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Stress in the Multi-ethnic Customer Contacts of the Finnish Civil Servants

Developing Critical Pragmatic Intercultural Professionals

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at the intercultural communication challenges of host culture adaptees through the multi-ethnic customer contacts of two groups of Finnish civil servants. The philosophical framework utilised is the critical-pragmatic notion of mutual adaptation and critique, as proposed by Young (1996). The host culture focus adapted in this research is significant from the point of view of Finnish working life, as well as internationally, for the field of intercultural studies has mainly concentrated on studying the adjustment processes of the immigrant populations. The research challenges the general claim (e.g. Kim Y.Y. 2001) that the cultural adaptation processes of the host culture members are only limited in nature. The way the Finnish civil servants go about creating intercultural space in their multi-ethnic customer contacts is approached from three different angles: as integrity issues, as cultural learning issues and as communication issues. The research takes an interdisciplinary approach. It combines Bennett's (1986, 1993) Model of Developing Intercultural Sensitivity and Lie's (2001) concepts of globalizing/localizing identities in a dialectic manner with acculturation studies (e.g. Berry, 1990, 1997, 2002, 2004) and gives a holistic view of the intercultural competence as the development of intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. The research also shows that the Finnish civil servants often undergo multifaceted processes of change and adaptation while developing understanding for intercultural communication. This is a process with opposing and partly overlapping pull effects between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. Subjective experience of stress is an integral part of the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts. Particularly in the beginning phase it can be equated with a culture shock experience of any cultural newcomer. Adaptive stress can be harnessed into a positive role for the development of intercultural professionalism by making the processes of gaining intercultural competence and cultural adaptation visible and thus making the adaptees aware of them. The application section of this research suggests a model of training for critical pragmatic intercultural professional. The challenge for the working life in the present day reality of increasing multiculturalism is to transfer the responsibility for gaining such know-how from individual civil servants' haphazard and often unplanned way of learning through experience into research-based organisational level training.

Keywords: host culture communication, stress, culture shock, cultural adaptation process, intercultural competence, intercultural training, customer-service

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1 Social motivation: host culture stress

> "What about us! Who understands how we feel! We, too, feel hurt. It is not always so easy for us either, you know. We are constantly told that we need to understand the foreigners because they have a different culture, and our ways are new to them. Yet since they have come to Finland, I feel they need to understand how things are done here. Then when things are explained to them, they get upset, and that makes us get upset! It's stressful for us too you know, not just for them!"

The above comment, with a distinctive feeling of hurt detected in it, was thrown at me when I started running intercultural communication training seminars for the Finnish Directorate of Immigration staff back in 1998. The job description given to me by the personnel manager was to help the staff understand the different communication styles of the multi-ethnic clientele of the Immigration Department. I did as I was told, and more, also explaining how the non-Finnish clientele might feel about us Finns. We discussed how they may view us in a totally different light from what we assume, or attempt to present ourselves in, and how these kinds of communicative misunderstandings could be caused by cultural differences. I felt I had a fair bit of understanding concerning what one faces as one moves to a new culture, how one possibly reacts to a communication style which is different from our own and what effect our own cultural backgrounds can have on the cultural adaptation process as a whole. This knowledge was based on a multifaceted intercultural experience. It included several years of involvement in intercultural training, both in Finland and in Asia, personal experience in customer service with ethnically non-Finnish customers in a Finnish government office, and a personal life history of studying and working in various roles on three continents.

However, the above comment made me realise that although in all of the above mentioned intercultural contexts, including the intercultural training I had been conducting, I had recognized the host culture adaptee' perspective, as I term the ethos of the above comment in the context of this research, somehow

this participant's perception was that there was a definite bias towards the adapters. The people adapting to the host culture were seen to be the main focus and the host culture adaptees were interpreted as not being taken with as much seriousness. Consequently, during the ensuing years, I began to pay even closer attention to the often-repeated comments of the above nature in my intercultural training sessions.

The picture that emerged was one where the Finnish civil servants felt that the responsibility for the success of their multicultural client contacts was placed far too one-sidedly on their shoulders only. Much was expected of them, and the customers and the general public directed criticism at them. Yet, at the same time, very little was given to them in the way of tools or understanding of what it takes professionally to be involved in multi-ethnic client contacts.

They perceived the gist of the intercultural training to be the following: being explained the reasons why intercultural misunderstandings took place meant that they were then expected to just get on with the task. Never mind if it sometimes was a difficult task to be involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts. They were not supposed to get too upset by it, and definitely not outwardly so! After all, a civil servant is supposed to be civil! Yet, inwardly they kept pondering what to do with the recurring feelings of frustration and stress, sometimes accompanied by guilt and quiet wonderings of whether one is developing an intolerant attitude towards some of the ethnically non-Finnish clientele. Who would listen to these sentiments? What forums did they have to deal with their negative emotions and thoughts? What were these kinds of reactions an indication of? Were they indeed signs of cynicism, intolerance and even racism, of which the ethnically non-Finnish clientele, general public and even media at time accuse them of? Even though they realised that often these kinds of accusations were only overreactions by the distraught customers, they still hurt. After all, they were only trying to do their job, to serve the multi-ethnic clientele to the best of their ability and to try and explain how the Finnish system works!

Civil servants are guided in their customer contact work by the particular guidelines and policies of the respective government departments they represent. They also have a wider body of legislation and norms to follow to ensure that the multi-ethnic customers get the kind of service the Finnish administrative system is supposed to give to everybody, regardless of their ethnic background. First of all the Finnish authorities are bound by the Finnish constitution to ensure equal treatment of all persons.

In 2001 the Finnish government endorsed the Action Plan for Preventing Racism and Ethnic Discrimination, according to which the authorities in various fields need to prevent racism and ethnic discrimination in their work. Another central guiding principle for any work involving contact with ethnic non-Finns is the Non-Discrimination Act (21/2004, as amended by Act No 50/2006. This legislation incorporates the former Directive on Racism (2000/43/EY). I applies among other things also to all services rendered, including those of the customer service sector. Its intention in this context is to ensure that information is always given in a manner understandable to the customer, taking into

consideration any special requirements arising from each customer's particular background, including ethnicity.

In compliance with these requirements, many government departments, such as the Directorate of Immigration and the Social Insurance Institute of Finland, the two government bodies under study in this research, have information leaflets and forms to be filled available in the languages of the largest immigration groups in Finland. However, with the multi-ethnic clientele, individual civil servants often have to explain matters at hand in person to the customers, when they come to the office and are not familiar with the Finnish bureaucracy and Finnish ways of handling administrative matters.

Based on the above, I claim that at least in professional settings, such as multi-ethnic customer contacts, host culture members' adequate intercultural competence is in high demand. Consequently, the pressure to adapt culturally is quite high among the specific sub-groups of host culture members involved in this line of work. In the context of this research for example, Finnish civil servants are shown to need a fair measure of intercultural competence to fulfil the legal requirements of equal treatment and non-discrimination for all customers to ensure the multi-ethnic clientele receive a genuinely equal opportunity for participation. This means understanding that equal treatment does not always necessarily equate with similar treatment, but that at times equality is attained by special adaptive measures. Apart from the legal and organizational framework, intercultural competencies are also expected of Finnish civil servants by their multi-ethnic clients, as well as by the general public, and the perceived lack of these competencies is also easily reported in the media. Thus the pressure for adequate intercultural competence at least in this context can be said to be significantly strong.

1.1 Growing global demand for host cultures' intercultural competence

There are examples from around the world acknowledging the need for intercultural competence of the host culture members in professional settings. For example, intercultural competence in dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds has been included as an ethical standard by both the American and Canadian Psychological Associations (Smith and Bond 1998:291).

In many countries, the shift from homogeneity to diversity as the new social norm requires a rethinking of the processes, mechanisms and relationships necessary for democratic policy development in diverse societies (Bennett 2001:12). However, instead of a balanced development the end result could well be a reduction and a blockade of social communication. Therefore, the public policy of enhancement of simultaneous multicultural development and infrastructure should be supplemented with the strong assertion of intercultural engagements on the basis of continuously developed intercultural competence (Klaic 2001).

Paralleling the context of this research, the special demands made on the Finnish civil servants when dealing with ethnically non-Finnish customers are also recognized by Hammar-Suutari (2006): "…in intercultural work, the

challenges are greater than usual and therefore confidence based on adequate professional competence becomes an increasingly important factor… the civil servant has to get adjusted to those changes which the newcomers bring about with them" (Hammar-Suutari 2006:8).[1] The meeting of cultures involves a process of change, which touches both parties: while the customer has to get adjusted to the new environment and society with its new regulations and idiosyncrasies.

The above comment also clearly addresses the need to recognise that cultural adaptation is not only a question of what it takes from 'them', i.e. those who are culturally different, to adapt to 'us' as host culture members, and how they may see us, but that it is also just as relevant to give proper forums to express what it takes from 'us', when 'they' are adapting to us. Hence it is no less deserving a topic of serious study in its own right.

1.2   Growing multiculturalism in Finland

The growing multiculturalism of Finnish society places increasing demands for host culture members' intercultural competence in many areas of life, including the public sector, which is the focus of this research. Over the past three decades several changes have taken place in Finland in respect to immigration, as far as numbers of persons arriving in the country, official measures taken and societal attitudes are concerned. First of all, it is to be noted that while the number of foreigners residing in Finland in the middle of the 1970's was only around 10 000, and even at the end of the year 1990 only as little as 26300, by the end of the year 2006 the figure was 121 700. The respective figure from the following year, dated 31.12.2007, is 132 632, with the total population of the country being 5,3 million people[2]. These statistics show a steady growth in the number of foreigners residing in Finland, with the latest figures being over ten times more than 30 years ago, in the 1970's. Still, one has to bear in mind that the number of foreigners residing in Finland, both numerically and percentage wise, is still among the lowest in the European Union member states. Less than 3 % of the population in Finland is a citizen of some other country.

The number of naturalised Finns is also growing all the time. By the end of the year 2005 they numbered around 166 000. The latest annual figures on granting citizenship provided by the Population Register Centre of Finland are from 4th of May 2007. According to these statistics, in the year 2006 Finnish citizenship was granted to 4,450 foreign citizens permanently resident in Finland. The number was 1,250 lower than in 2005. Of the recipients of Finnish citizenship, 2,550 were women and 1,900 men. Of the recipients of Finnish citizenship, 1,300 were younger than 15 years of age and 150 were older than 65.[3] Finland does not keep records of people's ethnic backgrounds.

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[1]   Translation from the original Finnish text by the present author.
[2]   Source: Population Register Center of Finland, http://www.stat.fi
[3]   http://www.stat.fi/til/kans/index_en.html

The first ever Aliens' Act came into force in Finland in 1984. This law has been amended several times. Consequently various internal directives and instructions have been issued as to how to apply it in the changed circumstances in conflicting situations, when an amendment in one section had certain ramifications on another, unchanged section of the said Act. The new Aliens' Act came into force in 2004 (201/2004). The many changes have also been reflected in the customer contacts. The clientele has expressed uncertainty and anxiety concerning the possible effects of the said amendments to the particular circumstances of their cases. The first ever immigration policy white paper was prepared by the Finnish government in 1997.

Most foreigners have settled in Finland either as a consequence of marriage to a Finn, or due to work, either as an employee or as a private entrepreneur. In some immigrant cases family and work reasons may also be combined. In recent years the number of foreign students in Finland has also increased considerably. Finland has also resettled, and continues to do so, return migrants of Ingrian origin from Russia. In addition to the above, there are the residence permits based on international protection needs, i.e. political asylum seekers and quota refugees. Over the past decade or so, the annual number of applications for political asylum has fluctuated from little over 1000 to almost 4000 persons, the record being at 3861 asylum seekers in the peak year of 2004. The annual figure for quota refugees is presently set at 750 persons. Several categories of residence permits also include the possibility for family reunification of close family members. All in all, the refugee and political asylum cases only form only a small fraction from the total caseload of residence permits handled by the Finnish Immigration Service.[4]

Recently, the government immigration policy has taken more interest in work related immigration, which was at the margins for many years. The public debate has called for a more active immigration policy (Forsander 2000:144, 2004:97). With an ageing population, obtaining a work force from abroad has become one means to secure the economic well-being of the country for the future. These facts and figures point to the fact that immigration issues have multiplied and diversified in the Finnish context quite rapidly over past decade and a half, presenting challenges for cultural learning for both parties concerned, the newcomers and the host community, particularly for those who in the course of their work have dealings with the immigrant population.

This research is not intended to be a study on the attitudes of the respondents towards their multi-ethnic clientele. However, matters pertaining to attitudes do surface, for example in connection with identity change as a part of the cultural adaptation process. Hence, it is useful to see how the interculturalisation process of some Finnish civil servants, as looked at in this research, reflects the surrounding societal attitudes in light of some related

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[4] While this research was being conducted, the government department in question was called The Directorate of Immigration in Finland (DOI). Hence this name and the respective acronym are utilized throughout this research. On the 1st of January 2008 the name of the department was changed to Finnish Immgration Service. The home pages can be accessed at: www.migri.fi.

research in Finland. In a survey conducted between 1998-1999 (Pitkänen and Kouki 1999), which looked at the attitudes of Finnish authorities towards immigrants and immigration, fairly polarised views came up. On the one hand, the increase in immigration was seen as a positive internationalisation of the population and a cultural enrichment. Yet on the other hand, it was seen as a threat to the Finnish way of life and to societal peace. In the year 2006, a follow-up survey (Pitkänen 2006) was conducted to see if any change had taken place. Through a factor analysis, the results were grouped into three attitudinal categories: assimilation, multiculturalism and resisting racism. The result was that the assimilationist attitude towards the immigrants received very little support in any of the professions represented by the authorities that took part in the survey. In none of them was this orientation the majority opinion (Pitkänen 2006:46). Part of the answers portraying an assimilation strategy was interpreted to be related to xenophobia, or at least a suspicious attitude towards cultural difference (Pitkänen 2006:47).

Most respondents in this survey supported a multicultural orientation (Pitkänen 2006:48). However, as it is pointed out in the survey, one needs to clarify what is meant by multiculturalism in this context. In one sense this term depicts a situation where several cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups exist side by side. This definition assumes diversity to be an everyday reality in the world. On the other hand, this term is also utilised in a normative, political sense, describing how a good or an ideal society ought to be (Goldberg 1994, Huttunen et al. 2005:20). Used in this sense, multiculturalism comes close to the concept of pluralism as an ethical attitude towards cultural diversity, which accepts this kind of multiplicity and the ensuing value differences, with the understanding that everybody is expected to be committed to some common principles.

The underlying thought is that values and norms are not just culturally conditioned, but are also expressions of a more general attempt to live well and act in a correct manner (Trux 2000:49-50). The idea of cultural diversity as an end in itself has been criticized as helping to create a politically correct way of speaking, which prevents grappling with the power structures of the society in any real way. By concentrating on the *ideal* of multiculturalism, this kind of discourse ignores the issue that the cultural majority population in power is still holding the key (Forsander 2001:44, Ylänkö 2000:55-56). The goal of pluralism, however, is that equality is recognised even for those who are culturally different. People are different but equal (Forsander 2001 44-45, Lepola 2000:378, Pitkänen 2003: 267-269).

In Finland the fulfilment of the goals for equality and equal treatment has largely been seen as the task of government authorities (Wahlbeck 1999:64-87). For this ideal of equality to materialise, societal, organisational and individual level processes need to take place. In the administrative system, in the working life and in education the cultural backgrounds of the immigrants and ethnic minorities need to be accounted for (Lepola 2000:378). The majority of the Finnish authorities who took part in the survey conducted by Pitkänen (2006) seemed to believe that if things are talked about openly, one can prevent many

problems and crisis situations from developing. Most of the respondents in all professions represented in the survey agreed that there needs to be an increase in the social interaction between the native Finns and immigrants. This helps in preventing the development of racism.

Racism and discrimination can take place both at an individual and societal level and it can be direct or indirect. Indirect societal level discrimination takes place, when seemingly impartial regulations, grounds of action or policies cause a person to be placed in an unfavourable position in comparison with others. The Non-Discrimination Act is meant to prevent both direct and indirect discrimination in the authorities working practices and working environment (Non-Discrimination Act 21/2004 6§).

In the present research, one of the central questions for the Finnish civil servants involved in customer contacts with ethnic non-Finns is whether the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination should be realised by giving every person exactly the same kind of service, or should there be some tailored approaches to ensure that the customers feel that they can live as equal members of the society. If the second option holds true, then it needs to be recognised that in the service sector immigrants may, particularly in the beginning states, need more time and resources than the native population (Räty 2002:219). The majority of the members of the different professions represented in Pitkänen's survey, except for the border guards and police, agreed with the statement that "Immigrants need specially directed support measures, because their chances of managing in life are otherwise worse that they are with people of Finnish decent" (Pitkänen 2006:54).

