this case organisation because it can be seen that the structural change towards vertical structure has created exclusive communication closing some communication channels that have existed before - and this creates a problem of not getting some needed information. Naturally it should be remembered that this is not the case necessarily in all departments of the organisation but according to the collected material it is in some departments. There are also areas of work into what these kinds of problems do not reach. This can be because of the nature of work where knowing what is happening in different areas is part of the job description (W10) or the nature of the work is so straightforward – “rules and regulations“ (W06) - that there cannot be seen any improvements concerning internal communication.

Some departments and people are seen as not cooperative (W11) and they seem to have set their own rules ignoring other’s professional wishes (W05). Also related to the matter is a fact of decreasing the amount of meetings in the research field (M03). This is because of the creation of coordinators, a new layer between director and the research staff. Because of this restructuring there is a confusion of how the information should continue its way to all the staff from this smaller “core group“ working with the management (W07). Restructuring leads to confusion of responsibilities also in a more broad sense (W11, W12).

Still it is needed to go back to the issue of hierarchy as an influential factor. According to the data got from the interviews information does not always get through especially because of this restricting nature of territories (W09). This can be linked with Redmond’s (see page 27) notion of functional and cross-functional teams. This organisation seems to be based on functional teams meaning teams of specific expertise areas and not based on diverse areas of expertise like in cross-functional teams. Like it has been discussed earlier in the chapter 3.1 there does

seem to exist a strong emphasis of professional territorial groups and so cross-functional cooperation does not have a significant role in the organisation.

3.3.4 Language

Language is something that has affect on group formation and maintaining, misunderstandings in communication and a sense of national identity. First of these I have already dealt in chapter 3.1.3 and the other two will be part of chapter four. Here my focus is on language usage and its possible levels and divisions in a multicultural work environment.

The common language for everyone in this organisation is English and therefore the discussion about language here is especially around that language. It is the language of the country where the organisation is based in and it is the main working language as well.

So it's a must, you have to speak English, something that goes with the job here. So, it's not only a must or need but also a tool, a communication tool.

(M01)

When dealing the issue of language, the structure of people using languages in this organisation can be divided into two groups: native speakers and non-native speakers. Naturally because English is the working language everyone uses that – no one has major problem with that because it is understood to go together with the work. General rule is that the native speakers do not speak their mother tongue in rare occasions when they make a conscious effort to try to speak their foreign communication partner's language (W10, W01, M06). It must be noted that this includes communication inside the organisation and not for example phone calls to abroad.

Another rule that came out from the collected material about the non-natives language usage was that usually they would use English most of the working time but always their own mother tongue when communicating with their own

nationalities (M01, M02, W03, W05, W04, W06, W08, W11). This was seen as something obvious and in many cases even the thought of using some else language in that kind of situation seemed to be peculiar.

This is interesting in the light of linguistic adaptation. Non-natives did not feel speaking English at general level problematic and all of their level of language skills was very high. This could imply to the high level of linguistic adaptation. On the other hand the level of adaptation was not that high that it would have replaced the mother tongue. There was still a notion of feeling more comfortable to speak your own language because of its easiness - and this was also the case with natives:

It makes life easier because you know you're understood. You don't have to make the effort in trying to communicate what you have to say. (W06, also W01.)

In one-nationality groups communication and use of language is easy and there is no need for negotiation of meanings. This can be connected to Cushner and Brislin's notion of secret nature of culture (see page 16). In one-nationality groups culture fills automatically the blanks meaning the not expressed but assumed to be understood words or meanings of the current interaction situation. This does not function in intercultural communication when there is no common knowledge shared by all participants.

So in one sense communicating with a language not your mother tongue can be seen as an obstacle. This was also realized by some non-native informants - it included feeling frustrated when not able to express your feelings as clearly and effectively as when using your native language (M01, M02) or being constantly conscious of the language usage: *"You have to continuously be thinking of the way you are going to say things as well"* (M01). The situation was also seen more balanced when communicating with other non-natives. When communicating with native speakers the difference of the language skills level occurs and can cause a problem (W05).

Language usage among non-native speakers can also be divided into informal and formal language when considering how important obstacle it can be. It was mentioned that work wise language was felt less to be an obstacle (W06, W03, W05, W08). The reason for this was defined to be the similar way to speak about professional matters with the same work related vocabulary. Using language in a social context is different because that is not so restricted but includes a wider scale of language use. Then the logic behind the language comes more visible and influencing (W05). Therefore there are more possibilities for unsuccessful communication and language as an obstacle can be realized.

This notion of logic behind language is a very interesting issue and essential to handle to get a deeper understanding of language usage and structure. The idea of it is based on the linguistic relativity theory by Sapir and Whorf (see pages 18): according to it language is not only a tool to express but also to create and define itself the experiences of culture, the reality. Like it has already been concluded your culture comes through always when communicating. So the logic behind the language does emphasize the understanding of what is said through language depending on how it has been said. The core idea of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that there are different ways to use language because of variety of cultures, and this can be seen in a following example concerning the concept of politeness (M02, W03).

But I speak very bluntly to the point and that's not, the French don't do that. They go around and around and around, you kind of feel like "tell me what you want me to do!" That they actually, their way of telling is so round about so that you need to get used to the way, the logic behind it. – You have to be kind of wrapping it more into politeness, approaching it in a round about way. So it is in a away, it's different English we're speaking sometimes –. (W03.)

This example case shows very well how essential it is to get behind the surface level of language learning. Also understanding that especially in language usage and communication in social context the possibility of a conflict or misunderstanding is always there although how high the level of general language skills based on grammar and vocabulary, are.

Essential this is especially because in a multicultural work environment among the natives speakers there is a possibility to make a false assumption of similar language skills in total because of the high level of grammatical and vocabulary skills (W03). This assumption is very easy and so also understandable to make and it can be seen in some attitudes of native-speakers that they assume the language level to be same with theirs:

But not necessarily to be a native English speaker because there are many examples here, particularly people from Southern Europe, their English is probably better than mine in many cases! (M05.)

I mean it's English, you don't think about it. The thing about it is that anybody who comes to work here, their English is so good that you really tend to forget that they are another nationality which isn't fair. (W09.)

Illusion of similarity on cultural level have been presented by Gullestrup (1992) (see page 21). It occurs when compared two different cultures they seem similar with each other and deeper structures of them are not been taken into consideration. This can be applied here into a communicative level as well: when linguistic skills are fluent also among non-natives and major mistakes are not done, there seems to be illusion of similar language level also on a more broad sense including the meaning of words, the style of communicating etc. This can be seen to be the reason for not realizing the significance of the logic behind language that has already been discussed.

It should be remembered that defining language as something that does not have an important impact in communication (also M04) or not seeing the importance of the deeper level of language is not only native speakers attitude. Also non-native speakers can see it as non-problematic part of their communication (W04, W11). One influencing factor to this is the experience and time spent in a multilingual or English -speaking work environments (W12, W08) - *"You just learn how to use it and how to adapt to the environment"* (W08).