The results of this present research concur with those of the attitudinal study conducted by Pitkänen et al[5]. In both instances, social interaction with the immigrants is appreciated, multiculturalism is the prevailing view, and the spirit of the Non-Discrimination Act in the context of customer service is fairly well internalised. The principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment are taken care of in the regular customer service context by modifying one's communication style, though desire was also expressed for special differentiating measures for the ethnically non-Finnish customers to facilitate the smooth running of their affairs. To sum up, in both of these studies the Finnish civil servants express being socially motivated to deal with the ethnically non-Finnish clientele.

The present research shows an example of how multicultural orientation is making a practical difference in some Finnish civil servants' communication methods with their multi-ethnic customers. How well is Finland on the way to a widely accepted and practiced pluralism, able to deal with the super-diversity taking shape in today's world, would be a topic of further research of the kind Pitkänen[6] has conducted.

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[5]   Ibid
[6]   Ibid

2   Scientific motivation: returning to the host culture focus

In analysing the kinds of feelings, reactions and actions of the Finnish civil servants in connection with their multi-ethnic customer contacts, two things became evident. Firstly, they were mainly talking about those perfectly normal and common reactions that are part and parcel of the intercultural adaptation process of any person, and secondly the host adaptees seemed to need help in understanding this process in themselves too, not just in the clients who were adapting to their way of communicating.

Yet in the past decades, the intercultural communication context the host culture members, whom I call the host culture adaptees, have to a great extent been ignored in the formal studies in this field, as it is just assumed that their adaptation process is only very limited. Whenever host culture members' adaptation process *has* been looked at, even then it has mainly been from the point of view of how it affects the adaptation process of the people who have left their own country and are adapting to a new culture. The host culture members only get a fleeting mention.

Even Kim (2001), who states that her theoretical framework has a broad conceptual base, only mentions adaptation of host culture in one passing remark: "…the present theoretical domain addresses only *indirectly* (italics added) the situation of native members of the host environment, who may experience *limited adaptive change* (italics added) through contacts with individuals from different cultures or subcultures. The fact that they remain in their own 'home territory' keeps the adaptive pressure on them to a minimum" (Kim 2001: 34).

In light of the above, it is noteworthy to realise that the field of intercultural communication studies as a modern academic discipline has actually emerged from a domestic setting from experiences within the borders of the United States (Pusch 2004:28-29). The most crucial works were published by such researchers as Whorf (1953, 1956), Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) and Hall (1994) on linguistic relativity and cultural values on contact among North American Indian groups, Mormons, Spanish Americans and Texans respectively.

Already fairly early after the Second World War, the cross-cultural mobility of sojourners became apparent and the intercultural communication studies became an established field of study in the international context. The focus of study began to shift and the process of enculturation and components of intercultural competencies began to be studied in the context of persons moving away from their own cultures and establishing themselves in another culture on overseas postings of various types, or in the contexts of intercultural experiences of such groups as immigrants, refugees and international students. DuBois (as quoted in Wright, Hammons, and Wight 1970) was the first one to speak of 'culture shock' while addressing educational exchange groups at a conference in the US already in 1951.

The present day globalization has also had ramifications in the field of intercultural communication studies, as multiculturalism, and even pluralism, is becoming the everyday reality in a constantly increasing number of societies and nations. This has manifested itself as the introduction of the theme of diversity (e.g. Copeland-Griggs 1987, 1990), with the action-oriented approach of managing diversity (Gardenswartz and Rowe 1993, Carr-Ruffino 1996) into intercultural training. So, in a sense the circle is closing, and intercultural studies are once again being conducted more and more in the domestic context so to speak. However, even then the research has mainly stopped at how do 'they', the newcomers, experience 'us', the host culture members, and what we can do to accommodate them. Berry acknowledges this by stating that "because the cross cultural contact experience is seen to have much greater impact on the non-dominant group and its members, "… *much of the research on acculturation … tends to ignore the impact on the dominant population. It is obvious however, that immigrant receiving societies and their native-born populations have been massively transformed in the past decades* (italics added) (Landis et al. 2004: 175).

Recently the focus has been directed more on the process of mutual change (e.g. Berry 1997, Bourhis et al. 1997).

3   Personal motivation: application to intercultural training

I see my interest in the connection between the host culture members' cultural adaptation process and their intercultural competence to be the next logical step in the research interests within the historical continuum of intercultural communication studies. As is evidenced by the ethical standards of the Psychological Associations of Canada and the USA quoted earlier on, and closer to home, in a study on the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts (Hammar-Suutari 2006) and most importantly, in the comments of the Finnish civil servants in this research, host culture members' intercultural competence has great relevance in the reality of present day working life. Not only is it important for the theory building in this particular academic field, but also in its practical application to a variety of working contexts globally.

I am interested in the intercultural dialogue process as a whole, in translating the theory into practice in the workplaces through targeted training. One of the underlying strands of thinking in this research is that making visible and validating the host culture adaptee perspective in the intercultural contact situation can assist in creating a positive attitude towards other cultures. This can take place both on individual as well as societal level, being expressed as cultural diversity, multiculturalism, pluralism and super-diversity in action.

It is recognized that also the host culture members need to be interculturally competent in their professional dealings with the various

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categories of people who have immigrated[7] to the new host country for various reasons for different lengths of time. With this research I want to show that in addition to this, what also needs to be validated is that being a host culture adaptee can be quite a stressful experience, just as the newcomers' similar processes as cultural adapters can be, and often are.

However, even though this is an acknowledged fact, a closer inspection of the existing literature on intercultural issues reveals that thus far the host culture members' cultural adaptation process has received very little attention. It is as if this has been the hidden side of the equation, or the self-evident side, that does not need much attention, as it is assumed that the host adaptees manage their intercultural encounters with less effort, since they are presumed to be in a superior position compared to the newcomers. This realisation strengthened my conviction that adequate attention needs to be given to both sides of the equation in the intercultural dialogue, both in theoretical treatment of the topic, and in particular in intercultural training as its practical application, which is of central interest to me as an intercultural trainer.

The host culture members' intercultural adaptation processes, as well as that of the persons going outside of their own cultures, needs to be studied with enough detail and seriousness. It needs to be acknowledged more clearly that both parties in the equation are both adapters and adaptees at the same time. The host culture members are not only being adapted to, they too can, and often do, adapt to the newcomers, making it a cyclical bi-directional movement of mutual adaptation, where both parties are both adaptees and adapters at the same time.

However, for the purposes of this research, in order to focus on the features that are specific to the adaptee-viewpoint, I have chosen to use the term 'host culture adaptee' instead of the more general term 'host culture member', which would also be a valid perspective to take. However, in order to make the focal point of the research more visible, I have opted for the term 'adaptee' instead. To me, this word choice places the host population in the intercultural equation on a more equal footing vis-à-vis the newcomers.

Intercultural communication context includes a minimum of two parties with differing cultural ideals, ideas and practices concerning how communication in a particular situation is to be conducted. In previous studies, the adaptive groups have been called by various names, such as foreigners, newcomers, strangers or sojourners for example (Kim 2001:90). In this research, for this other party in the intercultural communication situation I mainly use the term newcomer whenever I do not use the expressions pertaining to the

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[7] Forsander (2004.106) lists the following reasons why people leave their countries of origins and immigrate to Finland: 1.work-related immigration, 2. family-based immigration (for example marriage, family reunification) 3.ethnically-based immigration (the Ingrians, return migration of former or present Finnish citizens), 4. foreign students, 5. pensioners (return migration of former or present Finnish citizens of pensionable age, the rotation migration of Finnish citizens between the "South" and Finland and the rotation migration of the immigrants between the countries of origin and Finland), 6. refugees, 7. illegal or irregular migration (visa overstayers, victims of human trafficking, undocumented foreign labourers, etc.)

particular context of the research, such as ethnically non-Finnish customer, or multi-ethnic clientele for example. In certain specific contexts, such terms as foreigners, immigrants, and immigrant population are also utilised. In the comments quoted in this research, the Finnish civil servants make use of all of these terms as well as some additional ones.

As to what the term 'intercultural' actually signifies, there are many researchers and academics of note within the intercultural field, such as Hall (1976, 1983), Hofstede (1991) Triandis (1980), Trompenaars (1994:23), Geertz (1973) and Schwartz (2004) for example, who all have differing definitions of this term to a certain extent. Knapp (1994)[8] states that "Intercultural communication can be defined as the interpersonal interaction[9] between members of different groups, which differ from each other in respect of the knowledge shared by their members and in respect to their linguistic forms of symbolic behaviour." In this research, I look at the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts in this vein and refer to them as 'intercultural communication situations', or 'intercultural (social) interaction situations', interchangeably with the phrase 'the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts'.

In the intercultural field, the term cross-cultural has generally been used to describe studies with large bodies of comparative data and studies of a limited number of cultures, such as examining attitudes towards work in the US and in Japan for example. One dictionary definition for it is "comparing or dealing with two or more different cultures"[10]. However, in certain areas of intercultural research, as well as in the writings of some authors within the intercultural field in general, some of which are also quoted in this research, the term cross-cultural is not reserved only for large scale comparative studies. Instead, it is also used in a similar sense to the term intercultural, i.e. referring to situations with *individuals* from different cultural backgrounds communicating with each other. Examples of these are: cross-cultural psychology as a field of study, cross-cultural adjustment (Ward 2003, Anderson 1994, Adler 1975), cross-cultural adaptation (Kim 2001), cross-cultural encounters (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002), cross-cultural learning (Bennett 1998), cross-cultural effectiveness (Kealey and Protheroe 1995, Grove and Torbjörn 1985). When these authors are quoted in this research, or others who refer to cross-cultural studies, the term cross-cultural is obviously employed.

In the Finnish civil servants' comments quoted in this research, the term 'culture', and its specific connotations need to be interpreted from the particular context of each quote. In some instances it refers to a workplace culture that a

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[8]   Original source:"EESE Strategy Paper No. 4 –(1994) Intercultural Communication in EESE (Erfurt Electronic Studies in English" http://www.uni-erfurt.de/eestudies/ eese/eese.html.   Quote   found   in: http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/ definition-of-intercultural-communication.html

[9]   In this research, the term 'interaction' is understood in the humanistic tradition of communication and knowledge as social interaction, i.e. shared meanings, rather than communication as transfer of knowledge.

[10]   (http://www.wordreference.com/definition/cross-cultural)

certain group of people share, and in other instances to the organizational culture forming the environment that creates the politics and strategies to be utilized within the organization as a whole (Trux 2000, Forsander 2002b). On the level of an individual, some of the comments in the three surveys, which form the empirical data of this research, refer to culture as one's identification as a member of a certain group (e.g. 'as a young Finnish woman') or as the way one interprets the behaviour of particular groups (e.g. 'Somali men') as culturally conditioned communication (Huttunen, Löytty and Rastas 2005, Verma 2005). The Finnish civil servants' comments in this research basically use the word 'culture' in the essentialist sense, along the lines of the definition by Gertsen and Söderberg (2000) as an empirical category, a relatively stable, homogenous, internally consistent system of distinctive assumptions, values and norms, which can be objectively described, as something that members of a group, an organization, or a nation have or bear collectively.

Many researchers of cross-cultural management, such has Holden (2002:28) for example, consider that this essentialist or functionalist view exaggerates the differences between cultures and generates criteria to rank them competitively. However, in my theorising the term culture in this research gets a more fluid definition, including the intrinsic ability to change and being open to two-way structuration Young (1996). This fluidity will be looked at in more detail in two connections. First of all while discussing the intercultural philosophy of this research. Secondly, it is examined in connection with the interdisciplinary approach guiding this research.

I utilise interdisciplinary approach in this research as an expert in one discipline, i.e. intercultural communication, reaching out to integrate views from the related fields of communication studies, social psychology and linguistics. I see the value of interdisciplinary approach for this research as fostering more creativity in problem solving, with the end result being greater than the sum of the individual discipline's contribution. The focus gets directed more on the particular goal of this research, rather than being discipline-specific.

4 Promoting understanding: philosophy of pragmatism

Intertwining theory with application of the knowledge gleaned through research is of particular relevance in the field of intercultural communication, with its immensely worthwhile practical goal of genuine intercultural understanding. This kind of close-knit, utilitarian connection between the theory and the practical application is also very close to my thinking. It is my conviction that knowledge only becomes alive and gets its true test in its usage. I draw here on Dr. Marja-Liisa Schwantz, an eminent authority in the field of development studies, who very appropriately has been described as the 'Searcher for the living knowledge'. As a student in Helsinki University, this

undercurrent of living knowledge, so evident in her lectures, left a permanent impression on me. In recounting the methodologies and experiences of her fieldwork in Tanzania, she stressed the importance of keeping in mind the application of the knowledge to the true realities we face. The following quotes reflect her thinking:

> "The essence of the matter is human knowledge in a holistic form, as a whole, not in slices. Science is only one part of knowledge. It determines one way of seeing, a certain viewpoint. Science as a form of knowledge does not exhaust human knowledge. Understanding, interpreting the knowledge, is an important part of it" (Schwantz 2004:359).

It is my desire to explore the field of intercultural communication through this research in the spirit of the above philosophy. The goal is that the practical application of the knowledge gained will give people with different backgrounds and experiences of life the tools for interpreting each other's meanings through mutual learning. This kind of increased holistic intercultural understanding can in turn lessen the stress experienced by the dichotomy of 'us vs. them' in a multiplicity of intercultural communication contexts, including multi-ethnic customer contacts.

5   Research assumptions

This research is guided by certain basic assumptions concerning the content and process of the Finnish civil servants' cultural adaptation. The first one concerns the depth of this adaptation: There are many situations where certain individuals, or whole groups, from the host culture are in a prolonged and intense relationship with persons from different cultures, through professional contacts for example. Hence these host culture representatives have both an opportunity and a felt need to go through a fairly far reaching cultural adaptation process in their intercultural contacts. In Finland some examples of such professional groups are the staff members involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts within the Finnish Directorate of Immigration (DOI)[12] and within the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela). These are the two groups of civil servants looked at in this research. By looking at their multi-ethnic customer contacts I am guided by three assumptions.

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[12]   The official abbreviation for Ulkomaalaisvirasto, which was the Finnish name of the Directorate of Immigration in Finland at the time this research was conducted, was UVI. As there was no official English abbreviation for this government department, I used the acronym DOI for the purposes of this research. It has also been used of this government department in connection with a multinational EU project called 'Chidren First' (1999-2000). The webpages can be accessed at www.migri.fi. For the Social Insurance Institution, the Finnish abbreviation is utilized, as it is also used on their English webpages.

The first assumption is that the host culture adaptees' cultural adaptation process is basically similar and, at least in professional contexts, can be equally profound as the corresponding process for those persons who leave their own cultures and adapt to a new cultural environment.

I want to challenge the existing assumptions about the host culture members' role, and the role of motivation in general in the cultural adaptation process. One such assumption concerning motivation is that even though strangers mostly make deliberate plans for achieving successful adaptation in their new host surroundings, "…such desire and motivation are not necessary for adaptation to take place" (Kim 2001:58-59). Another assumption concerning the host culture adaptees states that "those who interact with natives with the intention of confining themselves *only to superficial relationships* are likely to become, given sufficient time, at least minimally adapted to the host culture *in spite of themselves*" (italics added) (Taft 1997:150). Applying the above statements to the host adaptee context of this research, it is my basic assumption that though the multi-ethnic customer contacts can be seen as "superficial" due to their limited scope of content and time, in fact the very limitedness of the contact sphere makes them even more demanding interculturally. The matters at hand are often complicated, exacerbating the intercultural difficulties at work in the situation. Consequently, it gives the civil servant an opportunity, and a definite motivation, to undergo a more extensive cultural adaptation process.

The second assumption is actually derived from the first one: Due to the nature of Finnish civil servants' intercultural social interaction in their multi-ethnic customer contacts, they can be interculturally quite demanding, and hence very stressful. This stressfulness is compounded by the combined effects of the restricted contact sphere, the often complicated matters, limited particularised cultural knowledge, and the great variety of communication styles represented by the multi-ethnic clientele. Additional stress is caused by the fact that there is an acute, mutual need for accurate understanding of the communication for effective handling of the customers' cases.

The third assumption is that the Finnish civil servant's multi-ethnic customer contacts call for a particular kind of contextualised intercultural competence due to the limited contact sphere, the multiplicity of communication styles and the high demand for accuracy in communication. So this assumption again arises from the previous one.

In this research I will explore the extent to which the above assumptions concerning the Finnish civil servants' cultural adaptation process, adaptive stress and intercultural competence in the multi-ethnic customer contacts are actualised and played out.