While the approach of language being an obstacle is relatively typical among non-native English speakers, native speakers do usually realize their own situation as an

advantage in general (W10, W02) or especially work wise. This can be seen in a work group with same nationalities - *“we just sit and talk. It doesn't matter what you say, everybody understands it“*. (W01.) Also when considering some certain work responsibilities being native speaker is a clear advantage, for example in dealing with external directions (W07, M06).

Advantageous position can also be seen in the case when language is understood as a communicative tool: it is easier to make a point across for example in meetings when you are a native speaker (M03). This way Redmond's (see page 19) assumption of language not but culture having power can be partly disproved. He is correct concerning the illusion of language having power on the level of meanings of culture expressed in language. But this is not enough because the level of purely linguistic language skills is essential in communication as well and can have emphasized role especially in intercultural communication.

3.3.5 Social activities

By social activities I understand activities that are not work related and happen outside the working hours. When making friends with an individual and/or having developed groups of friends inside the work environment during the working hours it is most usual to share part of your free time together as well, although exceptions do exist. Like it has been concluded there are different socially based groups developed in the organisation that tend to get together also outside the office. The focus of this chapter is not these groupings and their activities but factors influencing atmosphere on a broader context concerning common social activities for everyone. Through the light of the collected material it was easy to recognize some of them that will be presented in the following.

The most common feature of organized social activities was recognized to be the former social committee of the organisation. It must be noticed that its importance has naturally not been the same for everyone. Participating in these activities may not be seen as an important part of the interviewed person's own social life and this

can be a possible reason for not mentioning it during the interview (W11, W12, M01, W02, W03, M04, W04, W06, W07, W09). According to the former director of the social committee board only one of third (30-35 persons) of the staff were usually interested in participating in social activities by the social committee (M03).

Still when mentioned, the general attitude towards not having the social committee at the moment is that it really is unfortunate.

That's a pity yeah. Trying to convince people but to start it up again but it doesn't seem to happen. Those in we used to do racing or we used to go to theater, bowling or something like that. You would laugh, have fun. (W10.)

Its importance also for the foreigners who have just started working in the organisation was realized to be a way to get to know local people and something about Irish culture (W01). Some of the activities that had been done were organizing a Christmas party, different sport activities like bowling, carting, walking in the mountains, going to the theater and having barbecues (M02, W01, M03).

The crucial point is that the functioning of the committee ended in the end of 2000 because:

there was nobody prepared to take on the social committee which is again a reflection on the cultural change that has taken place in the Foundation and nobody is ready to do it. But yes, up until last Christmas we had a fairly active social life, the staff of the Foundation, very very active. Every month we were doing something you know. -- But that's all stopped. (M03.)

This has also been noticed to be a factor in decreasing communication between staff during the work time (M03). Nowadays the common open for everyone kind of activities is depending quite a lot on individual email messages telling about possible activities or events (W08).

Shared social activities but only more based on spontaneity were seen to be influenced by the geographical location of the organisation. There is not possibility for more spontaneous social activity *"just because geographically the Foundation is like middle of nowhere!"* (M05). There are no places comfortably near by to just

decide to do something after work. This can be related into the long distance to home that was also seen as an obstacle. (M05, W05, M06, M03).

All these factors put together imply that among some employees more social interaction would be seen as a good change, for themselves naturally and for the atmosphere of the organisation. Although the situation does not seem to be the worst possible, there is a room for an improvement.

It's unfortunate for that there's not more social... because we are so isolated geographically. – to something to eat or to go for a drink after work or. Everybody just go home. I find it quite cold place, in that way that you just come in, you work for a while, that's it. There's no contact to anybody outside. (W01)

4. National Identity

To be able to research the concept national identity the question of main ingredients of national culture must first be resolved. That I see as an enabling factor in developing sense of national identity. On a more focused level I will present the significance of national identity especially in the context of work environment. Connected to communication and also influencing in atmosphere I will research what is the role of nationality in intercultural communication and misunderstandings in it. Also it will be found out how relevant national stereotypes are in forming communication patterns and how true are they understood to be.

4.1. Concept of National Culture

To be able to discuss the issue of national identity the concept of national culture has to be clear. This is because the contents of national culture gives the tools for understanding and adapting national identity by the members of the culture. Here I will present perspectives of eight informants from whom I got answers from by email spring 2002. It should be addressed that clear majority (six out of eight) of the informants here are Irish. But still some general definitions can be listed of what is considered to be included in national culture.

An essential part of national culture is the history of the country - and this can be closely intertwined also with culture and cultural heritage in general (W10, M04, W11, W02, W09, M03). This includes understanding the importance of history as a determinant factor also today.

Ireland to me means having a loyalty to its history (but not the continuation of same as seen by the IRA) (W09).

Religion has been a major part of history and also that is been acknowledged as another building block and as a structuring force of the national culture (M01, W10, M06, M04) especially.

Interestingly enough common characteristics of people of certain nationality are defined as well. National characteristic can be connected for example with friendliness (W10, W02), individualism (M04), hard-working (W10), non-rationalistic (M01) or introvert behaviour (M03). Strong nationalistic attitude (M04, W02) and also even a possessive attitude towards own cultural heritage (W11) are defined as characteristic as well. When talking about a general approach to life it can be defined for example as energetic, enjoying and relaxed (W09, W10) or intense and passionate (M01).

These characteristics are derived from various influential factors like history that has already been mentioned or for example geographical location (M03). On the other hand the circular motion can be understood to continue in the behaviour of people:

Spanish people are said to be very "meridional" in the sense of taking life in a rather passionate way: living outdoors, thanks to a fairly warm climate, by socialising and inter-acting with others. This would include our way of expressing ideas and feelings in, a very often, expressive way (we normally use hands and body language) to reinforce the messages we send across. This is, I believe, part of the explanation for people talking loudly. (M01)

Different phenomena deriving from characteristics of national culture are most importantly part of every-day life.

As a child I learnt Irish dancing from an early age went to Feises (competitions), watched my brother play Gaelic games, learned to play Irish tunes on the tin whistle“ (W10).

When taking phenomena of Irish national culture as an example it most frequently includes traditional Irish music and dance (W10, M06, W02, M03, W09), sports both traditional (Gaelic football and hurling) and modern (e.g. football) (W10, M04, M06) and Irish language (M04, M06, W02, M03).

According to Stuart Hall (see page 34) national cultures constitute of cultural institutions, systems and representations. In them meanings of the nation are created and because of those meanings people can identify themselves with the nation. Van Gennep (see page 34) on the other hand defines national culture

constituting from national symbols, customs, traditions, rituals, writing, language, territory and name of nationality. Some of these have been presented also in the collected material and it is clear that there is a pattern to what national culture is believed to include. From all this it can be seen that the basis for these definitions of national cultures is strongly on the history and heritage of the nation. Institutions, customs, characteristics of different nationalities, language etc. are all developed in the past influencing today.