How have I arrived at the assumptions described above? Between the years 1998 and 2004 I ran intercultural training seminars to a total of almost 500 participants, who were mostly Finnish host culture adaptees working in the civil service having regula customer contacts with ethnically non-Finnish clientele. Apart from the staff of the Directorate of Immigration and the Social Insurance

Institution, the participants also included municipal staff, members of the Finnish Police force and interpreters who work with the Finnish civil servants in the immigration context. In total, I spent several hundred contact hours with the trainees.

During these training sessions, I came to realise that often the Finnish civil servants have had to cope with the multi-ethnic clientele without much prior training or exposure to non-Finns. Their unfamiliarity with intercultural communication resulted in stress and frustration. Intercultural challenges and conflicts can cause much inner turmoil and have a negative impact on a person's view of the particular client's culture, on the effectiveness of one's work and also on the feelings of job satisfaction.

In developing the lecture materials for the above-mentioned intercultural training seminars, already in the year 1998 I was a secretary in the DOI's in-house working group for improving the DOI's customer service. As such, I recorded the experiences and opinions of the staff members both with the face-to-face and telephone contacts with the mainly ethnically non-Finnish clientele, and wrote up the working group's proposal for the administration to take action on. The fact that for a couple of years I also had personal work experience with the customer contacts in the DOI by having a regular slot in the customer service rota during the DOI's customer service hours, gave me an added understanding and practical insights into what is involved in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. Thus the real experiences and expressed needs of the DOI personnel were very much the starting point of the training modules.

With time, the aspect of host culture adaptation began to get more and attention in my intercultural training seminars. In the course of the discussions, role plays, other exercises and their debriefings I came to realise the value of giving the host culture representatives ample opportunity and time to express, examine and reflect on their own reactions, thoughts, feelings and behaviour in an intercultural communication conflict situation in a manner that validates these reactions and gives proper understanding concerning their causes, both the stated and the hidden ones. This kind of approach gives the participants a better self-understanding, and assists them in becoming more open to similar processes in their ethnically non-Finnish customers.

The epistemological assumptions behind this research is founded on interpretive philosophy of inquiry, which is mostly concerned with describing and explaining phenomena, rather than finding causal relationships and predicting behaviour. This line of thinking is adopted in the way the qualitative and quantitative data are combined in the analysis. Here this research takes a similar stance with Collier and Thomas (1988) in thinking that cultural identity is important in describing and explaining intercultural communication and that 'cultural is recursive with cultural identity'. Thus, the perspective on cultural identity in this research is based on identity negotiation, formation and management in intercultural contact, characterized by a theme of inter-subjectivity (Collier and Thomas 1988:105-107), or, as they quote Geertz (1973) and Grossberg (1982) respectively, a web of significance in which people of

particular cultures are caught, and a processual understanding that is fused in dialogue respectively.

Emphasizing inter-subjective knowledge sees culture as both constraining and facilitating conduct (Collier and Thomas 1988:107). However, there is considerable variation in how researchers conceptualise the relationship between socio-cultural context and human behaviour. The main issue is at what level are the behavioural similarities and differences to be interpreted. The three approaches of absolutism, relativism and universalism have been suggested by Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen (2002). Absolutism assumes that psychological phenomena are basically the same qualitatively in all cultures, while a relativist stance assumes that all human behaviour is culturally patterned, with aversion to cultural comparisons. The universal is situated between the first two. It assumes that the underlying psychological processes are common to all cultures, even though particular cultures display different variations of these basic themes (Berry 2004:166-167). This is also the epistemological stance seen to be useful in analysing the qualitative data in this research, for according to Berry:

> "…it seeks to understand the role of culture in stimulating behavioural diversity, accepting culture as source of human variety … this approach permits the discovery not only of behavioural similarities (universals) but of behavioural differences (cultural specifics) across human groups" (original brackets) (Berry 2004:167).

Berry (2004) continues to state that within the universalist stance, comparisons are made cautiously, employing a wide variety of methodological principles, and interpretations of similarities and differences are attempted that take alternative, culturally based meanings into account. Comparisons are considered essential to the achievement of a global understanding of human behaviour.

This is congruent with the ontological assumption also guiding this research, which purports that everywhere persons negotiate identity (Brown and Levinson 1978). The assumption that such 'universal laws' (original quotes) of human behaviour can be approached even though they may not be fully reached is based on the existence of such universals in the disciplines of biology, sociology and linguistics (Berry 2004:167).

These above epistemological and ontological assumptions are reflected in the main assumptions guiding this research. The first research assumption concerning the similar nature of the host culture adaptees' and cultural newcomers cultural adaptation processes addresses the identity negotiation from the universalist stance.

The second research assumption concerning the demanding nature and the stressfulness of the cultural adaptation process in the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts bases the treatment of this topic in the tradition of interpretive inquiry, describing and explaining the process of cultural adaptation and the role of culture shock within it.

The third research assumption concerned the need to develop a particular kind of intercultural competence, with the surface level communication components of

skills and behaviour rooted in the deep level sensitivity components of awareness and attitudes with the interculturalisation of one's identity. This is epistemologically grounded on the centrality of cultural identity formation and management in intercultural context, with cultural being closely tied with cultural identity, as discussed above. Cultural identity is one level of multiple identities that are formed and managed in intercultural communication, and communication is more intercultural to the extent that intersubjective cultural interpretations are revealed in discourse (Collier and Thomas 2004:99).

One of the main aims of this research is to examine and make visible the *process* of gaining intercultural competence. The need to keep the process-view as strongly visible as possible has also strongly guided my choices in the way I have handled and analysed the qualitative data, i.e. the free comments from the three surveys for which this research is based. The data was not examined with the help of any computerised qualitative data analysis tool. I chose to go this way as I felt that otherwise the multifaceted nature of the process-aspect may be too easily lost, and the computer generated categories arrived at end up possibly denoting fixed, static attitudes, rather than the reality of what is actually involved in the processes of one's identity becoming changed and sensitised to intercultural issues, developing one's behavioural competencies and in gaining knew knowledge in the midst of the cultural adaptation process.

As for the sense in which I use the term 'ethnic' in this research, in connection with such phrases as 'multi-ethnic', and 'ethnic non-Finns', I refer to the following quote by Verma and Mallick (1988):

> "There has been a pronounced, sudden increase in the tendencies by people in many countries and in many circumstances to insist on the significance their group significance and identity. … In most cross-cultural research the preferred term (to describe this identity) is 'ethnicity'. … Ethnicity is not an all-or-nothing classification; it is more a clumsy conglomeration of attributes with which the individual identifies, and these may include language, religion, skin colour, culture and so on. However, ethnicity is not a permanent feature of one's identity. In cross-cultural research, the concept of ethnicity as a tool to explain differences in behaviour between two or more groups is used. The fact is often ignored that, in general, the difference between ethnic groups are matters of degree rather than of absolute distinction" (Verma and Mallick 1988:100-101).

In this research, the term ethnic non-Finn denotes those customers who have moved to Finland as adults and who therefore are not familiar with the Finnish way of communicating with the administrative system, creating situations of cultural misunderstandings in communication. The dilemma of whether to call this type of customer contacts multi-ethnic or multi-cultural is evident from Verma and Mallick's[13] quote above, where he includes culture as part of one's ethnic identity. The first option seems to give the impression of concentrating on the *persons who are communicating*, (italics added) while the second option seems to give the centre stage to *how the communication is carried out* (italics added). It is recognized however, that many ethnic non-Finns of immigrant background have been socialized in Finland since childhood and that their communication style

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[13]   Ibid

with the Finnish government servants may not differ at all from the ethnic Finns dealings with the same authorities, thus exemplifying Verma and Mallick's[14] claim of the differences between ethnic groups not being absolute.

However, it also needs to be kept in mind that some ethnic non-Finns with socialisation experience in Finland, be they of recent immigrant background or members of the traditional ethnic minorities in Finland, may still retain their own communication style, distinct from that of the Finns. They still have communication clashes owing to this difference when dealing with the Finnish government servants. Likewise, ethnic Finns with extensive and intensive experience of living in other cultures may upon their re-entry into Finland have communication clashes with the Finnish civil servants similar to those of ethnic non-Finns. However, this research restricts itself to using the terms 'ethnically non-Finnish' and 'ethnic non-Finn' in discussing the multi-ethnic client contacts of the Finnish civil servants.

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[14]   Ibid

CHAPTER 1.   THE OVERALL RESEARCH THEME:

CONNECTING THE PROCESS WITH THE GOALS IN CULTURAL ADAPTATION

As the name of the thesis already suggests, this research is divided into two main themes. It examines both the *process* and the *goal* of cultural adaptation of the host culture adaptees through the professional setting of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts. It also looks at the interconnectedness of the two by examining how the actual process of cultural adaptation in itself is intricately connected with the stated goal of intercultural competence, expressed as effectiveness and sensitivity.

I study the process view through the role of stress in the Finnish civil servants' cultural adaptation process, both quantitatively and qualitatively. As for the second theme, the goal of cultural adaptation, in line with the mainline tradition of intercultural research, I examine it as an attainment of intercultural competence. Even though cultural adaptation can be viewed from a much wider perspective, I specifically look for the general and contextualised components of the professional intercultural competence of the Finnish civil servants needed in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. In this quest, I further divide this competence into surface level and deep-level competencies. I look at the interconnectedness of these two; how the surface level intercultural competencies get manifested in culturally adapted communication, while finding out how the deep level competence development is tied in with the cultural adaptation process as identity change and how it forms a basis for a sustained surface-level competence. Thus the interlinkage between cultural adaptation and intercultural competence also gets addressed.

In the theoretical treatment of this topic, I adapt an interdisciplinary approach by connecting the intercultural research with acculturation studies in order to gain a more comprehensive and holistic view of the qualities of critical pragmatic intercultural professional.

1 The research questions

The three assumptions concerning host culture adaptees discussed in the introductory section as guiding this research, give rise to two main research questions with their sub-themes. They are as follows:

1.   What is the process of the Finnish civil servants' cultural adaptation like in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts?
      As sub-themes of this question I more specifically examine the following issues:
   a.   Which factors cause stress in the multi ethnic customer contacts and to what extent?
   b.   What is the role of stress for cultural adaptation in the multi-ethnic customer contacts? I.e. do persons who have undergone intense adaptive stress reactions exhibit greater intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity?
   c.   What are the issues through which the Finnish civil servants deal with the cultural adaptation process?

2.   What are the component areas of the Finnish civil servants' intercultural competence in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, and how are they interconnected?
      As sub-themes of this research question, I more specifically ask the following questions:
   a.   What are their general and contextualised intercultural competencies?
   b.   What existing models can be utilised for portraying the orientations towards persons from other cultures in order to check one's own level of intercultural competencies?
   c.   How is the cultural adaptation process interlinked with intercultural competence?

I will begin to answer these questions by adopting a dialectical approach that integrates three separate strands: the social science view, the interpretive approach and the stance of critical thinking in understanding culture and communication. In line with this dialectic perspective, through the multi-ethnic customer contacts of the Finnish civil servants I first look at the nature of the process of developing intercultural competence seen as intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. I examine how stress due to different factors is manifested in an identity disintegrating culture shock experience on the one hand. On the other hand, I examine how stress is utilised for growth towards a more intercultural professional identity. I then relate the above-mentioned components of mindful intercultural competence to those of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional. Finally, I look at the connection between the cultural adaptation and intercultural competence. I will ask whether the manner in which the cultural adaptation process takes place make

a difference in the end results, i.e. in the strategic quality and quantity of intercultural competence attained.

I utilise the term 'strategic' in this research to describe how I integrate and connect the acculturation domain with the intergroup domain within the intercultural research tradition through multicultural ideology and intercultural critique, as propounded by Young (1996). Intercultural theorists have been divided into two camps concerning whether they focus their attention on cultural differences (expressed in learning and teaching styles and language use for example in the field of education or on cultural deprivation, taking into account the elements of social class and power issues (Pusch 2004:28). Even though this division still remains, there are developments attempting to integrate the advantages of focusing on cultural differences with the questions of unequal division of privileges and power. Banks (Banks 1988, Banks and Banks 1995) has concluded that intercultural issues are too complex for either or approach and that it is necessary to explore how all variables influence learning and achievement.

The above division also finds expression as the individualist vs. critical approach, with the first-mentioned one concentrating on the cultural adaptation processes of an individual as a member of the adapting group and the latter mentioned one seen as concentrating on the macro-level critique of organisational and societal structures affecting the possibilities and quality of the acculturation process. In a sense, this division is also replicated in the way research on intercultural relations has been expressed in two domains: acculturation and intergroup research. Berry (Landis et al. 2004:175) makes note of the fact that acculturation is considered to be a process that entails contact between two groups and that Graves (1976) later proposed that the respective process of cultural change in individuals who are members of cultures in contact should be termed *psychological acculturation* (author's italics).

Apart from the above context of education, the call for an integrative approach by Banks (1988, 1995) can also be extended to other spheres, where intercultural issues play a role, such as multi-ethnic customer contacts, which is the focus of this research. There are also some terminological implications owing to the integrated, interdisciplinary approach. In my own analysis I use the term cultural adaptation for the total process of gaining intercultural competence, including intercultural communicative competence and developing interculturally sensitised professional identity. However, when the process of identity change upon entering new cultures is referred to by quoting the experts in the fields that are related to intercultural research, such as psychology, social psychology and cross-cultural psychology, where acculturation is the established term for this phenomenon, naturally this term is employed in these instances instead of cultural adaptation.

In this research, the theoretical framework for the host culture members' intercultural adaptation process is achieved by embedding the acculturation attitudes of individual civil servants within the intergroup research tradition through the concept of multicultural ideology. The strategic intercultural

effectiveness is achieved through various psychological changes, expressed through behavioural shifts and issues dealing with cultural identity, security as stability and resistance to change vs. interculturally critical fluidity as readiness for open horizons.

Thus, in my scheme of things, the concept of strategic effectiveness is also combined with the critical stance as I have adopted it from Young (1996). This will be explained in more detail shortly in this chapter while discussing the intercultural philosophy utilised in this research, and particularly when detailing the components of the intercultural competence of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional. Suffice it to say at this juncture that integrating the acculturation and intergroup domains and going back and forth between the two also mirrors the holistic approach of this research, which sees the internal reality of the cultural adaptation process as a dialectic fluctuation between opposing forces.

2   Stress in the cultural adaptation process

As the title of this research already suggests, and as expressed in the sub-themes of the first research questions, I first of all ask the question: "What is stressful in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts?" This is done by examining the various stress factors in the two government bodies under study here. I use the term stress to signify the subjective experience of the respondents, described by them in their responses to the survey questionnaire for which this research is based. It is first of all measured quantitatively through the multiple choice options, and secondly it is described qualitatively, as psychological and physiological symptoms expressed by the respondents in the free comments section in the survey questionnaires.

The purpose for adopting this approach is two-fold. First of all I want to examine what are the main causes of stress and how great is the stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts under study. Secondly, in the tradition of culture shock research, I want to examine the nature and the role of stress in the cultural adaptation process of the host culture members, as exemplified by the Finnish civil servants. In this, my research first of all rests on the broad base of stress and coping tradition within the acculturation studies, the usefulness of which has been attested by previous research: "The stress and coping tradition of acculturation studies (Ward 1996, Berry 1997) has increased our knowledge of the psychological outcomes of cultural relocation" Liebkind (2004:391).

The Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts are an example of cultural relocation to both parties communication-wise. The empirical material of the present study, with its focus on the stressors of the multi-ethnic customer contacts, conceptualises the cultural adaptation process of the host culture representatives in the above mentioned tradition, as it looks at stress due to language problems, perceived cultural incompatibilities in communication style and various other factors. Within this view, negative reactions occur when

stressor of the above kind exceed the individuals' coping resources, or protecting mediators, to borrow Ward's (1996) terminology. Thus the methodology for collecting the empirical data and likewise one strand of analysing the data in this research rests on the stress and coping literature of the cross-cultural psychology.

2.1 Adaptive stress: comparison with Kim's thinking

The next questions concerning the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts considered are: "How is their adaptive stress expressed, i.e. what modes and patterns does it take, and why are the multi-ethnic-customer contacts so stressful, what is the role of stress for developing both intercultural communicative effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity as part of interculturalised identity?"

Within the broader context of stress and coping tradition, my analysis of the role of stress in the cultural adaptation process, developed later on in this research, parallels Kim's (2001) process model of stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, where "…the concurrence of acculturation and deculturation … brings about an internal *transformation* (author's italics) in individual strangers – a gradual opening of more or less culturally fixated existence to an open-ended intercultural synthesis" (Kim 2001:54, based on Dyal and Dyal 1981).

In a similar sense, I look at the host culture member's path of cultural adaptation towards interculturally open horizons in like manner to Kim's models "that focus on the process of enculturation, rather than on the static fact of it" (Kim 2004:7). There are also other ways in which I see my theorising connecting with Kim's (2001) model, even though hers is designed to describe the cultural adaptation process of the strangers adapting to their new host culture environment. Through this research I first of all want to point out that the host culture adaptees' cultural adaptation process is not different from that which Kim (2001) describes concerning cultural strangers. Secondly, I make the point that the stress of the multi-ethnic customer contacts is an incentive for adaptive changes for the Finnish civil servants in a similar fashion to Kim's (2001) description of the growth dynamics in the acculturation process.

Since my analysis concerning what is the role of stress in cultural adaptation and the way it is played out will have parallelisms with Kim's (2001), a summary of her thinking follows.

The core idea is that adaptive change is bound to cause stress in the stranger's psyche. This is expressed in a conflict between the need for acculturation and the resistance to deculturation, between the push of the new culture and the pull of the old, between the existing conditions inside the stranger and the demands of the external environment. This process, which is an attempt at stabilizing, cannot happen without some measure of temporary disintegration of one's personality, and in the extreme cases it can result in a complete breakdown of one's identity. However, no open system can keep on stabilizing itself endlessly. The state of conflict and the heightened awareness caused by stress are the very forces that push the person to find a solution and

develop new cultural understanding, expressed in action. Thus the dynamic stress-adaptation disequilibrium causes subtle *growth* (author's italics), as due to the creative forces of 'self-reflexivity' (author's quotes) new ways of working out problems are found, and the period of stress for this particular factor is passed (Kim 2001:55-56, original source: Kirschner 1994:165).

Stress, adaptation and growth constitute a three-pronged dynamic of psychic movement in the forward and upward direction of increased chances for success in meeting the demands of the host environment, where none of the three factors can occur without the others and each occurs because of the others (Kim 2001:56). Stress, in this regard, is intrinsic to complex open systems such as humans and essential in their transformation process – one that allows for self-organization and self-renewal (Masterpasqua and Perna 1997, Ruben 1983).

The prototypical acculturative growth is a spiral with diminishing dimensions over time, as strangers go through a progression of internal change, and the fluctuations of stress and adaptation are likely to become less intense or severe, leading to an overall calming of strangers' internal condition. In the beginning, the continual cyclical draw-back-to-leap process occurs in larger and more noticeable fluctuations between the dialectic, opposite forces of push and pull, change and stability, engagement and disengagement. However, the cyclical spiral movement is evident at all stages of the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, for it is never acted out in a smooth, linear progression. The cultural strangers respond to each new stressful experience by drawing back and thus activating adaptive energy to reorganize oneself and consequently leap forward (Kim 2001:56-59).

Every stressful crisis, once dealt with, gives a person the opportunity for new learning and growth. Mezirow (1991) emphasizes the capacity of people to develop a higher level of self-understanding in a transformative learning process, which involves finding a new perspective by unlearning the old one. This learning and growth process is inevitably accompanied by stress.

This research examines how, and to what extent, is it possible to produce such deeper level self-understanding, even though this research is not about transformative learning as such. The cultural adaptation process leading to cultural competence is looked at through the culture shock experience in an interconnected fashion, in a parallel manner to Kim's (2001) concepts of stress, adaptation and growth. Combining these approaches provides a wider insight into the Finnish civil servants' acculturation experiences in their multi-ethnic customer contacts, as knowledge gained from one approach is added to the one gained from the other aspects. For any practical application, such as training considerations, this allows for a holistic and critical outlook on intercultural communication, whereby communication behaviour can be changed, starting on the level of an informed individual with the ability to affect eventual societal level transformations.

Adaptive stress is at its most severe in the beginning of the cultural adaptation process, as demonstrated by culture shock studies. Even the more conservative estimates say that within the first year in a thus far unfamiliar

culture, a person can experience nearly one third of the 43 most significant life changes identified by Chan and Lam (1987b). As people everywhere at all times strive to hold constant a number of variables in their internal makeup to obtain an integrative whole, defensive responses are initially activated under stress in intercultural contact situations.

2.2   A brief history of research on culture shock

Research on the phenomenon of culture shock has been going on in earnest for over 50 years, ever since the international movement of persons and groups has increasingly become the topic of ever widening research.[15] The early research concentrated on describing the strong reactions caused by a move away from one's familiar surroundings, such as confusion, anxiety, feelings of powerlessness, aggressiveness, regression, depression, different kinds of fears, loss of self-confidence and various psychosomatic symptoms (e.g. Oberg 1960). The term culture shock was coined to describe a state of being in another culture that exhibited the above-mentioned symptoms and signs.

The number of definitions for culture shock increased with the new advances of the research into this area. They were connected to the stress reactions of the individuals and groups who lived in an environment previously foreign to them, and found it difficult to react, or behave in an appropriate manner in their new cultural surroundings. Culture shock was analysed both in the ways the host culture was found to be difficult to understand by the newcomers, and in the ways the newcomers found it difficult to predict the consequences of their *own* behaviour in regards to how the host culture members would react to it.

Culture shock was looked at from various angles, as a shock to one's role expectations, or as a language shock, highlighting the problems caused by linguistic differences (Furnham and Boechner 1994:49-56156-158). In general, culture shock was described as an adaptation process to a new culture that happens through a crisis. Lysgaard (1955) described it as a three-stage process of honeymoon, frustration and reorientation/adaptation. Oberg (1960) describes the culture shock symptoms and process with the help of a U-shaped curve. Later on, other researchers (for example Salo-Lee 1996, Weaver 1993 and Brown 1990) have tried to enhance the model by describing the changes in the intensity and length of the culture shock experience. Based on the U-model, a W-model was developed (Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1963) to describe the process of return culture shock. As is evident from the above, many researchers treat culture shock, as experienced by the individual, as a certain state of mind. A couple of well-known definitions of culture shock with its consequent

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[15]   The discussion of the developments in the research trends concerning culture shock in this subsection is based on Markku Salakka's overview of the different culture shock models in his doctoral thesis*: Suomeen palaavien lähetystyöntekijöiden paluuta koskevat puhetavat: Paluusokki ja identiteetin monikulttuuriset jännitteet*, Oulu University, 2006

symptoms illustrate the point. Oberg's (1960) definition is one of the classic ones. It is quoted here for its relevant parts:

> "Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: how to give orders, how to make purchases, when and when not to respond. Now these cues, which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, or norms, are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind on hundreds of these cues, most of which we are not consciously aware" (Oberg 1960).

With time, the use of the term 'shock' in the culture shock research began to receive criticism as being too intense and even stigmatising (Heyward 2002:12-13, Berry et al. 2002:362). In later research, theorising about learning and identity rose to the central stage in the treatment of culture shock. The stressfulness of the experience was not denied, but its deeper and positive affects were also recognised (Heyward 2002:14-15, Sparrow 2000, Bennett 1993, Bennett and Bennett 2004).

Some researchers (Stringham 1990:12-13, Berry et al. 2002:236) talk about the acculturation stress rather than culture shock. This refers to the way a person reacts to the kinds of situations that go beyond their psychosocial capacities.

Instead of stress, Gudykunst (1998, 2005) uses the terms 'anxiety' and 'mindfulness' in his anxiety uncertainty management (AUM) theory. According to him, certain levels of uncertainty and anxiety motivate people entering a new culture to engage in successful social interaction with the host culture members.

Gradually the research of the culture shock phenomenon began to make note of the fact that culture shock, when looked at as an acculturation stress, can be a positive experience. It sensitises the person to the new cultural surroundings, and motivates one to manage in the situation. As such, the experience of stress is seen to be growth-oriented and positive in nature (Berry et al. 2002: 362). People differ in how intensively they experience culture shock. Church (1982:542) states that not all persons go through culture shock at all, and seem to adapt to the new culture without any difficulties, and that some people do not go through the initial 'honeymoon' stage, but go immediately to the confusion and depression stage before the eventual adaptation. There is not much evidence of the 'honeymoon' stage of the classical culture shock theories in the comments of the Finnish civil servants concerning their multi-ethnic customer contacts. One can ask is this stage lacking in the host culture members' adaptation process? However, as Church has mentioned, this stage is also sometimes skipped in the culture shock process of those persons who are undergoing it in another country as a sojourner.

2.3   Connecting culture shock and stress with intercultural competence

Through this research, I want to show that culture shock, as a disintegration of identity, is generally a positive development process for the host culture adaptees', as it is for the immigrants, as pointed out for example by Kim (2001)

in the above discussion and by Dabrowski (1964:5). I tie the culture shock experience as part of the adaptive stress into the cultural adaptation process of the Finnish civil servants in general.

Most importantly, I want to point out the strong interconnection between culture shock and developing adequate intercultural competence, particularly as far as interculturally sensitised identity is concerned. Thus through the concept of culture shock, the two main themes of this research, i.e. the cultural adaptation process and the intercultural competence of the host culture adaptees, become connected. This interconnectedness is actually the third theme of my research. In this thinking, I join in with those researchers who are of the opinion that a lack of culture shock symptoms mean that the experience of the culturally 'other' is only superficially conceptualised (e.g. Weaver 1993). Likewise Eaton and Lasry (1978) found a positive correlation between a high initial acculturative stress and eventual good success in cultural adaptation; in their research they showed that more upwardly mobile immigrants experienced greater stress than those who were less upwardly mobile.

Other research (Marmot and Syme 1976, Miranda and Castro 1977) has also found that better adapted immigrants in America have been found to have somewhat greater frequency of stress-related symptoms (such as anxiety and need for psychotherapy) than their less-adapted counterparts. Similar results have also been recorded in later research. For example, Ward and Kennedy (1994) found notable psychological stress in those international students in Singapore who attempted to integrate in Singaporean society. Likewise, Rivera-Sinclair (1997) found that in a Cuban immigrant community in Washington D.C. area there was a positive relationship between psychological orientation of biculturalism and level of stress ('anxiety') (author's quotes and brackets) (Kim 2001:60).

In developing my ideas for connecting culture shock with intercultural competence, I specifically draw on the empirical findings of studies conducted by Kealey, who states that strong culture shock reaction indicates a more effective eventual cultural adaptation and better intercultural effectiveness (Hawes and Kealey 1981:84). In other words, culture shock is seen as an intensive learning experience that changes the person in a profound manner. This way of thinking places culture shock at the very centre of the intercultural experience.

According to Kealey (1995:21) the Kenya study[16], which looks at the effectiveness of the Nordic Development Aid personnel, suggests that those among them who were judged most effective in their collaborative partnership projects through local acquisition of skills via mutual learning, originally experienced great difficulty in adjusting to a new culture. Kealey's own research results on the Canadian On-site developmentally relevant North-South

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[16] Evaluation of The Effectiveness of Techincal Assistance Personnel, 1988; Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), The Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA), The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Development and Cooperation (MCD/NORAD), and the Swedisch International Development Agency (SIDA).

collaborators' [17]overseas effectiveness echo the Kenya study findings: those people who were judged by their peers to be most effective overseas were also likely to experience the greatest degree of culture shock during the transition period (Kealey 1995:37).

In a diagram on the various components listing the factors affecting cross-cultural adaptation, Kealey (1995:36) states unequivocally that ease of adjustment does not predict effectiveness, and says that background and situational variables are not as important as the effect of culture shock on effectiveness. Although 65 % of the Canadian respondents initially denied experiencing any culture shock, 55 % of them admitted in subsequent interviews to feeling *some degree of culture shock or stress* (italics added). This evidence suggests that most people do experience initial culture shock, but that they feel there is a stigma attached to admitting any difficulty in coping with the cross-cultural transition. Experiencing culture shock is seen by many as *a weakness, to which one should not admit* (italics added) (Kealey 1995:38).

These sentiments of the Canadian overseas experts have also been expressed by the Finnish civil servants in their comments throughout this research, as well as by the participants in the intercultural training seminars I have run over the years.

It can thus be deducted from the above that success in intercultural adaptation process in the professional contexts has certain similarities, whether the context is expatriates' intercultural adaptation on overseas assignments, or host culture members' respective adaptation in the domestic context, of which the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts are an example. Kealey (1995:1) himself recognises this similarity in stating that even though his report is primarily aimed at individuals going on overseas assignments in North-South collaborative projects, it may also be of interest to the cross-cultural training community in general. He states that the lessons about individual intercultural effectiveness will be similar in all types of international or cross-cultural tasks needing some level of co-operation, and that while the analysis of environmental or macro levels discussed in his report is mainly specific to North-South collaborations, the factors that feature in them are likely to be similar to those in other intercultural contexts.

Hence there seems to be justification for drawing partly on Kealy's findings when discussing the host culture members' intercultural adaptation process and intercultural competence.

It is important to recognise culture shock reactions as part and parcel of the cultural adaptation process. Two things need to be stressed in connection with this. The first is that "if we don't understand the process involved in cross-cultural adaptation, it is very difficult to predict who will succeed overseas and who will fail" (Kealey 1995:3). The second is that "our attitudes about culture shock must change. The negative connotations associated with culture shock

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[17]   In the original study from 1990, they were called technical advisors. However, this traditional term, together with the concomitant term "transfer of skills" has been perceived to be patronising and replaced by the terms used here

must be replaced with a realization that culture shock is an inevitable part of the process of cross-cultural adaptation" (Kealey 1995:38). Even though at the initial phase of culture shock severe adaptive difficulties may cause drastic disruptions to the integrity of one's identity, at the same time it is also true that "the higher the resistance against structural change, the more powerful the fluctuations which ultimately break through – the richer and more varied also the unfolding of self-organization dynamic at the platform of resilient structure" (Jantsch 1980:255).

2.4 Prolonged culture shock as negative adaptation cycle

Not all persons go through the stress-adaptation-growth cycles in an equally successful manner. Kim (2001:56) quotes Moos and Tsu (1976:13) in saying that "every crisis presents both an opportunity for psychological growth and a danger for psychological deterioration." There are, of course, several reasons why a person's inner resources do not allow for the opening of one's cultural horizons. Limited awareness concerning cultural adaptation process or intercultural issues in general, if not dealt in any way in the course of continued intercultural contacts, can have negative consequences for cultural adaptation, leading to eventual long-term cultural maladaptation.

This can express itself as a continual stress in the intercultural contact situations, in the extreme cases causing severe panic and prolonged damage to a person's psyche (Hettema 1979). Others may so strongly resist cultural change that they develop what Giles, Coupland, Coupland, and Nussbaum (1992) have termed a negative adaptation cycle, i.e. a reverse (or regressive) process of change in the direction of increased stress, maladaptation and psychic degeneration (Kim 2001:60). Defensive responses are activated in persons under such acculturative stress and the existing internal structures are attempted to be upheld by some protective psychological manoeuvring (e.g. Lazarus, Cohen, Folkman, Kanner and Schnefer 1980). People attempt to avoid or minimize the anticipated or actual stress of internal disequilibrium by such strategies as selective attention, self-deception, denial, avoidance, and withdrawal, hostility and cynicism (Kim 2001:56). Of course all of the above reactions can be expressions of culture shock reactions at various points of the cultural adaptation process, as long as new things to adjust to keep cropping up, and exhibiting such symptoms only speaks of maladaptation and negative adaptation cycle if they become unduly prolonged.
One of the goals of the three surveys on which this research is based was to find out about the level of intercultural awareness among the Finnish civil servants within the Directorate of Immigration and the Social Insurance Institute of Finland. The results showed that things that in reality belong to the sphere of intercultural communication were continually commented on by the respondents in connection with all the other factors. This can be interpreted as either limited intercultural awareness, or alternatively exhibiting a diffuse understanding of the role of culture. In the second interpretation cultural

factors are seen to permeate many aspects of the multi-ethnic customer contact situation, thus showing well-developed intercultural sensitivity. There are comments in both veins in the surveys. However, having a more limited intercultural awareness than one considers oneself to have, is a fact that is attested to by other research. For example, when developing the intercultural development inventory for measuring intercultural sensitivity, Bennett[18] with his colleagues also discovered that in the self-assessment questions the test persons often place themselves higher on the intercultural sensitivity scale than what their actions and attitudes actually warranted according to the test results from the other parts of the test.

Opinions, feelings and actions described by the Finnish civil servants exhibiting limited intercultural awareness have already been quoted in other connections in this research. Limited intercultural awareness, including the lack of awareness concerning what is involved in the cultural adaptation process mentally and emotionally, causes misinterpretations of each other's intentions and motives in the multi-ethnic customer contacts both for the civil servants and for their customers. If the participants in this social interaction are not made aware of how these two factors are at work in the situation, their cultural learning can be impeded in a severe manner and be a cause for negative attitudes towards cultural learning in general. This is exacerbated by the fact that one can also misinterpret one's own intercultural adaptation reactions as negative attitudes towards the cultural other, causing additional psychological obstacles to cultural learning.