Concerning collected material it can be concluded that there is also a feature in national culture that is also based on the development of the history and heritage but emphasises more the situation of today. National culture is also about the modern country and culture of present time and what kind of role it has outside the boundaries of the nation. Still when focusing on Ireland its economical successfulness and progressivism (W09, W10, M04) has been a great changing factor of national culture and naturally it has also had an impact in the sense of national identity. Also “cosmopolitanism“ of especially the capital area (W10), good education (W09) and the more open atmosphere towards different influences from outside national boundaries (M04) have been acknowledged. So in the end it can be realized how national culture derives from, functions and affects in different levels. All this put together creates the sense of national identity.

4.2. Significance of National Identity

Here I will get into the matter of national identity and it's significance. The given data functions at relatively general level of national identity but that I do not see as an inferior matter. It is a broad concept that also reaches and can be seen as a part of the special frame of this study, work environment.

First of all the nature of national identity should be stated. Grounding on definitions of identities by Liebkind (1996) (see page 32) it can be understood to be both individual (difference making in a multinational group) and social identity (common feature for all representing same nationality). Usually it is also given identity got

already in birth but also gained identity based on optional choice. What ever the category of national identity is it should be remembered that in the light of collected data it is an “imagined community“ (see Anderson page 34) based on construction of emotional state through ingredients of national culture (see previous chapter).

The significance of national identity can be divided into a few categories based on information from the collected material. The two characters of the first category are the following: a strong importance of national identity by non-natives. It is seen as something that is part of you and something that should not or could not be forgotten because of its fundamental nature (M02, M03, M01) - a clear nationalistic perspective was easy to recognize from the interviews. Especially important in the work environment national identity was understood to be when the nationality you represent is a minority in the organisation or in the European Union as a whole (M02, W03).

Although living in a country not your own there was no threat felt that national identity would be lost or attacked by the Irish culture (W08). The majority of non-natives shared the same strong feeling about the significance of their nationalities. The nature of this significance was generally seen as unconditional and influencing at daily level. One informant expressed it greatly:

So the cultural background is like a little back bag that you carry on with you and that can be sometimes useful in a positive way (M01).

Second category contains a clear majority of native citizens plus some non-natives who do not see national identity in such important manner than it is seen in the first category. It is seen more as something transparent, that is taken for granted, it's easy, its importance has never been especially analyzed and / or it's something that does not make a difference (W07, W04, W09, W10, M04, M05, W01, W11). There difference between natives and non-natives has also been recognized concerning this matter:

It's not important to me that I would make my mark that I'm an Irish person in this organisation. I don't have an Irish flag outside my door, I don't have signs up saying that this is an Irish office and Irish person. – I think it's probably

more important here for non-Irish person who comes here to work in the Foundation to say "I'm not Irish!" but that's a good thing. (M05.)

I find more French definitely because, when you live in your own country you don't have to prove anything to yourself. You don't have to, you don't feel you have cultural identity but when you live abroad it becomes much more important to you. (W05, also W12, W03.)

It must be noted that the perspective of a native does not exclude the positive importance of national identity, it is just not as pronounced that it probably would be in another country. When referring to the concept of back bag it can be seen as a lighter version when compared to the first category. Its importance can also be a part of one specific area of life like work in a multicultural environment. There it can be realized to be important work wise when noticing the easiness of the work when being "local" or being able to use mother tongue (M06, M03, W10, W11).

The impact of multicultural work environment to the sense of national identity seems to be distinct among majority of informants. The time worked in an environment like that can be said to open your eyes – you broadens your perspectives to able the learning and better understanding of other nationalities (M05, W12, M04, W02, M06, M01). This can happen also through the work that you do: *"I know what reality is in many countries and this gives me the impression that my country is not the center of the world –"* (W08). It can also give a different appreciation of your own culture (M01, W07).

There are exceptions to the rule. Concerning the sense of national identity there is an appeared phenomenon that I have named as interspace. By this I mean a state including a notion of having a distance both with your own national culture and / or the culture you are living in creating mixed feelings in different situations (W11, M01, W01, M03). This is not necessarily the case for only non-natives of present time:

I think you are never the same once you leave and come back. You might be the same but you're different. You never see things quite the same as people who have been here all the time. (W01.)

Interspace can be said to be about confusion of roles. According to Georg Elwert (see page 32) a basic character of a human society is that a person has many identities that can be switched from one to another. From the collected material it can be concluded that this mastering of different identities called polytaxis does not function at least without problems. There can be confusions of roles and there can be a sense of distance to them. Hautaniemi's concept of hybridity (see pages 22) on the other hand includes the idea of possibility to lose original culture (also Redmond, same pages) when there has been too many influences and cultural changes. Also this theory is not valid when national identity was observed through the data collected from the case study organisation.

Interspace is a state that generally does not seem to decrease the sense of national identity. National identity seems to be a strong feature in self-identification even though the multicultural environment a person is in would be an ideal environment for decreasing its significance especially among non-natives who are not on their "own ground". Simple rule can be expressed as following:

-- I learn from other peoples experiences. But this doesn't mean that I totally change my identity, I just keep it as it is. (W08.)

4.3. Emphasizing it or accommodating to others?

Are there any ways the significance of national identity can be seen in a working environment? It has been noticed that it is something that exists and has been more or less acknowledged. Is emphasizing your national identity felt needed and if yes are what are the tools for this? Here my focus will be in communication but I will also discuss the matter of physical objects. Or is national identity something that is not needed to emphasize in any way but especially in communication it can be put aside not to influence communication in a multicultural context? Does the sensitivity reach accommodation to others' communication patterns and acknowledging their cultural backgrounds?

According to all the interviews done it can be said that generally emphasizing national identity is not seen as an essential feature of communication and majority of interviewed did not find any ways to do that. It comes through unintentionally for example in the language usage (W03, W05, M01). Linguistically it can be emphasized sometimes by intentionally discussing about the linguistic differences (W04, W03) or by using own language in a playful manner (here Irish M03). Also when concerning the topics of discussions there can be an emphasis in expressed experiences from own national country (W08) and as a native there can be a tendency of telling that *“this is the way we do things around here“* (M05, also W07). Majority of non-natives do have some decoration, usually pictures, in their offices but that has not generally seen as important form of expression of your nationality.

Gudykunst has defined speech divergence (see page 22) as emphasizing difference in speech patterns coming through in communication between different languages. When observing this concept through the collected data it could be developed further to concern communication divergence meaning emphasizing the difference in communication on a broader level. This would include the notion of culture behind the language expressed in forms of telling for example about different customs and experiences from own country or language differences that occur in languages (e.g. neutral form of s/he in Finnish, W03) like in this material.

Living and working in a culture not your own can be defined as having a strategy of managing successfully in a foreign context (M01). This strategy has an essential impact on your. Multicultural (Oksaar’s definition see page 23) and communicatively competent (Saville-Troike’s definition see page 23) person is recognized from this ability of cultural sensitivity and accommodating him/herself to the specific context and switch it to another when needed. In many cases this kind of sensitivity and ability to accommodate was easy to recognize.