2.5 Culture shock as liminal transition process in cultural adaptation

Culture shock should not be treated as an exotic ailment, associated with distant places and strange, unfamiliar symptoms, as has been the general tendency. Instead, it should be seen as only a subcategory of general transition experiences, "bearing remarkable resemblance to the tensions and anxieties we face whenever change threatens the stability of our lives and as something that can also be experienced within a subculture in one's home country" (Bennett J. 1998:215-16). Being able to draw on parallel experiences of similar nature in previous life experiences can give a person the confidence that one is not entirely without resources in coping with culture shock (Bennett J. 1998:216,222).

This view fits in with mine in connection with the Finnish civil servants as examples of host culture adaptees. First of all, even though they do not leave their home country, the multi-ethnic customer contact situations are the kind of culture-shock inducing subcultures mentioned above. Secondly, I also want to point out that the mere realization that neither the context nor the content of culture shock are unfamiliar and alien features, can give the Finnish civil servants assurance that they have the ability to adapt culturally to the diverse intercultural demands in their multi-ethnic customer contacts.

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[18]   Hammer et al, 2003 and personal conversation with Milton Bennett

In a similar manner to other transition experiences that force one to take a closer look at one's identity and adaptability, likewise culture shock can be viewed as a highly provocative state in which one can work towards personal intercultural development. During transition experiences, a person's analytical processes are often in high gear, drawing on the unlimited human ability for constant comparison and contrast to make sense of the situation. Through the Finnish civil servants' comments, I examine the process of how this activity of comparison and contrast develops in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, as the civil servants gain intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity.

Any transition experience inherently involves some degree of ambiguity, as one needs to let go of the old and familiar, and grasp the new and yet unfamiliar (Bennett J. 1998:215). I see a parallel between Bennett's thinking on transition shock and my way of conceptualising the creation of intercultural spaces, which is based on Lie (2003) and Turner (1969). I describe it as involving a liminal state of being 'in-between'. This process of moving from one stage to the other through a liminal experience can express itself in psychological and physical symptoms of anxiety, as well as defensiveness. I describe the nature of this process as a back and forth pull between opposing forces. The operation of transition shock is described in similar terms: "often two very contradictory systems vie for equal time" (Bennett J. 1998:218).

In this research I also share the thinking concerning the inherent ambiguity of transition experiences consisting of the need to re-interpret oneself and the surrounding world in a manner that preserves some meaning (Bennett J. 1998:217). The need to create meaning despite estrangement and ambivalence in the midst of conflicting impulses, the need to articulate the stages of its resolution, and the risk of lasting disintegration if the process is not worked out (Marris 1975:45-46) are the three core concerns in this re-interpretation.

The way the three vistas in cultural adaptation of the host culture adaptees are seen to overlap and interconnect give a similar picture that is presented by the two above researchers. They both talk about how, with knowledge gained from previous transitions, one can transform defensiveness into stimulating intercultural learning. One can transfer such things as personal characteristics of self-awareness, non-evaluativeness, cultural empathy and understanding of cultural complexity from the previous experiences into the intercultural contact situation. J. Bennett (1998:220) further qualifies the interrelationship between the four above-mentioned personal characteristics by stating that a strong sense of identity can also be a hindrance to cultural adaptation, if one is inflexible and becomes threatened too quickly by conflicting stimuli. Therefore strong identity needs to be complemented by non-judgemental attitude for positive cultural adaptation to take place.

The Finnish civil servants' comments, as expressed in this research, prove this point. Importantly though, the above characteristics, as a sign of personal intercultural growth "may very well be *developed* (author's italics) during the cross-cultural learning process," and "perhaps the greatest degree of shock in the cultural transition experience can be related to the recognition of our own

values and beliefs in the light of the new environment" (Bennett J. 1998:222). This is exactly what I see gradually happening in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts, and it is this very *process* that I primarily examine in this research. Hence, I too, stress the need to articulate the various stages of the process, as well as their resolution, to show that they are neither 'alien' features, to use her terminology, nor something one should try to avoid, but that they are part and parcel of the process of developing intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity.

As discussed in the previous subsection of this research in connection with negative adaptation cycle, and as mentioned by Marris (1975) above, culture shock, as any other transition experience, can lead to two kinds of outcomes: "When perceived as challenge, change can simulate creativity and flexible communication. When perceived as disorientation, change may produce barriers and defensive communication" (Bennett J. 1998:223).

Through the Finnish civil servants' comments I show that defensiveness can perhaps prolong culture shock and delay the acquisition of a new frame of reference (Bennett J. 1998:219). When the consequent adaptation and learning resources to deal with the loss of familiar frames of reference prove inadequate, this can lead to a cognitive conflict. Culture shock is a reaction to such a conflict. However, it should be stressed that it is not only the loss of the frame of reference that causes culture shock, but the defensiveness that such a loss causes. Not knowing what is going on due to losing the familiar symptoms as part of the culture shock experience is already hard, but not being able to do what one has come to value doing is even more challenging (Bennett J. 1998:219). It is precisely the struggle with the above issues as part of learning through crisis that I describe in my discussion of the Finnish civil servants' comments concerning their multi-ethnic customer contacts.

The theme of learning through crisis is also present in the pedagogical thinking of Bennett and Bennett elsewhere (Bennett 1986, 1993, Bennett and Bennett 1998). They suggest the utilisation of measures that support change and challenge the move to an interculturally more sensitive orientation. These measures help persons through cultural adaptation and transition crises in order for a multicultural identity to be formed. There are not many writers who deal with culture shock as personal growth, tying it in with identity change and acculturation (Bennett J. 1998:222). The following quote is a rare example of this perspective: "Cross-cultural learning experience … is a set of intensive and evocative situations in which the individual experiences himself and other people in a new way, distinct from previous situations and is consequently forced into new levels of consciousness and understanding" (Adler 1975:23).

This is how I see the culture shock phenomenon fitting in with the Finnish civil servants' experience of developing the qualities of critical pragmatic intercultural professional in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts. Exposure to a variety of cultures and worldviews helps one to tolerate differences more easily, as the new ways gradually become familiar by "coming

back again and again in new forms, seeking understanding without applying the values of one's own culture" (Bennett J. 1998:221-222). The Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts involve a multiplicity of cultural backgrounds, giving them ample opportunity to learn to deal with the complexity and ambiguity, as well as with the confusion involved in the transition experience.

In summary, going through the culture shock experience in an in-depth manner, by experiencing stress on the cognitive, operational and affective levels, can be seen as an integral part of the cultural adaptation process, if it is taken as cultural learning. The perceived effect of identity confusion and identity disintegration, expressed as integrity issues, are both directed towards oneself, as well as projected at the immigrants. In this sense, culture shock links the integrity vista to the cultural learning vista. The crucial aspects are how are intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity gained, and how can hindrances to these processes be prevented?

As already stated above, in the last decades research on intercultural communication has progressed from the concept of culture shock as a negative stress affecting a person's identity, which is needed to be overcome, into looking at intercultural contact situations through the concept of learning and then through the concept of identity. From this perspective, adaptive stress is seen as a mark of positive growth in identity. The way the various stress factors are examined in this research mirrors these developments in the research on culture shock. I see culture shock as an integral part of the Finnish civil servants' cultural adaptation process in developing adequate intercultural competence in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts. Culture shock as expressed in the Finnish civil servants' comments and its interconnectedness with intercultural competence will be returned to in more detail later on. At this juncture, I will introduce how the components of intercultural competence are conceptualised in this research.

3   Critical pragmatic intercultural professional

In conceptualising the components of intercultural competence as effectiveness and sensitivity, I have been guided by the thought that that there are different grades of effectiveness. A certain type of behaviour in an intercultural context may on the one hand be effective for short-term purposes, getting the desired effect in the immediate situation. On the other hand it may not have strategic long-term effectiveness, measured for example in the transferability of the new learning to other contexts. I propose that this kind of breadth and depth of intercultural competence only arises from the deep level sensitisation that has interculturalised a person's awareness and resulted in an interculturalised attitude. The limited context of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts focuses the intercultural competence on interculturalised *professionalism*, which allows for the

surface level intercultural communicative competencies to be utilised in an enhanced and more effective manner. This is how the different qualities of the critical pragmatic intercultural professional all work together.

3.1   Intercultural competence as effectiveness and sensitivity

I use the term *intercultural effectiveness* to include the areas of *skills and behaviour*. I see these two components being the manifestations of surface level intercultural competence, expressed in intercultural communication.

I employ the term *intercultural sensitivity* to cover the areas of *awareness and attitudes*. I consider them to be the components of deep-level intercultural competence, expressed in the qualities of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional and dealing with identity change. I see the role of identity issues in the cultural adaptation process as a means of bringing the in-depth learning aspect into the picture. It complements and deepens the surface-level skills learning to other areas besides communication competence. If the surface level intercultural skills, yielding positive returns for the immediate intercultural contact situation, are supplemented by the development of deep level intercultural sensitivity, the intercultural effectiveness will be greatly enhanced and the results more sustainable and far reaching strategically.

In trying to examine what goes into developing the qualities of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional, I consider that dividing the process into the two areas of intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity with the subsequent sub-components of skills, behaviour, awareness and attitudes is a useful way of describing the attainment of mindful intercultural competence. The mindful nature of the process comes from the way the sensitivity factors are combined with the effectiveness components. This has particular significance for the quality of intercultural training.

3.2   Intercultural competence: readiness and action

At this juncture, I combine the qualities of critical, pragmatic and professional with the term mindful. I have adapted this term from Ting-Toomey (1999).[19] To her, mindfulness meant being aware of our own and others' behaviour in the situation, and paying focused attention to the *process* (author's italics) of communication taking place between us and dissimilar others. In mindful communication, we encounter others and ourselves in the 'flow' (author's quotes) of the interaction moment. In mindless communication, we are consumed by our habits, reactive/defensive emotions, or biased ethnocentric cognitions. "To become an effective communicator in diverse cultural situations, we must first be mindful of the different characteristics that constitute the process itself" (Ting-Toomey 1999:16).

To me, mindful intercultural competence in the areas of effectiveness and sensitivity on the levels of skills and awareness, as readiness for intercultural

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[19]   I will discuss her theory in more detail shortly in Chapter 2.

action, or to put it in other terms, as a capacity for action on the level of skills and attitudes, is intercultural professional currency. I see this as a befitting term, for investing in capacity building for intercultural competence as a top-down organisational activity, in the end pays great dividends in the form of increased intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity of the host culture adaptee, both for the individual civil servants as well as to the authorities who invest in it. The organisation can have much to gain from the intercultural investment through changes in the organisational factors, institutional development and efficient management apparatus, with ramifications to management of services. I have adapted the term 'intercultural professional currency' from Kim (2001), who talks about the 'social currency' of the immigrants, which empowers them and enables them to be active participants in the civil society. Similarly, the Finnish civil servants can be empowered to obtain intercultural professional currency through targeted training, a topic to which we turn to in the applied section of this research.

The readiness for intercultural action as intercultural professional currency does not necessarily translate into intercultural action. Mindful communication only takes place when this currency is paid out in the areas of effectiveness and sensitivity, as activated states, on the levels of behaviour and attitudes. This is mindful intercultural communication in action, as expressed by the critical pragmatic intercultural professional, the qualities of which will be expounded later on in this research. Mindfulness arises from the surface-level intercultural effectiveness being rooted in the deep-level intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural effectiveness cannot be executed in a mindful manner without it being rooted in interculturally sensitised identity. Thus, my way of conceptualising critical pragmatic intercultural as strategic sustained intercultural effectiveness, which is based on intercultural sensitivity and expressed in mindful communication includes a parallel concept to Ting-Toomey's conceptualisation of mindfulness as an activated stage, springing from a conscious attitude.

To summarise, in the intercultural adaptation process, developing the two areas of intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity finds expression as acquiring intercultural competence. This is grounded in an interculturally sensitised professional identity. The four-way grid of skills, behaviour, awareness and attitude correlate with the more commonly used division of cognitive, affective and behavioural spheres of social learning, with skills and awareness being equated with the cognitive sphere and attitude with the affective sphere. Figure 1. below depicts this conceptualisation.

	CRITICAL PRAGMATIC INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE	
	Surface level: **EFFECTIVENESS**	Deep level: **SENSITIVITY**
	COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE	IDENTITY ISSUES
Readiness: Intercultural professional currency	Skills	Awareness
Activated state: Mindful intercultural communication	Behaviour	Attitudes

FIGURE 1.   Critical pragmatic intercultural competence

CHAPTER 2.   DEVELOPING THE MAIN THEMES

Next I will develop further the three themes of the research, which are the process, the goal and interconnectedness of the two in cultural adaptation within the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts. They are looked at as an example of how host-culture adaptees gain and demonstrate intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity in professional contexts.

I will start with the intercultural philosophy, which defines the goal of this research. I will then continue on to introduce the intercultural theories, which I draw on in developing new insights both into the host culture adaptees' process of gaining intercultural competence, and in analyzing the components of that competence. With an interdisciplinary approach I will then connect the intercultural theorizing with other communication studies, acculturation research and with the interconnectedness of language and culture. I look at these theories according to whether they address the issue of cultural adaptation and intercultural competence mainly as   effectiveness or alternatively as sensitivity, or include both into their schemes. I also examine whether these theories mainly deal either with the contents, or the methods of attaining intercultural competence, or do they include both aspects. In other words, does a particular theory answer only one or both of the following questions: "What are the components of contextualised intercultural competence required in a particular communicative situation?" vs. "How is contextualised intercultural competence attained?" I will also move from the theory-level to the application level by adapting certain models, with modifications, for utilizing the theories discussed into intercultural training.

1   The critical intercultural philosophy of this research

"How is it possible for members of two different cultures to understand each other without one culture surrendering its integrity to the other" (Young 1996:180). This central philosophical and ethical problem of intercultural communication is also the central theme explored in this research. Young continues to propose an answer:

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> "Only some theory which outlines, in the place of adaptation, a notion of *mutual adaptation and critique, and of inter-evolution, can meet this requirement, but such a theory can only rest on a theory of culture which sees it as open to the *two-way process of structuration*" (italics added) (Young 1996:180).

Young[20] criticises Kim's (1988) intercultural theory' s boundary definitions for ruling out the host culture members' ability for cultural learning. In that framework the host culture cannot learn because it is *defined* (author's italics) as the independent variable. Young sees this as one of the main weakness of Kim's theory: "By conceptualising culture as a fixed background for individual psychological change and enshrining this in the logic of the analysis, the behavioural approach legislates for the political passivity of immigrants and the incapacity of the host culture to learn from them" (Young 1996:61). Another criticism of his against this theory is that it connects with traditional social theories resting on a view of communication, which fails to foreground its active ontogenetic character – the way change is built-in whenever we communicate. Hence he thinks that Kim's (1988) theory should not be considered a general theory of intercultural communication, which it claims to be, because it does not include the two-way structuration of culture he propounds:

> "The global village will not be created by immigrants everywhere adapting to host societies but only by 'host societies' also adapting to immigrants and both immigrants and hosts moving to a more sophisticated awareness of intercultural problems" (Young 1996:197).

Any intercultural theory needs to examine the role of *politics* (author's italics) on the adaptation process or in the response of the host society. An individualist approach is particularly limiting to understanding the host environment in the intercultural contact situation (Young 1996:62). Another shortcoming of much of the intercultural theorising according to Young is that "the interesting problem of how communication might be possible in conditions of cultural pluralism is never tackled"(Young 1996:60).

This research looks at some of the above issues raised by Young[21] in the context of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts. On the practical level, the civil servants grapple with such questions as: "How to maintain the professional code of conduct of the Finnish administration system, while at the same time serving the ethnically non-Finnish clientele effectively, without surrendering the integrity of the Finnish civil service's communication conventions?" On the level of intercultural theory, it is both a question of looking at the cultural adaptation process of the individual members of the host culture on the one hand, and also at how the policies of the administrative system they work with influence this process. Thus the wider structural and political framework propounded by Young[22] can be said to be present in this research, albeit on a very limited scale. It is manifested in the commenting on

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[20]   Ibid
[21]   Ibid
[22]   Ibid

how the form of the constraints, particular working methods and policies of the two government departments under examination in this research affect the communication situation with the customers.

As for the Department of Immigration, it is clearly an executor of a particular political stance prevalent in the Finnish society. This political stance is expressed in the Alien's act, upon which all of the decisions in this government department are based. Likewise, the workings of the Social Insurance Institution are based on legislation, which reflects a particular kind of political stance concerning the values of welfare society. When changes in the political stance cause changes in the respective legislations, this in turn gets reflected in the policies and decisions of the DOI and KELA respectively. The effects of these legislative changes on the customers' lives can feature in many ways in the customer contact situations. The individual civil servants very much feel that they are the recipients of the customers' feelings concerning the policies of the Finnish state, rather than intentional, personal targets of the clientele's displeasure, as evidenced by the comments quoted later on in this research.

1.1 Mutual adaptation and critique: a paradox with open horizons

One method for achieving the goal of two-way structuration of cultural differences is through mutual adaptation and critique and of inter-evolution, notions proposed by Young[23], who in his theorising draws on Habermas (1975), Focault (1980) and Derrida (1972). As already mentioned, his theory of culture is open to the two-way process of structuration. This creates an intercultural communicative context, where the critique need be no more than a mediating moment in rational learning. Young (1996) elaborates on his earlier mentioned wager for reaching the common ground in this manner by stating that it is possible and desirable for all cultures to change, but not to change by blending with one another or being submerged by a single culture. Rather he suggests that:

> "Each culture must change to the extent necessary for it to recognise differences, to acknowledge the prima facie validity of other cultures, to incorporate some degree of tolerance of cultural diversity, and to discover some common ground in the new intercultural space thus created, ground upon which a conversation about intercultural understanding and co-operation can be built. The apparent paradox of this change is that there must be room in it not only for tolerance but also for critique, including critique of other cultures" (Young 1996:3-4).

This research looks at how the Finnish civil servants grapple with the critique levelled at them as they communicate with their ethnically non-Finnish clientele. It also examines the other side of the picture; how the Finnish civil servants critique the communication style of their ethnically non-Finnish clientele and the Finnish administrative communication style. It also explores how this issue can be looked at constructively from the perspective of intercultural hope, with mutual critique leading to mutual adaptation and increased communicative understanding between the two parties.

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[23]   Ibid

Lieberman's (1990:189) notion of horizontal character of understanding complements Young's ideas well in this context. He states that it is the 'open horizon' across which parties to an intercultural conversation are searching for practical solutions to the communicative problems that face them. Because the horizon is open, it is not settled. Meanings are rarely clear and distinct, fully determined. Meanings are fluid. All solutions are never in hand; the indeterminate character of understanding is critical to the social interaction. Indeterminacy is the vague progenerative medium that "points ahead to possible perceptual multiplicities" (Husserl 1982:94).

The meaning of every utterance in a conversation bears an etcetera that offers to one's conversational partners the observation that what is meant, cannot be reduced to just so many words, but that its sense is apparent nevertheless, and includes even what cannot be foreseen at present, but what will come to seem reasonable as the social interaction progresses (Garfinkel (1979). In intercultural communication, this etcetera is licence for permitting an indeterminacy to persist that is perhaps greater than that found in mono-cultural social interaction.

Thus in intercultural communication, neither the analyst nor the participants can demand that everything be made explicit, that meanings be definite. The meaning of words depends on their use, not on being interrogated. As participants, we must play along, letting the others *presume* we are full participants, so that we may be able to witness the realm of signification in which some incomprehensible talk will come to find its sense. Spaces must be created for this to happen.

As for the social interaction between the individual and the organisational level, one can ask how do they influence one another and which way do changes happen. Is it from the top down or from the bottom up? Can the approach of taking the individual as a starting point be a feasible way of affecting change? In the intercultural field, Touraine (2000) talks about the individual's attempt to transform lived experiences into the construction of the self as actor in the midst of a world of permanent and uncontrollable change, as being the only stable point of reference. He calls this attempt 'the Subject' as opposed to an 'Object' (author's quotes) (Touraine 2000:13). This concept is equated with human rights in discussing how the recognition of differences and diversity need to be compatible with the independent instrumental activities of the cultures in which they exist, and how both cultural identity and instrumentality must recognise a reference to the Subject, in other words to basic human rights.

Communication can only take place if each recognizes the Other as Subject, who freely combines a cultural identity and instrumentality, while constructing an individuated life that cannot be reduced to general principles or rules (Touraine 2000:141). "There is no discontinuity between the idea of the subject and the idea of multi-cultural society or, more specifically, of intercultural communication. We cannot live together with our differences unless we recognize one another as Subjects" (Touraine 2000:158).

These analyses should allow us to formulate proposals for specific institutional domains. Applying his theory to the field of education, the stance Touraine (2000) takes is however not purely critical in that he does not only concentrate on the institutional level solutions, but attempts also to make the "personal Subject, its resistance, its hopes and failures, central to both analysis and action, rather than the needs, functions and consciousness of society" (Touraine 2000:158).

I look at the dynamics between the Finnish civil servant's multi-ethnic customer contacts and their wider organizational and societal context in much the same fashion. I see the changes for more multicultural, and eventually pluralistic, way of handling multi-ethnic customer contacts taking place in a bi-directional manner, both from top down and from the bottom up in connection with the relationship between the individual civil servants and the organizations they represent. The horizontal bi-directionality of cultural adaptation and change between the host culture members and the immigrant population is another matter, which is partly addressed in connection with the following sub-section.

1.2   The goal: critical pragmatic intercultural professionals

Young (1996) describes the end result of engaging in mutual adaptation and critique the inter-evolution of a critical pragmatic professional, with the ability to negotiate hybrid sets of rules and new, shared definition of situation, roles, associated norms and of the expression of self. He does not talk about this in general, theoretical and global terms only, but also takes it to a local and pragmatic level of specific professionals, saying that if we can find ways to solve global problems, then each and every professional in his or her specific cultural circumstances can do the same. His critical pragmatism is a synthesis. Its purpose is to guide the critical process by reflecting on human beings' general capacity for intercultural understanding and by engaging in critical institutional communicative and cultural analysis. Thus Young (1996) includes both the individual and the institutional levels into his definition of 'critical'. This double approach is also adapted by Touraine (2000) with his concept of the *Subject* (italics added) as politics of democracy on institutional levels and also as the personal Subject. However, while Touraine (2000:158) states that the inclusion of the personal aspect does not make his stance purely critical, I consider that including the individual aspect makes any critical stance into a mega-stance, or a double perspective with wider applicability, by giving the opportunity to examine change both as a top-down and a bottom-up phenomena, as well as a horizontal bi-directional phenomenon between culturally different individuals or groups.

In this research, I approach the Finnish civil servants' experiences in their multi-ethnic customer contacts by using the term 'critical' in the kind of double perspective described by Young (1996) and Touraine (2000). I examine possibilities for the kind of fluidity and open horizons that point to perceptual multiplicities and to possibilities of reaching an understanding between the two

parties in the social interaction. I also want to find out how it affects their professional, and to some extent even personal identity and what is the role of the organisational level in this context?

To expound Young (1996) further, critical pragmatic professionals utilize a critical pragmatic theory of intercultural communication. The term 'critical' implies involvement, values and norms. This means that the matter at hand touches one's identity; it is not just an expression of an outward, learned reflex, or parroted behaviour. Rather, it involves a genuine negotiation between the two parties, with much uncertainty being allowed to float around before some sense is made from the communicative context. If too much weight is placed on cultural differences, it will take away the middle ground where cultures can learn from each other *enough* (author's italics) to live peaceably together. Neither must culture be absolutized, or we are in danger of losing our humanity to it. People in all cultures have some possibility of autonomy and it is this that allows them to see the possibility of intercultural spaces. Young summarises the premises of his practical theory by saying that the critical pragmatic theory of intercultural communication is a theory in which communication is said to have occurred when participants reach a pragmatically just concord, where the level of communicative understanding achieved is also merely a pragmatically effective understanding. It follows from this that that "any understanding arrived at is for the time being in concrete situations" (Young 1996:208).

This research looks at one such concrete situation through the specific professional roles of the Finnish civil servants within the Directorate of Immigration and the Social Insurance Institution, both of which are of central importance to the immigrant community in Finland. Through their comments it explores, how they could become critical pragmatic intercultural professionals in their own fields to promote the kind of intercultural understanding Young talks about when he says: "Specific professionals are not at the margin of the society, they are at the centre. The task of critical professionals is to make that centre a multicultural, democratic centre" (Young 1996:212).

2   Intercultural effectiveness and communication theories

One basic parameter within which to examine the host culture adaptees' intercultural competence as intercultural effectiveness is a relevant communication theory. It goes without saying that any model on developing intercultural effectiveness must be supported by a theory on communication, but since intercultural communication differs in some ways from mono-cultural communication, they also warrant separate theoretical treatments to a certain extent. However, any human communication, in minimalist terms, is about one person transmitting a message to another person, who then translates that message by giving it meaning. The message may be transmitted either consciously or be unintentional, and consist of information about both the

content of the message and the relationship between the communicating parties (Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson 1967). For communication to succeed, these two components of the transmitted information need to be co-ordinated by the participants. The content co-ordination calls for a certain amount of common ground in the form of mutual knowledge and assumptions for example. In order to co-ordinate the process, the communicators "need to update their common ground moment by moment" (Clark and Brennan 1991:127).

The above kind of affirmation of understanding is called grounding (Chen 1995). The less pre-existing common ground, the more the interactants need to ground their communication as they go along, to ensure that mutual understanding has been reached at every point. Effective communication means that the outcome of the process continues to meet the needs and intentions of the parties. Wish (1979) has shown that stable relationships in the USA are perceived to vary across five dimensions: 1. Co-operative to Competitive, 2. Intense to Superficial, 3. Task-oriented to Socio-emotional, 4. Hierarchical to Egalitarian, 5. Formal to Informal. These dimensions probably apply to relationships in all cultural systems (Adamopoulos 1988, Lonner 1990), although no empirical work has addressed this important question.

Cultural groups vary in the frequency of their preference for certain types of relationships, including communicative relationships. Communication between two parties can still be effective regardless of how their relationship is characterised, providing that each party is achieving 'a desired sort of relationship' (authors' quotes) for themselves. Thus effective communication does not necessarily entail agreement about the nature of the relationship between the communicators or current satisfaction with that relationship. One or both parties in the interactive situation may wish to change the nature of their relationship for one reason or another (Smith and Bond 1998:239-240).

These kinds of issues of common ground, grounding procedures, communication accuracy, breakdown of communication, repair strategies, and type of desired relationship become especially critical in exchanges across cultural lines (Tannen 1985, Scollon and Scollon 1995, Wiseman 1995, Gudykunst et al. 1996). Intercultural communication is a demanding process in this respect, as it requires a high level of interaction involvement in the form of talk that is sensitised to the give-and-take of the speech situation, "integrating one's thoughts, feelings and behaviour into the process of the exchange" (Cegala 1981).

Yet, ironically, the above kind of interaction involvement is often lower in intercultural conversations, at least initially (Chen 1995). Living and/or working across cultural lines produces constant unexpected turns of communicative behaviour with possible subsequent anxiety and stress for both parties. The guidelines for explaining to oneself this kind of out-of-the ordinary, non-normative communication behaviour by the other party, to reduce uncertainty and anxiety, is often culturally conditioned however, leading to unfavourable, or overly favourable, personal attribution about the other. Smith

and Bond describe this process as disconfirmed expectations leading to misattributions (1998:243).

2.1   Connecting with Lie's interdisciplinary communication theory

The baseline of any research into intercultural communication is the theory of communication it rests on. In this research, for the surface-level intercultural competence component of effectiveness, I utilise Lie's (2003) interdisciplinary communication theory. This is the main theory upon which I conceptualise my analysis on how the host culture adaptees' intercultural communicative competence actually gets expressed in practice.

Lie [24] takes a qualitative, combined approach to communication, culture and identity. He integrates his five central, intertwined concepts of communication, culture, globalization, localization and identity in a frame of analysis that can be used for research into how spaces of intercultural communication are created (Lie 2003:7-9, 117-202). The contents of this phrase in Lie's theorising fit in with well Young's (1996) philosophy and ethics of creating new intercultural spaces, the possibility of intercultural spaces and the imperative for creating such spaces, which I also see as the desired goal in my theorising concerning critical pragmatic intercultural professional. Thus it is fitting that in this research the major building block concerning communication should rest on Lie's theorizing (2003). He is particularly interested in communication and social change and in how the relationship between these two concepts could be approached from a culturist perspective. Culture and communication, and especially communication between cultures, are seen as among the most important sources of these changing processes of identities.

Lie (2003:3) calls his approach an 'interdisciplinary, interpretivist-culturalistic, people centred, qualitative perspective'. He draws on interpretive social science in general (Blumer 1969 and Goffman 1959), interpretive communication studies more specifically (Frissen and Wester 1990, Lindlof 19889), and also on interpretive anthropology and social symbolic anthropology (Driessen and de Jonge 1994, Geertz 1973, 1988). Lie (2003:15) states that this kind of qualitative approach to communication studies is becoming the norm, replacing the traditional positivist approach, which can be exemplified by the linear formula of 'who says what through which channel to whom with what effect' (Lasswell 1948).

In line with his interpretivist-culturalistic perspective, from the multitude of definitions concerning what is culture[25], Lie (2003) conceptualises his use of this term within the body of idealist definitions of culture, as opposed to the realist ones. In this approach, culture is not directly observable, but can only be known by interpreting interpretations (Garbarino 1977:49-50). It is in this tradition of interpretations that he tries to find contemporary and future

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[24]   Ibid
[25]   Already in 1952 the American anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhorn
       analysed 162 different definitions of culture (Kroeber and Kluckhorn, 1952)

directions of embedding communication in culture. He takes an all-encompassing view of the connection between culture and communication: "People without culture do not exist and there is no human interaction that is noncultural interaction. In a people-centred perspective, culture can not be separated from human interaction (communication)" (brackets in the original text) (Lie 2003:200).

The consequences of intercultural communication on a group's identity can be globalizing and localizing at the same time (Lie 2003:2). These two are not opposite concepts that do not mix. Every group's identity has elements of both and is always constructed in overlap. These processes of changing identities refer to adopting, rejecting, adjusting, and reshaping cultural elements to fit the in-between direction of globalization/localization. It is within these spaces of intercultural communication that identities are shaped and reshaped. Lie[26] quotes other research in saying that history of the world, rather than moving toward cultural homogenisation, has demonstrated the opposite, a trend to cultural differentiation and cultural complexity (King 1991:16). The question is not whether we all are participants in a process called cultural globalization. Rather, the question can read: "How do people in a local setting deal with global mass media content and how do they counteract, in interpretive sense, the increase in a foreign (global) cultural flow?" (author's italics and brackets) (Lie 2003:78).

Lie[27] deals with the topic of spaces in intercultural communication with special application to mass communication. However, his ideas also have a more general applicability that can have relevance in describing some aspects of the host culture's cultural adaptation processes. In the context of this research, his statement can be rephrased in the following manner: "How do the Finnish civil servants in their local, culturally-bound communication setting deal with the communication content of the ethnically non-Finnish clientele that varies from their own, and how do they counteract, in an interpretive sense, the increase in a foreign communication flow?

One of Lie's basic concepts is the pair globalizing/localizing (e.g. Lie 2003: 2, 5-7, 55-117). At present, the term globalization is used at least in four different ways. Parkins (1996:69-70) summarises them as follows: 1. To refer to a new consciousness of global interdependence, 2. As a project, in a sense of global business strategies and attempts at global governance, 3. As a process of change in economic and cultural relations which intensifies links at a global level and 4. As an explanatory framework, a way of understanding social relations by considering the world as a single system. In Lie's (2003:72) thinking, apart from identifying different interpretations or dimensions of globalization, different societal fields, or domains that are being globalized can also be distinguished. In addition to globalization in the social, economic, political, military, environmental, health and business arena, globalization also refers to culture and the assumed changing cultural state of the world.

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26   Ibid
27   Ibid

The cultural issue is the aspect that Lie elaborates in his research. In this context, the term cultural globalization is equated with new perspectives on intercultural contacts or intercultural communication. It also addresses the issue concerning the direction of the results of these contacts. It is often seen as two-fold, consisting of both scale-enlarging issues, such as homogeneity, integration, and universalism on the one hand, and of scale reducing issues, such as heterogeneity, differentiation, diversity and particularise.

There seem to be different interpretations concerning how to delineate the concept of local. Is it an extended family, a village, a tribe, a neighbourhood, a town, a city, a country, a region, a nation state or even a larger entity? However it is defined, little is known concerning the process of how globalization and localization become interconnected. It is this 'missing link' of how it actually works in a specific community that Lie examines. Three domains of origins to the process of globalization/localization are identified; personal communication, institutional communication and product communication (Lie 2003:73). Four people-centred aspects of cultural globalization/localization are explicitly formulated:

> Aspect A. "Globalization and localization refer to a process of changes taking place in people's perceptions of time and space. On the one hand it refers to a broadening/widening of all kinds of boundaries; on the other hand it refers to a strengthening or a firmer articulation of existing boundaries" (Lie 2003:103).

> Aspect B. "Globalization and localization, as far as they refer to culture, are interpretive processes. This means they are not objective processes, but defined differently by different subjects, belonging to different communities, in different times and different spaces" (Lie 2003:103).