-- you behave in a different way and you communicate in a different way sometimes but the fact that I am Spanish is who I am. (M01, also W03, W06.)

So it seems clear that accommodation does exist and it is widely used as a communicative strategy in a multicultural work environment. Again Gudykunst’s

concept of speech convergence can be modified into communication convergence emphasizing the same accommodative communication. It can be seen how it functions on a surface level. But it does not seem to cause a conflict with or decrease the significance of national identity (M02).

When considering cultural background again at symbolical level as a back bag

it is as heavy or light as you want sometimes. So you carry your background in the back bag. But you have to make it lighter, not very heavy to carry with you. (M01.)

This can be understood in a way that when having a not too heavy back bag to carry it means the ideal situation of not losing identity but taking into consideration your communication partners in a way that it creates good communication (M02). In this case it is clear that Redmond's (see page 22) argumentation of possibility of losing sense of identity when being too accommodative in communication does not exist here.

Putting national background and identity to the background in a communication context can be seen as a way to overcome possible difficulties that occur in communication (M01). Generally the ability "*to put yourself on the other person's shoes*" (M01) – is been seen important in communication. This includes a conscious effort concerning especially communicative interaction situations of being verbally clear and make sure the other one has linguistically understood the expressions and meanings of words (W01, M04, W05, W12, W08, W09, W07, W04, M06, M01). Saville-Troike (see page 23) has defined code-switching as accommodating the used language into communication partners but because of the data collected here it can be broaden into code-switching including also observed linguistic style.

Accommodation functions also on another level. Communication can be seen as restricted subject wise (W10) – for example with Irish "*you don't bring abortion on the table, or sex*" (W11). The subject is connected with norms and values that can differ by cultures and this deeper level taken for granted within your own nationals has to be taken into consideration in a multicultural context (W07). - "*I should try to remember that my way is not the right way - -*" (W09). This can easily be linked with

Saville-Troike's definition of style-shifting (see page 23) that concerns also cultural and social context of the speech act.

It must be emphasized that the importance of accommodation with different nationalities is especially high in the following context: when being in interaction with people unknown to you (W03, W10) meaning that you do not know the person well enough to feel completely comfortable or you first enter into a multicultural environment in general (M02). In time you will get to know the people and the amount of needed negotiation decreases and through experience in a multicultural work environment in general you learn different patterns:

Over time you build up this knowledge how you can talk with people from different cultures and understand their culture and know what you can and cannot say or know how you can or cannot react to that person. I don't think it's something you can read in a book, you have to work in that environment and learn it. (M05.)

Another distinction made divides accommodation in informal and formal communication. Workwise accommodation is not seen as important as in social communication because of the restricted nature of subjects dealt and vocabulary used there is no much space for conflicts (W06, W09). This same division with its characteristics has been done also in the more specific discussion about language usage and the possible conflicts .

Accommodation may have a pretty picture of itself in this work environment but there are also voices that break the harmony and should be noticed. It can be seen that the constant need to accommodate and negotiate slows the speed of dealing things down in communication (W05). Also when considering the division natives and non-natives there had been a notion of natives not always accommodating in the concrete level because of the assumption of similarity in the level of language skills (see also chapter 3.3.3).

4.4 Role of National Stereotypes

The focus of this chapter is to discuss about the nature and present examples given of national stereotypes in the interviews. It must be noted that I have not asked directly to give examples of these stereotypes but they have selectively been told as examples connected with other questions. I emphasize that the examples do not show my own opinion in any way. I also will present the most frequently expressed characteristics. I find important to tell about these stereotypes so that they can give a certain – not complete but sufficient – picture of different nationality images and their significance in this specific context.

Accommodation in communication situations is based on assumption on differences. Especially among people from different nationalities this assumption has created a concept that can be called national stereotype.

People with different opinions and ideas, different attitudes towards not only working issues but life... As we know there are always stereotypes and sometimes it is a small part of truth in that in a way we interact, how we speak with other people. We are all, every country would be different. (M01.)

Similar attitude towards national stereotypes comes through clearly most of the interviews: stereotypes do exist because differences can be seen in different cultures. Like Redmond (see page 29) and Liebkind (see page 33) have defined stereotypes are not necessarily negative but as natural needed categories that help to organize our lives and decrease uncertainty and this attitude can also be seen generally in the interviews. Concerning especially communication national stereotype can also be seen as a positive factor when communicating with someone unknown: it makes to understand the broader context of possible differences and decreases uncertainty felt in the situation (M05).

But quite often it is emphasized that it is not an absolute rule and that there are exceptions (e.g. W12, W07, M05, W11, M04) as well but still they can be seen from time to time in a multicultural work environment causing a following possible reaction: *“It’s somewhere in my mind I’d say “Oh gosh, that’s typical!”.” (W09).* Like

the intertwined relationship of nationality and personality has earlier been discussed, also in this matter it must be taken into account (W02, M05, W09, W03, W07).

Usually stereotypes are related to something that people from other nationalities do differently. First of all there is a general tendency to see European countries and cultures divided into two: Southern and Northern Europe (W08). The Southern European way of communicating is more intensive including a lot of gestures, short distance with and touching the communication partners (M01, M02). Also it had been noticed that they have a tendency to interrupt the other speaker more than in Northern Europe where interaction is clearly seen to be slower and in Britain and Ireland between these two (W04). This implies to the different levels of turn taking in interaction.

Subject wise Southern Europeans are seen as more open to negotiations: *“there’s the official way and then there’s the used way“* (W03). Northern Europeans are said to be closed and not talking about them selves easily creating a distance and so communication can be seen as more direct in Southern Europe (M02), but on the other hand some Southern Europeans have been told also to have not straight forward but round about way of talking (W03). Also work wise the time concept has been noticed to be different: Northern Europeans come work earlier, have shorter lunch breaks and leave work earlier than Southern Europeans (W04).

One specific example nationality that got attention was the Germans. They were seen as people who go straight to the point they are efficient and punctual (W09, W04, W03, M04). When comparing Irish and Germans Irish were seen as more relaxed (W01), and also relatively laid back also without a comparison (M03). Another characteristic of Irish culture and especially way of communicating by non-natives was that it is difficult to know what they think (W03): *“But Irish people tend to talk a lot and in the end sometimes you don’t know what they told you“* (W12). This has also been recognized by some Irish people:

An example is that people think that we are quite indirect and we don’t say things out directly and I wouldn’t had thought of that. Because what they think is direct I think is polite. (W07, also W02.)

The way to understand stereotypical images is completely individual and there are some exceptions to the majority. There can be an emphasis of similarities between people instead of differences. In this perspective national differences and so national stereotypes are not seen as an essential feature of people:

People are not that much different anywhere. Occasionally even here you will see the sort of national stereotype coming out but on the whole people are not much different. They may have a different language, culture, maybe different music. Their background is somehow different but individually people are not that much different. (M03.)

– something that I've found all these years working in European system that all nationalities are the same. You can see an Italian, you can see that same in an Irish man. (M06.)

4.5 Nationality and Misunderstandings in Intercultural Communication

In this chapter the focus will be in the role of diverse national backgrounds in communicative misunderstandings. It will be shown what is generally their importance, how they exist at two levels and how to deal with them.

“Because sometimes looking at peoples' faces you could very easily like say that is bad, like I'm not sure if she or he understood something I said. Sometimes I think it's kind of intuitive feeling that when you happen to... someone I think you can easily sometimes see when some person is misunderstanding, maybe taking something in a different way. Sometimes you easily identify why is that happening“. (M01.)

Misunderstandings in intercultural communication do happen. In the light of collected data it is possible to create two main categories based on the assumed reason: linguistic and logical. By logical misunderstandings I comprehend a misunderstanding grounded on the logic behind the language - the concept has already been presented in the chapter 3.3.4 - meaning the ways to express the language based on culture and the meaning of words. Linguistic misunderstanding

on the other hand is based on different levels of linguistic (grammar, vocabulary etc.) skills. These two categories are compatible and can be included in Francesco and Gold's (see page 20) definition of language usage as a difference in communication. Other definitions of differences in verbal style and non-verbal communication are accurate as well and will be dealt also here as much as they were discussed in the interviews.

It is interesting to see that misunderstandings are most commonly connected with language, either the surface level linguistic or the inner level logical. Linguistic misunderstandings can be caused by generally not understanding because of different level of language skills (M02, W07), more specifically not understanding a vocabulary or terminology from a certain area (M03, M05, W02) or metaphors, jokes and other local expressions (W08, M04, W04, W10).

The logical level of misunderstandings in language usage can be seen as more influential in causing misunderstandings than the purely linguistic level. Even though everyone is using the same language English *"they all understand different things"* (W01, also W07). Similar definitions related with reasons for misunderstandings to happen are a different aspect of life (M05) and the whole way of thinking (W03). This causes the different expressed way of communicating (M02, M03) and this includes for instance differences in the level of directness in speech (W08) or the level of using gestures and the level of distance with communication partners (M01, M02) possibly causing misunderstandings.

A very good example of logical level of misunderstandings is the following misunderstanding situation caused by different meanings of certain words in a specific context. In an interview situation are a foreign woman and the interviewers.

And I had to ask her, my last question was "Why do you think we should hire you?" to give her a chance to express herself. And she said "I don't understand". And I said "Well how would you sell yourself to us?". "I would never sell myself" - I think she found I was getting into prostitution or something! (W09.)

It must be remembered that about half of the informants did not see misunderstandings based on diverse nationalities as a relevant problematic factor in communication although they do exist (W02, M04, M03, W10, W04, W05, W06). Other possible perspectives are that misunderstandings are noticed to happen, at least more, to others (W02, W12) or that the connection with nationality is unclear (W12, W11, M06) or not relevant (W04).

General attitude appears to be that diverse nationalities in intercultural communication is not a major obstacle. This can be considered through Clyne's categories of outcomes of communication acts (see page 18). Most of the communication can be said to be communication that is (1) successful already from the beginning of the interaction situation.

Also there is communication that is unsuccessful but solved. Clyne has divided two categories for this and basing my perspective on the collected material it can be said that both of them do occur. (1.) Potential unsuccessful communication emphasizes negotiation of meanings as a key for solving the situation and this functions well especially in a sensitive environment like multicultural work environment. Like it was observed in the chapter 4.3 accommodation, sensitivity and flexibility is needed in an environment like this and so also potentiality of communication breakdown has to be taken into account. On the other hand in (2.) resolved unsuccessful communication the emphasis is on breakdown that has occurred and then solved. Possibly because of the mix of nationalities (W05) the occurred misunderstandings are usually well accepted and the clear majority of interviewed agrees on solving the misunderstanding by a simple correction making, negotiation or re-explaining. Categories four and five including unsuccessful communication that cannot or will not be solved plays a minor role in communication in this organisation.

5. European Identity

In the previous chapter the significance of national identity specifically in an multicultural European Union institution was researched at two levels: identity and communication. Now it is time to move into a broader context and take the concept European identity into account. Here I will present what appears to be its significance generally speaking among employees of European Union, what has been the impact of the work environment in creating a sense of Europeanness and also I will come up with conclusions of what seems to be the relationship between all this and national identity.

It must be noted that the data I will present in this chapter are from eight informants from the total of eighteen from whom I got answers by email. This I do not see as a threatening factor concerning the validity of the presentation because of the high similarity of the answers I have got and I can assume there would not be any striking differences among the rest of the answers. Also in the chapter 5.2 there will be included some material from the first set of interviews from people who mentioned the also the European dimension in the discussion of the atmosphere of the work environment.

5.1 Significance of Being European

Being European is a concept that is meaningful today. It is part of the identity discussion of present time. The way to understand being European and its significance varies depending on individuals and their perspectives. Here I will present the most common perspectives concerning the significant factors of being European that I found from the collected data done by email.

Europe can be seen as a geographical area with a history. This emphasis of the past is one of the grounding factors when creating the significance of Europe. It can be understood that the long common history and inheritance of Europe has created a concept of Europe as a whole entity establishing its significance (M03). Idea of

Europe is based on higher level of abstraction than national identity argues Delanty (see page 37) and correctly it can be thought that the actual phases in European history (including e.g. colonialism) have created European common “ideologies“ during these different phases: Christendom, imperialism, fascism etc.

But the history of Europe has also created variety and differences inside of it - and this can be seen as distinguishing own nation from others and not personally feeling European identity as such (M04). Like Goddard, Llobera and Shore (see page 38) argue the concept of Europe is not a neutral concept but includes many diversities that can influence in the lower level of identifying yourself with it.

But this development of diversities inside Europe throughout the history is still generally been understood as a tool that can create greater understanding, tolerance and acknowledging the differences as a richness (M06, M03). This can make being European and the sense of European identity important on a personal and idealistic level. At the moment through an example it can be seen that in the world politics the process from cultural intolerance to tolerance is still going on:

This, in particular, applies to intolerance in Ireland and the lack of understanding and acceptance of two distinct cultural differences which has caused conflict over many centuries. I think that within a more integrated Europe these differences in Ireland would become insignificant and unimportant. (M03.)

The development of Europe during the last decades has been towards greater unity than ever before influencing lives of people (see Mikkeli page 37) and it can be added that the development has happened on a really concrete level. This can also be seen through the collected data here. The significance of being European, being part of European Union is usually connected to the concrete benefits gained from it either nation-wide or personally. To your own nation it can be beneficial in a form of equalising laws (W10) and entitlements for instance in terms of discrimination (W11), common market and currency (M04) and ensuring peace and prosperity (M06).