> Aspect C. "Globalization and localization are in fact one process, because they are two sides of the same coin. The same intercultural domains can lead to both: either a global interpreting process or a local interpreting process. This can even take place in the same interpretative community. Therefore, the processes are intrinsically linked to each other" (Lie 2003:104).

> Aspect D. "Globalization and localization as one linked process refers to the adoption/integration and association/disintegration of cultural elements belonging to an out-group or to another socio-cultural level" (Lie 2003:104).

Several nodal points of research that are situated within intersecting processes of flows and levels are identified. They are production, regulation, entry, consumption and action. However, to Lie identity is something that is articulated in the globalization/localization process itself, and is not a nodal point of research. One man's local is another man's global. A local feature can be interpreted globally, and a global matter can be looked at from a local perspective (Lie 2003:110). The theory combines symbolic culture and communication studies through Turner's (1969) concept of liminality (e.g. Lie 2003:30). The starting point is communication as symbolic communication and the idea of societal holism, which embeds symbolic forms in societal processes and social structures, and is also applied to community and related identities.

Actually, there are several ways to see and study the relationship between culture and communication. One way is to say that the whole process of

communication is embedded in culture and as such the two concepts are inseparable. If looked at in this way, the wholeness is emphasized and cultural studies then have the potential of creating the meeting of symbolic anthropology and communication studies according to Lie[28].

2.2 Utilizing Lie's theory for the process and goal of cultural adaptation

This research utilizes Lie's[29] concept pair of globalizing/localizing and liminality to demonstrate some aspects of the Finnish civil servants' cultural identity negotiation as they create intercultural spaces in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. Looking at these encounters as embedding communication in culture, along the lines of Lie's interpretation, this process finds expression in the negotiations between the customers' culturally conditioned communication style and the Finnish administrative communication style. The grammatical form of the two terms globali*zing*/locali*zing* already suggest an ongoing, *active process*. As such, they are well suited for the process-oriented approach of this research.

Historically the term liminality refers to the middle phase of rites, which Van Gennep distinguishes in his classic book, Les Rites de Passage, from 1909. He distinguishes three phases in all rites: 1. separation, 2. margin (limen) and 3. reaggregation (reintegration). In the phase of transformation from one phase to the next, one does not belong to society and one is not a member of the normal daily structure. One is located in a time and space that has no social definition. The identity of such a person or group is unclear. "Such a liminal position offers a possibility of reflection and critique but also of idealizing, equality and intense comradeship, and 'communitas'.[30] In liminality, that communitas emerges (Lie 2003:30).

The bi-directional opportunities for such things as critique on the one hand, and equality on the other, offered by the liminal phase, are of great importance from the point of view of intercultural communication. Lie draws on this possibility and talks about the cultural mixing and global/local mixing in the liminal and liminoid spaces of intercultural communication. These kinds of communication spaces are the zones where intercultural contact between the global and the local can be found, and where the localized/globalized identities are framed. They can be spaces in a state of cultural coexistence, spaces in a state of cultural negotiation, or spaces in a state of intercultural transformation (hybridised transculturality).

At the centre of the process of framing the localized/globalized identities is the idea of cultural mixing through the process of encounter and negotiation. The mix is not only in-between cultures but also in-between what Lie has termed the global and the local, or the processes of globalization and

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28   Ibid
29   Ibid
30   Turner sees social structure as the opposite of communitas as communitas exists outside structured time. (Turner 1974a:231)

localization. Furthermore, this cultural mixing often takes place, as we have seen, in bordered spheres, zones characterized by 'in-betweenness' of the borderlands, or, based on Turner's theory of liminality which is situated within the field of anthropological communication studies, in the 'liminal/liminoid spaces of intercultural communication.' The question Lie asks is what exactly happens within these communication spaces and in the states of cultural and intercultural liminality, which are coexistence, negotiation and transformation. These can be phases in a chronological sense, but do not necessarily have to be. One can enter a state of negotiation without going through a significant phase of coexistence. In fact, many liminoid spaces are constructed in a state of negotiation (Lie 2003:81-97).

2.3   CDPE as a model for applying Lie's theory in intercultural training

In addition to particular theories, holistic research approach also calls for the development of particular models through which the theories can be applied in practice. In the context of this research it means applying the theory into the development of relevant models for intercultural training. With this aim in mind, I complement Lie's theoretical conceptualisations for intercultural communicative effectiveness with the adaptation of a modification of the Communication Display Portfolio Exchange (CDPE), developed by Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002). For the purposes of feasible transfer of this model into concrete intercultural encounters, such as the multi-ethnic customer contacts of the Finnish civil servants, I have modified the original model into an intercultural dialogue method, which I call 'Communication Display Exchanges' (CDE).

The logic and usefulness of combining my adaptation of Lie's conceptualisation of globalizing/localizing identities with my adaptation of the DCE method is that through Lie's concepts I can describe the *contents* of the kind of intercultural competence I present, while my modification of the CDPE model into the CDE method describes the *process* how it is practiced. The CDPE will have particular usefulness for training context and I will return to it in the application section.

The way I adapt those strands of CDPE, which can be utilized even in a single training session through a simplified method as a truncated form of the complete original model, is looked at in more detail shortly. First, however, the components and aims of the original CDPE model need to be looked at in more detail.

Pan, Scollon and Scollon,[31] as developers of CDPE, criticise the prevalent western communication ideal that communication *must* follow the norm of clarity – brevity – sincerity (called the C-B-S style for short), demanding that the speaker or writer answer the questions: Who? What? When? Where? How? They suggest that in order to sort out to what extent people assert this ideology and to what extent they follow the C-B-S style in professional communication

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[31]   Ibid

in international settings, new perspectives need to be found (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:15).

The Communication Display Portfolio Exchange method is quite elaborate. In the first phase the communication display portfolios are prepared by the participating groups from different countries. The groups, whether they represent business or organisational life, prepare these portfolios. They contain different aspects of the communication culture. Ideally the material should include at least one internal communication, one external communication and some personal documentation, consisting for example of such items as recordings of telephone calls, presentations at some meetings or the actual of running meetings and written résumés. Four example cases are examined for local in-house comparison and discussion (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:20).

However, I suggest that what should be included as CDP items and how to assemble it really depends on what information one wants to find out from the other party and what is important in one's professional communication activities. Based on the discussions, a self-assessment is then made by the participants (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002: 152). Some persons may revise their portfolios on the basis of the discussions, as often discrepancies between the members generalisations and individual case histories arise. Some people have taken the normative 'best practice' approach and written down members' generalisations, while others have stated the way things are done in actuality, taking the individual case history perspective (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:149).

In the second phase (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:149) these portfolios are exchanged between the parties from different countries for commenting in order to gain contrastive intercultural feedback. Ideally the groups would meet physically, but if this is not possible, focus groups from each site perform a critical evaluation of each other's CDP's and self assessments. These discussions are summarised in written form and accompanied by a video recording (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002: 152).

For the third phase, the results of the focus group discussions are returned to all sites. The participants at each site then make self-assessments of their communication styles and practices and decide how to make adjustments based on these findings" (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:150). The overall goal is not to tell how to communicate in a particular setting. Instead, the intent is to show one proven way to establish good relations with people from different communicative settings and begin the learning process together. Since each case is largely unique, the best source of knowledge about how to communicate within that setting comes from the participants themselves (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:7). The purpose of CDPE is to construct a productive environment in which self-assessment and self-reflection on particular aspects of communication in cross-cultural encounters can be achieved without risk to the identity of the persons or to the entity represented by them (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:11).

2.3.1 The four perspectives of professional communication

For the purposes of reviewing and analysing one's own and each other's communication for improved intercultural communication competence, the CDPE method developed by Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002) approach professional communication from four different perspectives. They are as follows:

> MEMBERS' GENERALISATIONS. This is what the members of a group say they do. Of course, people will often tell others what they think others want to hear.
>
> THE OBJECTIVE OR NEUTRAL VIEW. This is what an uninvolved or external observer would say about the behaviour in question. Normally some form of objective record is made, such as a video/audiotape recording or a photograph.
>
> INDIVIDUAL CASE HISTORIES. This is what an individual member of a group will say he or she does. Quite often this is very different from the members' generalisation.
>
> CONTRASTIVE STUDIES. This is a comparison with the way people in other groups do the same thing, and could also include a contrast between the analyst's explanation and the member's explanation of a particular behaviour (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:15).

The authors elaborate further, why all of these aspects help us to develop a broader view of professional communication in international setting: "It is essential to know not only what people are doing, but what they think they are doing. When what they are doing conflicts with what they think or say they are doing, we need to be able to understand this conflict as well" (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:17).

2.3.2 CDE as a simplified adaptation of CDPE in intercultural training

The CDPE method was developed with the idea of using it between businesses and institutions, i.e. corporate bodies, with the limitations and problems that it may bring, as the authors themselves acknowledge (Scollon and Scollon 1995:151). However, the situation is entirely different with an institution, such as government department, communicating with a single client, as is the case with this research topic. This type of communicative situation calls for a much less elaborate, and more informal system of making the culturally 'other' aware of what is possibly going on in the communication situation due to possible cultural mismatches.

Nevertheless, the basic idea of putting one's communication system explicitly and openly on display in one way or another in order for the other party to understand it better, is definitely a highly useful one in the context of intercultural communication, and a topic which I see to be crucial in intercultural training. Hence, for the types of communication situations under study in this research the adaptation of a simplified version of the concept of Communication Display Portfolio Exchange is suggested. In the adapted model

suggested here, called Communication Display Exchanges, the concept of creating a formal portfolio is left out, as the name already suggests.

The idea of the formal communication portfolio is not rejected altogether, for it is a valuable tool, and the idea can still be utilised as a means for self-reflection in intercultural training. However, the wide range of cultural contexts encountered in the multi-ethnic customer contact situation calls for a more diversified approach with an 'open horizons' approach, where more informal ways are utilised for displaying the cultural particulars that possibly hinder the communication between the two parties.

I justify modifying the basic method on the basis of what the developers of the CDPE themselves say about the process of the CDPE not being uniform and about the need for flexible approaches in applying it: "The important message to emphasize is that it is never necessary to insist on uniformity either in the CDP's themselves or in the process. One method will work well in one setting or environment, but not in another. The key to overcoming such differences and other obstacles is to be flexible" (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002:157).

3   Intercultural sensitivity and acculturation theories

As for the intercultural sensitivity component as one constituent element of intercultural competence, this research looks for support from acculturation theories. They provide a fruitful analytical framework in which to rest the model suggested in this research concerning how intercultural sensitivity can be achieved and how it is expressed in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts.

I approach the issue of identity by intertwining strands of research in psychology and social psychology with intercultural studies. I acknowledge Kim's (2001) critique of the social scientists' prevailing view on the immutability of social identities having some validity. Yet I still think that both psychology and social psychology provide added depth to the theorising in this research. They provide valuable insight into the intercultural sensitisation process of the Finnish civil servants' professional identity, particularly in making connections between stress and coping with social skills, and socio-cultural adaptation with culture shock. This kind of interdisciplinary approach helps in forming a more holistic picture of the bi-directional change in the identities of both parties in the intercultural social interaction.

In the Encyclopaedia of Applied Psychology, Liebkind (2004:386) quotes the following classical definition of acculturation: "Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural pattern of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits 1936:149). This early definition refers to groups in contact, explicitly placing acculturation

within the realm of intergroup relations. Also, it already encompassed bi-directionality in noting that change can occur within both groups.

The above definition of acculturation can also be extended to the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contact relations. They can be described as repeated first-hand contacts between a group of host culture representatives, i.e. the Finnish civil servants, exhibiting the Finnish administrative cultural behaviour, and the ethnically non-Finnish clientele. Due to culturally bound understanding of the interactive situation, is affects the cognitive, affective and behavioural patterns of both parties, creating an arena for a possibility of bi-directional cultural adaptation and change. This cultural adaptation process can be either conscious or unconscious in nature.

In this research, I discuss adaptation in three ways: as a pluralistic phenomenon that both maintains one's own culture and assimilates the other culture, as a social interactionist phenomenon, where one chooses portions of both cultures and becomes a mixture of each, and as a monistic adaptation, which leads one to retreat to the safety of people from one's own cultural ways. The last-mentioned option is actually discussed as maladaptation in the intercultural context. Monistic adaptation can also mean 'going native' and submerging oneself in the new culture.

From its onset, psychology as a field has found it useful to distinguish the affect, behaviour and cognitions of human interaction. I follow Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2003) in applying this approach also into the intercultural contact situation. According to the above authors, drawing on theoretical formulations in general psychology, the above-mentioned three-way distinction provides a theoretically sound, comprehensive, yet parsimonious, way to represent the conceptual developments in this field up to the present point in time. It can also be systematically applied to research of intercultural contact and change. They demonstrate in their book, that the ABC of culture shock, as they call the affective, behavioral and cognitive approaches, provide a solid conceptual base for the empirical research on tourists, immigrants, refugees and other sojourners (Ward et al. 2003:50). I apply these concepts to yet another group, the host culture adapters.

In fact, various acculturation measures have been used by different researchers. Smith and Bond (1998:271-72) refer to Church's (1982:126-127) review of the topic, which lists the assessments of adaptation as being the following: a wider worldview, reduction of ethnocentrism, greater self-awareness and self-esteem (Church 1982), attitudes towards host culture (Ibrahim 1970), psychological distress (Masuda, Lin and Tazuma 1982), perceptual maturity (Yoshikawa 1988), mood states (Stone-Feinstein and Ward 1990), health evaluations (Babiker, Cox and Miller 1980), feelings of acceptance and satisfaction (Brislin 1981), the nature and extent of social interaction with hosts (Sewell and Davidsen 1961), the acquisition of culturally appropriate behaviour and skills, (Bochner, Lin and McLeod 1979, 1980), academic (Perkins, Perkins, Guglielmino and Reiff 1977) and job performance (Harris 1972).

Atempts have been made to simplify the multiplicity of thoughts and findings on this topic. Ward et al. for example have focused on two dimensions of adaptation, psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adaptation (e.g. Ward and Kennedy 1993). The relationship between stress and coping and social skills is a central theme in Ward's investigations of the outcomes of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of diverse groups (Ward et. al. 2003: Chapter 2.). The first set of outcomes refers to intra-psychic consequences of coping with novel, demanding environments and is characterized by physical and psychological well-being. The second set of outcomes refers to the interpersonal consequences of this coping and is characterized by social and behavioural competencies. Empirically these dimensions are related, as successful social adaptation arises partly from psychological well-being and vice versa.

However, Ward states that these two factors need to be separated 'because they are largely predicted by different types of variables and show different variation over time (Ward 1996:127). Other researchers have drawn similar distinctions between the psychological/somatic and social/task domains of acculturation (e.g. Hammer, Gudykunst and Wiseman 1978, Kealey 1989). In theorising about intercultural adaptation, expectations are a relevant concept within the stress and coping approach (Ward et al. 2003:49), while social skills, for example in the form of communication competence, belong to the cultural learning sphere (Ward et al. 2003:90), and value differences are likely to be associated with sociocultural difficulties with one's identity (Ward et al. 2003:49).

The length and purpose of the newcomers' stay in another culture have also been taken into consideration and the adaptation processes of various groups have been studied, including immigrants, refugees, diplomats, international business people, international students, tourists etc. (Kim 2001:152). A dictionary definition for immigrant is: "A person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another".[32] This implies a conscious, free will choice of leaving one's own country of acculturation. In some cases it is a question of genuine free choice, such as marrying a person from another country, while in other cases leaving one's own country may be necessitated, for example, by economic hardship, political upheaval, war or some other factor which makes emigrating a must, rather than a desired course of action. Refugees definitely are persons who have been forced to flee their countries of residence. The motivation for leaving one's country, the motivation of being in the particular new country of abode, and the estimated length of stay there (whether the estimation gets realized, is another matter) can all have an affect on how a person is motivated to adjust to the new culture, expressed in a level of desired integration.

The above kinds of factors also affect and motivate the host culture adaptees in their intercultural contacts. The expectations of adaptation between two parties can be very different and even conflicting with one another. Along

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[32]   Source: http://www.answers.com/topic/immigrant

the lines of Ward et al. (2003:8), this research looks at the expectations of the Finnish civil servants towards the ethnically non-Finnish clientele in a variety of ways: their cultural competence, their adaptive communicative measures towards these clients from the communication point of view, the multi-ethnic customer contacts' effects on the professional identity of the civil servants from the integrity perspective, and how these three factors impact one another in the concrete client contact situations. In this research, I use the term adaptive in a broad sense, covering the two areas of gaining communication competence as intercultural effectiveness and developing an interculturally sensitized identity. Thus I consider this term to also cover the more specific concepts of acculturation, which is mainly used in the area of identity change, and the term adjustment, which is usually reserved for psychological processes in the fields of humanities and social science.