On a more personal level “European status“ gives the opportunity to easily travel, work and live in other countries (W11, W10). This can be understood as a concrete developing factor in creating the sense of European identity through seeing and experiencing different ways of living and behaving. This appears to include the idea of seeing yourself and your nation as a part of a larger context, Europe (W10, W09, W02, M01). When seeing Europeanness as something that creates a larger context with what you can identify yourself, from the perspective of this research the most important significant factor of creating European identity has been discovered. This brings us also to an essential result of the relationship between national and European identities but before that it is needed to have a more focused look on the impact of European multicultural work environment on European identity.

5.2 Connection with the Work Environment

When discussing about the concept of European identity especially in one of the European Union bodies, the perspective of diverse national backgrounds and their significance has to be taken into account as well. The focus of national diversities especially in the atmosphere of the work environment has been discussed in the chapter 3.2. There it was concluded that there is not conscious effort put to emphasize different nationalities except celebrating different national days during the lunch break. Generally nationalities were something transparent and not essential part of the atmosphere. But still like it was seen in the chapter 4 the significance of national identity has not decreased because of the “melting pot“ of different nationalities in a multicultural work environment. In accommodating communication when putting your national communication patterns to the background was referred as having a strategy - you are still always carrying your cultural back bag. Where does this leave European identity or Europeanness?

Without exceptions it appears that working in a multicultural context has some kind of impact. It is very interesting to see that most frequently the sense of Europeanness has been connected with different nationalities - in the idea of Europeanness the emphasis seems to be more in national differences than national

similarities (W09, M04, W10, W11). Working in an European Union body seems to develop a new kind of awareness of different countries and cultures and enables to achieve *“a better understanding of how the various nationalities think and work”* (M04, also M06). Celebrating national days have been a factor developing this awareness and understanding (W10, W02) and especially from a native’s point of view *“they aren’t ‘foreigners’ anymore”* (M04).

So from this it can be concluded that the sense of Europeanness does not really base itself on similarities between different nationalities but to the richness of differences - although the opposite perspective do also exist emphasizing similarities in basic needs independent from nationality (W02). Here the pride of own nationality can come to the fore as well (W10). But on the other hand when becoming more sensitive towards national diversities, it could be said that the *“traditional”* nationalistic feeling of own country decreases enabling a greater understanding of other nationalities (W11).

Common in all answers is that European identity is connected to something that broadens perspectives and gives a different perceptions towards differences. But on the other hand it can also create a consciousness of Europe on a more abstract level as a uniting force emphasizing similarities from a perspective of work itself: through work a contribution has been done towards more integrated and similarity based Europe (M03, M01). - *“This a particular civil service with a licence to dream”* (M01).

I see working in the European Foundation as an opportunity to make a very small contribution to the objective of a more integrated, inclusive Europe which would reduce conflict and minimise the possibility of future wars. In particular, I believe that the building of a common social model which builds on and incorporates the values we share, referred to above, rather than focus on our national differences, can contribute to this objective. (M03.)

Generally it can be said that working in an European Union body does create European identity in a sense that it creates awareness. This can be awareness of different cultures and countries inside Europe or more specifically awareness of

European Union's goals in creating integrated Europe. If the diverse nationalities are not consciously emphasised in this specific work environment, neither is Europeanness – at least very successfully: *“Generally you don't get the European feeling”* (M06, also W05, W12).

Shore and Black (see page 12) have done a research of European identity dealing some similar issues. Their case study was from the European Commission based in Brussels. Research results show that the employees did not define or perceive European identity through working in an European Union institution but an increased consciousness and a feeling of solidarity was recognised towards being European. This was seen more as loyalty to the work environment than as a personal emotion. When observing the data presented here the results can be seen as similar, only the concepts differ and this comparison is very interesting to make. In this research European identity exists in the minds of informants in a form of awareness which can be connected with consciousness by Shore and Black that they separate from European identity.

5.3. European Identity Versus National Identity - Does Europeanness exist?

Through the light of collected data some conclusions of European identity can be made. It has been recognised to be an influencing factor in creating perspectives of the person him/herself and the surrounding world. It depends on the individual how great significance you put to it but because of the reality based nature of it, as we are part of the European Union, it does have some kind of significance in identity formation. This way it could be understood that Europeanness / European identity does exist.

Now it is essential to define what is its nature and what does it include. First of all it is an awareness of diverse cultures and countries (see previous chapter). It is about recognising national differences and acting according to them. It is about cultural sensitivity and accommodation on a communicative level. The idea of broadening own perspectives of cultural differences is essential here.

Secondly and closely connected with the first definition it can be defined as a broader context of world view and identity discussion. Specifically here it means a creation of a certain concept called Europeanness / European identity that does exist because of its significant features related with world today. It is a topical, trendy and influencing part of the world existing today.

- - being European is quite important for me as this is something which helps to understand your background and also to put quite a few things into a particular context (your background is for instance seen as part of this broader picture that is made up of the idea of Europe). In that sense I think that I have an European identity. (M01.)

When understanding your background as part of a broader context called Europe, the relationship between national and European identities becomes clear. In total it could be said that the European identity does not seem to include anything opposite to nationalities and national identities but is more founded on them. At the moment European identity and Europeanness does not seem to be anything concrete and independently created effecting people working in an European multicultural work environment. It does not threat national identity but can be understood as an awareness creating layer of identity surrounding it.

I consider myself to be Irish living within a European Community - I would feel strongly in defending being part of Europe - but would probably always consider myself to be Irish (W09).

I am not afraid of becoming 'homogenised' as some people are because I will always know that I am first and foremost Irish but also feel part of the greater European picture (W02).

Various foresights of the roles and relationship between national and European identities have been made. Two opposite perspectives concerning first of all the future of national identity are the following (see pages 35): 1. The weakening of national identity because of emerging external influences (e.g. EU) and 2. The strengthening of national identity because of external influences. According to the conclusions made from the collected data it can be said that in this case national identity does not seem to be at least consciously threatened by creation of

European identity and more generally of European Union. Although it is impossible to measure if the identification towards nationality has become stronger it can be said that national identity is still one of the main identification sources of people also working on a European level.

As it has been concluded European identity does exist as a form of creating awareness towards cultural diversities and as a broader context of self-identification. Agreeing with Delanty (see page 37) it does not seem to have same intensive emotional connection with people than national identity has. European Union has tried to create that in form of European symbols and different European themes (see page 39) but the successfulness of them has not reached the same level than in identification of national identity. Like it has been discovered it exists as a layer surrounding national identity. The co-operation of these two identities has been acknowledged also for example by Delanty, Shore and Black (see page 37): according to them European identity is meaningless without national identity because national identity functions as a comparison model and as a unit creating European identity also in the past (through colonisation). Agreeing also with Hall (see page 35) it can be concluded that national and European identities can and do function together not excluding each other.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this research was to clarify the current situation of national identity in a context of multicultural organisation. This issue was approached by two question setting: national identity and its connection first of all with communication and atmosphere of an work environment and secondly with European identity.

Like question setting was presented as four dimensions in the beginning of the research, same division can be used here when discussing about the research findings. First of all when concerning communication of the organisation the focus was in group formations and the role of national background in that. It appeared that behind different characteristics of groups there was a general rule of seeking for similarities in communication partners increasing the feeling of comfort. This was naturally more the case in informal groups where there was no ordering to develop a group but was based more on a free will. Features that were seen to be in common for all the members are various and nationality was one of them. Especially when connected with language usage national groups were identified to exist but still nationality was not a determining factor.

Generally the situation of nationality structure was seen as unbalanced. Almost fifty per cent of the staff was Irish and it did have an impact on the perception of the organisation as a whole and that way directly influencing into the atmosphere of the organisation. The atmosphere was not as multicultural as it could have been. A change to the situation seemed to be wished but on the other hand the perception was flexible and this major Irish influence in structure was understood to be understandable because of the location of the organisation.

A similar adjusting perception of the role of different nationalities can be seen more generally in the nature of them in the work environment. There was only one concrete way - national day lunches - to emphasise diverse nationalities represented in the organisation. Otherwise they were not acknowledged and consciously put on view. According to these research findings based on perceptions of the staff, it can be concluded that nationality is not a crucial factor influencing the

atmosphere of the work environment but has developed to have transparent nature. The ways and significance of emphasizing national background are minor but still this does not mean that it would be without importance.

Some factors that did come through the collected data and did have an influence in communication and atmosphere should be mentioned. Seeking for similarities as a basic feature of group formation has already been discussed. Other influential factors were the major influence of structure of the organisation defined by management also influencing into the fluency of internal communication, language and social activities creating atmosphere outside working hours.

Especially important developed to be the role of language in intercultural interactions. Language usage can be divided into two categories: linguistic and logical. Linguistic usage refers to the language skills based on purely grammar and vocabulary skills. Logical usage on the other hand includes the message itself and the form of it modified by culture. This categorising is valid also in communicative misunderstandings based on diverse nationalities. Both of these misunderstanding types do occur in intercultural communication but in this case the significance of them is not a major and has relatively non-problematic nature.

Research findings show that national identity based on more easily definable national culture is mostly based on history and heritage creating its different characteristics but also one of its features is more focused on modern life, current situation inside and outside national boundaries. Still ingredients of nationality are realised to be unique in every country and differences do exist between countries. This enables the existence of national stereotypes. Most commonly national stereotypes were defined to exist and influence in the perception of people, especially with unknown people. From the data it can also be concluded that the issue must be sensitively observed: national stereotypes are not the only tool of perceiving other people, noticeable differences are not prominent constantly and exceptions to the stereotypes are understood to exist.

At general communicative level significance of nationality is minor. Accommodation in intercultural communication is the typical way of communicating: not emphasising national backgrounds by following own culturally determined communication patterns but acknowledging and accommodating communication style according to communication partners possible different patterns. Here a conclusion of significance of nationality and national identity can be made. Like it has been shown in the levels of atmosphere, group formation, misunderstandings, stereotypes and now general style of communicating of the case study organisation nationality has not played a significant role in influencing, modifying or developing them. This can be seen as surface level of comprehending the significance of nationality and national identity.

The minor significance of nationality does not decrease the significance of it on a deeper level based on identities. Although diverse nationalities are not emphasised in the work environment and the communication is based on accommodating to others it does not radically change the significance of national identity. Like it has been defined communicating is like a strategy. There is a phenomenon that I have defined as interspace meaning a sense of distance to own national culture and / or country of living. Distance creates an outsiders point of view but it does not change the fundamental identification resource based on nationality. What distance does is that it creates new awareness of differences.

European identity was comprehended including two characteristics. First of them is the awareness of differences that includes the idea of diversities as richness. European identity is not so much about the similarities across national boundaries but about differences inside of these boundaries as richness. The specific impact of a multicultural work environment in creating European identity is creating this awareness. Perspectives of other nationalities, their diverse cultures and also own nationality and own culture develop and a broader perception, greater understanding of different phenomena of cultures starts to exist.

Second characteristic of European identity is to exist as a broader context. Europeanness is a context of identification surrounding national identity. It was

understood as one identification source but did not have the same emotional and personal significance than national identity. First and foremost you represent your country, then Europe. From this it can be observed how national and European identities are not excluding each other and European identity has not replaced national identity. The significance of national identity is very great and influential in the level of identification process and its less essential nature in multicultural work environment and its communication does not decrease its fundamental importance.

It can be concluded that the stronger identification source is nationality and after that being European. New ethnogenesis, a multicultural culture where diversities are not relevant anymore does exist in the levels of communication and atmosphere in the organisation - nationalities do have transparent nature. But in this European Union institution which is the ideal environment for developing new identification sources the order of identification based firstly on nationality has not changed and does not seem to change at least in the near future. Answer to the question in the title of this research: national identity is not threatened by Europe.

Hypothetical model of connection networks in a multicultural work environment was presented in the beginning of this research. It is now possible to represent it in a modified form including data from collected material:

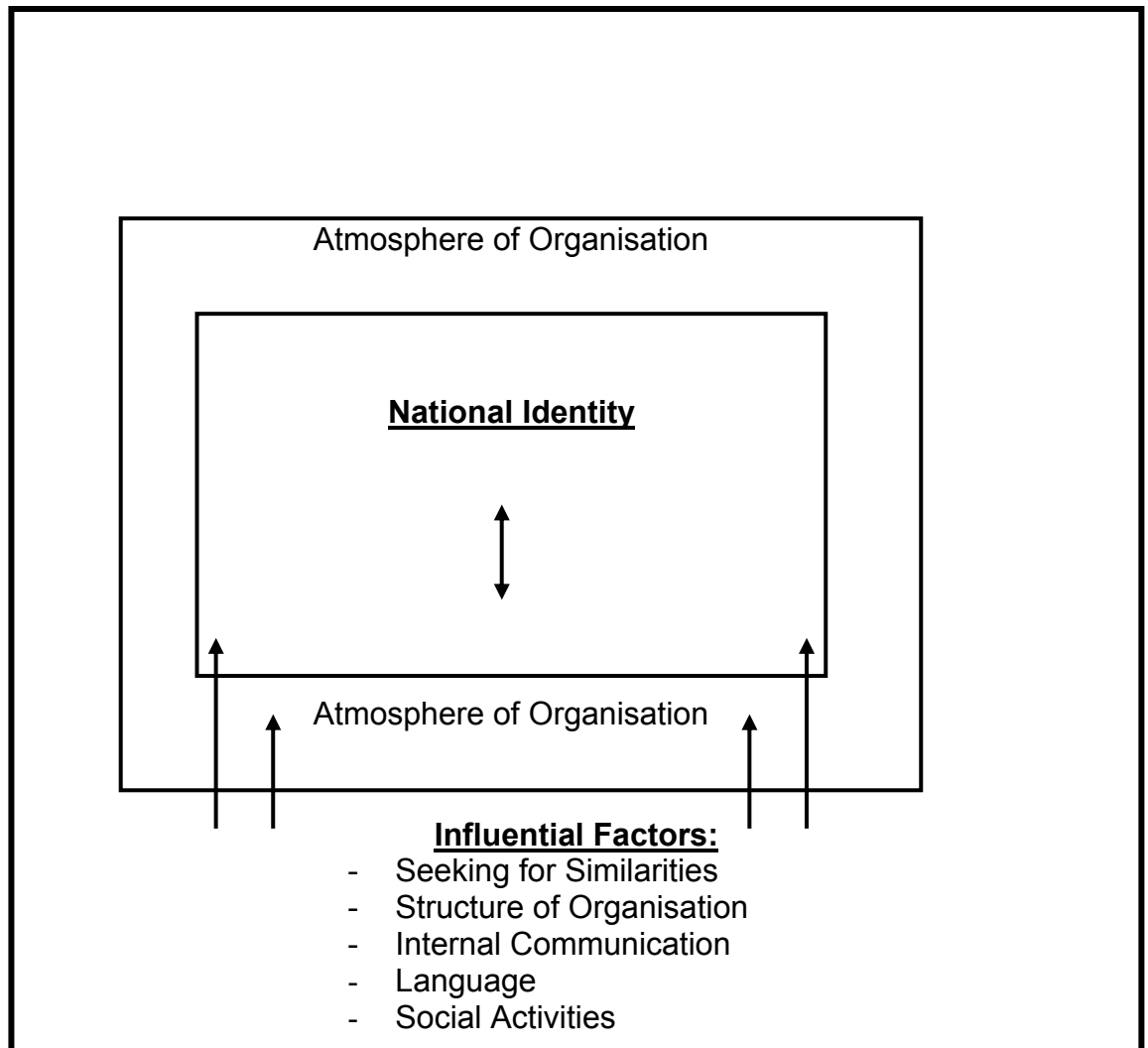


Figure 2. Connection networks in multicultural work environment

It should not be forgotten that the collected material is only from one case study organisation. Influence of the chosen method is great in research findings and conclusions. Always when doing a research with a method of doing interviews the results should be studied critically. An issue of subjectivity and motives of informants is always present and this should be addressed when studying findings and making conclusions depending on the interviews. Especially because of the abstract nature of the questions concerning identities I realized that an informant might have said something that could first be interpreted in a clearly too harsh way. Time was needed to let the informant think more about the issue and to enable the understanding of the context of the opinion that was expressed first.

It should also be addressed that various different research findings are possible especially when concerning the impact of nationality and national identity in organisational communication and atmosphere. This is because there are many internal and external influences directed at organisation - in this case study organisation only part off all the possible influences came through. Organisation is dynamic, developing process so also the significance of national identity in it can vary depending on the significance it has been given in culture and functioning of organisation. But still I see this research as a well functioning example study presenting one possible form of organisation.

Focusing on identity research the findings are more applicable to research of other multicultural organisations and to a broader research of modern identities. According to the findings presented in this research identity can be modified and distance or vicinity can be created but the deeper level of identity is deeply rooted and so the research area is relatively stable and more easily managed.

The basic perspective of combining identity research with organisational communication and atmosphere research has given a fresh angle to research an abstract concept like national identity. This has happened in two levels: abstract and concrete. The essential connection between culture and communication has been acknowledged. By this broader perspective considering influential factors from the different phenomena of organisational atmosphere and communication connected with the concept of national identity, the complexity of the issue has been shown. The aim of the research has not been to make sweeping generalisations of this complex matter but some findings did come out clearer than others.

First and fore most it should be addressed that concerning time this research is new and topical. European Union is part of our lives in a way or another and as it has established a new cultural feature it has ingredients for further studies. By broader and deeper further research on different European Union institutions an understanding of the level of uniqueness in each organisation could be found out. This way it could be examined whether there are common features independent from management and other internal and external features behind the surface that

could be determined as European Union organisation culture. Does European Union create new organisation model or are organisations depending completely on individual management?

Also concerning European Union institutions as organisations the methods of improving the functioning of them could be researched. The discussed and assumed possible common features of all European Union organisations and on the other hand the understanding of organisations as unique entities should be considered in this research. But through this knowledge a method of developing them to function better firstly by considering diversity managing would be an interesting research finding.

Also based on the image of these organisations a method of making them improve their reputation and closer to ordinary Europeans through organisational functions and perspectives would give great tools for developing better image of European Union also in general. From this organisational perspective answers to the current situation of European identity and its relatively minor significance could be clarified - what creates the distance between an European and European Union and most importantly what is there to be done about it?

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Interview Number	Code	Gender	Age	Nationality	Occupation	Time of starting the job
1	M1	male	32	Spanish	secretary	1996
2	M2	male	41	Italian	research manager	1998
3	W1	female	35	Irish	secretary	1996
4	M3	male	58	Irish	research manager	1989
5	W2	female	49	Irish	secretary	1979
6	W3	female	34	Finnish	research manager	1997
7	M4	male	41	Irish	security and facilities officer	1983
8	M5	male	40	Irish	IT manager	1990
9	W4	female	44	Dutch	secretary	2000
10	W5	female	40	French	research assistant	1999
11	M6	male	52	Irish	publication store manager	1997
12	W6	female	47	French	payment officer	1979
13	W7	female	43	Irish	web manager	1991
14	W8	female	37	Greek	research manager	1999
15	W9	female	53	Irish/Canadian	marketing assistant	1983
16	W10	female	38	Irish	accounting officer	1983
17	W11	female	43	French	secretary	1990
18	W12	female	44	Austrian	translator	1999

Appendix 1

Interview questions (face to face):

Where does most of your communication with other employees happen (office, meetings canteen etc.)?

Into what is it connected, grounds (official, personal)?

With whom do you communicate mostly/least?

What countries do your communication partners represent: same as yours/different?

What language do you speak when communicating?

What kind of importance does the language has in your communication (obstacle/advantage/no importance)?

Have you noticed some kind of inside groups among people in this organisation?

Do you belong in one? Your grounds for that?

Have you noticed difference in your communication compared with others in an interaction situation (speed of talk, topics, nonverbal communication)?

Has this difference caused any reaction (confusion, misunderstanding, conflict)?

Are there conflicts between personnel in more general level? What is the practical situation of them? What is the reason for them to happen?

Is your own cultural background important for you in your work place?

Can you see any difference in your attitude towards your cultural identity when thinking time now and before working in a multicultural work place?

If yes what kind and when did you notice it to happen?

Do you intentionally emphasize your diverse cultural background in you communication or do you try to accommodate your communication to your communication partners?

Do you have any ways to emphasize your cultural background in your working place at more general level (decoration of office etc.)?

Generally what is the atmosphere like in this work place when thinking about different nationalities?

Do you think that different nationalities are an important part of the place and its every day atmosphere?

Interview questions (by email):

What does your national culture consist of?

How important being European is to you?

Can you define that you have European identity?

Does the place where you work have an impact on your sense of Europeanness?

Can you define what kind of impact it is?