3.1   Conflicting theories on adaptive change

Researchers have tried to sort out what factors explain the differences of success in adaptive change and how intercultural adaptation can be assessed in the best possible manner. In the various theoretical schemes presented over the decades, several individual factors have emerged, such as psychological/personality factors (e.g. Gao and Gudykunst 1990, Gudykunst 1995), communication skills in the form of linguistic acculturation (Epstein, Botvin, Dusenbury, Diaz and Kerner 1996) to name but a few. A combination of several of factors in more broad-based and comprehensive models and explanatory systems have also been postulated over the years (Shuval 1963, Weinstock 1964, Berry and Sam 1997, Huhr and Kim 1990).

However, the existing models reveal a lack of consensus Kim (2001). They are based on different conceptions of what constitutes the domain of intercultural adaptation in varying foci and levels of comprehensiveness: "Disagreements abound as to whether a given set of factors should be regarded as constituent elements of the phenomenon or as 'causal' (or independent) variables that help explain (and predict) it. Indeed the problem of varying and divergent conceptions has been repeatedly pointed out as a major impediment to continuing theoretical development in the field (e.g. Kim 1998, Padilla 1980) (Kim 2004:23).

In the existing theories and models concerning cultural adaptation and acculturation, there are some studies that also note the role of the host culture members in the intercultural communication context. Still, even in these instances the focus very much remains on the newcomers. The focus of this line of research has mainly been the impact of host culture receptivity on the newcomers' adaptation. The positive effects of the host culture's openness towards the newcomers have been called 'interaction potential' (Kim 1976, 1977, 2001), 'acquaintance potential' (Cook 1962), 'opportunities for contact' (McPherson 1991) and 'communication climate' (Leets and Giles 1995). The

negative effects of the lack of host receptivity have been noted, for example, in the context of the contact hypothesis (Amir 1969, Worchel 1979, 1986).

3.2   The marginalized role of host culture acculturation in social studies

Bourhis et al. (1997) not only talk about the cultural adaptation process of the host culture from the point of view of the newcomers, but also mention the adaptive changes of the host cultures themselves in the context of intercultural contact situations, quoting previous researchers on this topic. The above authors first of all quote Kymlicka in saying: "When integration policies are adopted in (modern democratic states of the Western world), they are usually planned to foster the necessary conditions for what is considered the 'successful' (author's quotes) integration of immigrants within the host majority. Such policies reflect the ideological orientation of the economically, demographically, and politically dominant group of the host society in question. Consequently, such policies are often formulated as though only immigrants had to shoulder the burden of adaptation to the host society" (Kymlicka 1995).

The above quote implies that the immigrants indeed are not the only ones who go through adaptive changes in intercultural contact situations; the host society is also involved in them. Bourhis et al. (1997) also quote two other studies to show that researchers have actually recognized this fact for decades, even though it has not featured in the analytical frameworks in any significant way:

"Though the unidimensional model of acculturation has been the dominant framework used to account for immigrant adaptation for many decades, the model fails to account for the fact that *the host majority is also changed by the presence of culturally distinctive immigrants*" (italics added) (Taft 1953). As pointed out by Sayegh and Lasry (1993:99) it is difficult "to imagine a host society which would not be *transformed* after immigrants have been accepted as full participants into the social and institutional networks of that society" (italics added) (Bourhis et al. 1997:376).

Bourhis et al.[33] acknowledge that at times there may even be macro-level, far-reaching society-wide changes in the host community: "Immigrants, by their very presence as newcomers, may trigger redefinition of the collective identity of the dominant society" (Bourhis et al. 1997:372). This is an important point, and I also address it in the context of the Finnish civil servants' development of interculturally professional identity. The above authors also mention the importance of looking at the individual level effects, how immigrant and host community members as individuals perceive and construct their own orientations towards immigration issues. They furthermore delve into the issue of how the immigrants and host majority affect each other: "Through intercultural contact, dominant host majority members do influence the acculturation strategies of immigrant group members, who in turn may also

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[33]   Ibid

affect the orientations of the host majority" (Bourhis et al. 1997:375). There is a need to conduct more studies where the social interaction between members of both the ethnic communities and the host society are examined, as it is obvious that their acculturation orientation and changes in them can, and in practice do, affect each another.

From an intergroup perspective (Bourhis and Leyens 1994), a number of analyses have stressed the need to improve articulation of the interplay between host community and immigrant group acculturation orientations (Berry 1990a, 1990b; Mayadas and Elliot 1992; Woldemikael 1987). "Obstacles to the social integration of immigrants within the host society need to be examined in the social interaction between members of both the ethnic communities and the host society" Sayegh and Lasry (1993:107). Moreover, "acculturation occurs within the two groups, immigrants and host, with changes in each interacting together to influence the direction and outcome of that change" (Sayegh and Lasry (1993:107).

The above summary shows that it has long been acknowledged that in intercultural contact situations the host culture also undergoes adaptive changes. However, in the intercultural adaptation studies the host culture aspect has been taken very much for granted. It has been assumed that some changes do take place also in that side of the equation, but it has mostly been left unstudied. Quoting Graves (1967), a well known interculturalist, G. K. Verma[34] (2005) of Manchester University, notes: "Although the dominant culture will also undergo changes because of the presence of minorities, most change will take place in the minority culture." Even though the reciprocal nature of the acculturation process is recognised, the 'dominant' host culture side of the equation still seems to be mentioned in name only. On the one hand its role has always been recognized and assumed to be of importance, as witnessed by the above quotes, but on the other hand, both in the intercultural theory formation and in actual research carried out, the topic of host culture adaptation has definitely been left on the sidelines. Yet, depending on various factors, such as the level, amount and length of contact, these changes can range from far reaching societal level transformations to a less wider influence, such as touching only certain professions, social classes or certain individuals whose lives and/or work are influenced by regular intercultural contacts.

3.3   The interactive acculturation model: A closer look a the host culture

The interactive acculturation model (IAM) developed by Bourhis et al. (1997) proposes a conceptual bridge between public policy, host majority and immigrant group reaction to ethnocultural diversity. Thus this model addresses the issue of the reciprocal nature of the contact between host community and

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[34]   Verma, Gajendra 2005, Kulttuurienvälisen työn lähtökohtia, in: *KULTTUURIENVÄLINEN TYÖ*, Pirkko Pitkänen (ed.) EDITA

immigrant community not only from the immigrant community's point of view but also from the host community point of view.

The IAM model lays out a grid of five acculturation orientations for the host community and five for the immigrant community. They are the following: integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion and individualism for the hosts, and integration, assimilation, separation, anomie and individualism for the immigrants. The possible relational outcomes between the two groups can be consensual, problematic or conflicting, depending on how the orientations between the host and immigrant groups match. What is noteworthy in the context of the present research is that the IAM model predicts that in some cases immigrant acculturation orientations may directly influence the acculturation orientation of the host majority. A medium vitality immigrant group that systematically adopts a separation orientation may shift host majority attitudes from the integration to the segregation or exclusionist pole of the acculturation continuum.

The host community's acculturation orientations ought to be looked at from two perspectives: firstly from the perspective of 'how does the host community perceive that immigrants should orient themselves towards the hosts', and secondly, 'what is the host community's own acculturation orientation towards the immigrant community'. The IAM model looks mainly at the issue from the first mentioned perspective. However, I propose that the second perspective also needs to be addressed.

3.4   Host culture adaptation as change in identity, attitudes and values

In the empirical material of this research such distinctly social psychological matters as identity, attitudes and values crop up. They are the mediators of the affective and behavioural outcomes of adaptive changes in the acculturation process, or the "uniquely cognitive domain of adaptive outcomes (Ward and Chang 1997:127). The two-way approach of cultural adaptation as coping with stress and learning new skills does not account for these. Hence they are also included into the scheme of my research, all of these aspects are needed: "Culture learning, stress and coping and social identification theories represent broad and comprehensive conceptual frameworks for the study of intercultural contact and cross-cultural adjustment" (Ward 2003:49).

Values in themselves are cognitive constructs, which are intimately tied to self-definition and cultural identity. Values are thus markedly affected by intercultural contact. Values also have significance in this field due to the fact that they are linked to perceptions of out-group members, for a fundamental principle in social psychology is that we like others who are like ourselves. Consequently, shared values can be taken to promote positive perceptions of out-group members (Ward 2003). This applies both to the newcomers' and host nationals' perceptions alike.

However, one must bear in mind the tradition of social psychology recognising that attitudes assessed toward acculturation may not be consistent

with actual behaviour, and identity may not necessarily follow the same acculturation pattern as attitudes. The question is also asked: "is ethnic identity directly related to the degree of acculturation, or whether conversely, it is independent" (Phinney 1990). Often the two concepts are used almost interchangeably (Nguyen, Messè and Stollack 1999). Phinney et al (2001) consider acculturation to be a broader construct, encompassing a wide range of behaviour, attitudes and values that change with contact between cultures. Ethnic identity is that aspect of acculturation that focuses on the subjective sense of belonging to a group or culture. If acculturation is understood as change in cultural values, there is some support for this practice. Studies in ethnic and cultural identity reveal complexities, which go beyond social identity theory as well as beyond simple adherence to cultural values (Laroche et al. 1998).

In Berry's (1997) two-dimensional model of acculturation, ethnic identity and national indentity as a member of one's new society can be thought of as two dimensions of group identity that vary independently, that is, each identity can be either secure and strong or underdeveloped and weak. An individual, who retains a strong ethnic identity while also identifying with the new society, is considered to have an integrated, or bicultural identity.

3.5   The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

As the starting point for looking at the deep-level intercultural competence as intercultural sensitivity, which in turn consists of awareness and attitudes, this research employs a modified version of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). This re-interpretation will be presented in a later chapter, but at this point a summary presentation of the original DMIS is called for:

The DMIS was created by Bennett (e.g. 1986, 1993) as an explanation of how people construe cultural difference. The underlying assumption of the model is that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more complex and sophisticated, one's potential in intercultural relations increases. As people became more interculturally competent, it seemed that there was a major change in the quality of their experience, which Bennett[35] called a move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism.

The term ethnocentrism is used to refer to the experience of one's own culture as central to reality, meaning that the beliefs and behaviours that people receive in their primary socialization are unquestioned; they are experienced as 'just the way things are'. The term ethnorelativism describes the opposite of ethnocentrism – the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviours as just one organisation of reality among many viable possibilities. Bennett also distinguished six distinct kinds of experiences spread across the continuum from ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism (Bennett 2004:62).

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[35]   Ibid

The following is his representation of the continuum of gradual increase in intercultural competence:

Denial -> Defense -> Minimization   -> Acceptance -> Adaptation -> Integration

ETHNOCENTRISM   ETHNORELATIVISM
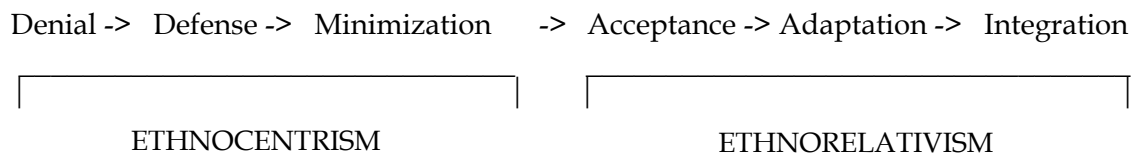
FIGURE 2. The continuum of orientations in the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Source of the original Figure: Hammer, Mitchell, Bennett and Wiseman 2003:424

Each of the six orientations is summarised as having a certain worldview structure, which is analysed through the cognitive, affective and behavioural expressions it produces and through the implications for exercise of power and organizational matters. Bennett's ethnocentric orientation is based on monistic ontology according to which all expressions of cultural pluralism can eventually be traced to one single foundation and origin, while ethnorelativist orientation is founded on the concept of multiple reality (Bennett 1993: 41-42). So, in his scheme of things the ethnocentric and ethnorelativist positions are opposites and thus incompatible (Bennett 1993:47).

Central to the ethnorelativist orientation is the ability to reflect and be aware of how one's reactions, motives, desires and wishes are culturally conditioned.[36] Ethnorelativist empathy is described as a code switching, where a person is able to conceptualise the codes of meaning of another culture and be able to adopt a strange and unfamiliar viewpoint. This is accompanied with the ability to consciously shift one's behavioural code to be able to act in an appropriate manner in cultural surroundings that are foreign to a person. It is more than stepping into the other person's shoes and understanding how we ourselves would feel in their situation. It is about imaginatively participating in the other's worldview. Characteristic to empathy is that it is a conscious role taking for a particular situation for a particular moment. As such it could be described as a cognitive frame shifting exercise (Bennett and Bennett 2004:156-157).

In the thinking of Bennett and Bennett,[37] pluralism is a form of ethnorelativist sensitivity that goes even deeper, and is of a more permanent nature than empathy. Pluralism differs from empathy in that with pluralism respect for other cultures is equated with self-respect. In pluralism, switching between different frames of reference takes place automatically and unnoticed, in a natural and flexible manner. This kind of feel for other cultures is expressed in behaviour that is considered meaningful in the particular cultural context in a sense that it also feels right and familiar to oneself (Bennett and Bennett

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[36]   Bennett's assumptions are based on Kluckhorn's and Murray's concepts of culture (Kluckhorn and Murray, 1965: 273, Hall, 1998)

[37]   Ibid

2004:156). The person also feels these different frames of reference to be important to one's personal identity (Bennett and Bennett 2004:157).

The DMIS describes in perceptual development terms the different stages in the cultural sensitisation process towards cultural differences, as well as particular competencies achieved, as factual states. In this research, I intend to look more closely from a dialectical stance how the cultural sensitisation process actually takes place and how particular intercultural competencies are developed in practice. This brings about a new interpretation to the basic dichotomy of ethnocentrism vs. ethnorelativism within the DMIS. My motivation for doing so is twofold. Apart from the desire to explore how the parameters of this model can be expanded and extended for the furtherance of theoretical development in the intercultural field, the other strong motivation is the training consideration. The question is asked, "Can intercultural competence be taught or learned?" Through the re-interpretation of the DMIS, I plan to make the process of how intercultural learning takes place more visible, and thus more easily attainable.

3.6   The cognitive constructivist development theories

Bennett describes the process of developing intercultural sensitivitiy from one stage to the next one within the continuum of DMIS in the tradition of perceptual developmental terms á la Piaget and other developmental theorists. This line of theorising began with Gestalt theories (Köhler 1959, Koffka 1935). Originally theories of perception, interested in the way the brain imposes pattern on the perceived world, Gestalt moved into cognitive problem-solving learning, largely influenced by the developmental psychology of Piaget, focusing on the maturational factors affecting understanding. Broadly speaking cognitive theory is interested in how people understand material, and in capacity to learn, thus fringing onto psychometrics, testing and cognitive learning. Piaget's theory is best known for his construction of the discontinuous stage model which was based on his study of children and how the processes and products of their minds develop over time. Piaget proposed that this does not happen entirely smoothly. Instead, there are certain points at which it "takes off" and moves into completely new areas and capabilities. He suggested that there were four major cognitive stages in logical development, corresponding to four successive forms of knowledge: sensory-motor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational[38]. During each of these stages, children were hypothesized to think and reason in a different way. Piaget recognized that the acquisition of each new way of thinking would not necessarily be synchronous across all the different domains of thought. Instead, he argued that the chronology of the stages might be extremely variable, and that such variability might also occur within a given stage[39]. Educational psychologists',

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[38]   http://www.fratfiles.com/essays/142216.html
[39]   http://www.oppapers.com/essays/Piagets-Cognitive-Developmental-Theory/138512

such as Piget's, work in the domains of learning, instruction and developmental processes has centred primarily on the childhood and adolescent school years. The part of Piaget's thinking that is most useful for understanding adult learners is his concept of adapting to the world through assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the process by which a person takes material into their mind from the environment, which may mean changing the evidence of their senses to make it fit. Accommodation is the difference made to one's mind or concepts by the process of assimilation. Assimilation and accommodation go together: you can't have one without the other.

Piaget's research is also the basis of the educational approach known as constructivism, which emphasises the role of the learner in constructing his own view or model of the material, and what helps with that (Atherton 2005). Bennett grounds his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity within this tradition of cognitive constructivism (e.g. Brown, 1972; Kelly, 1963), taking in the related assumptions of cognitive complexity (e.g. Delia, Crockett & Gonyea 1970), communicative constructivism (e.g. Appelgate & Sypher, 1988), and experiential constructivism (e.g Barnlund 1998, Bennett & Castiglioni 2004). With these concepts Bennett explains how perception becomes more interculturally sensitive as categories for cultural difference become more complex, thus resulting in the potential for increased intercultural competence and how we "co-create' our experience through our corporal, linguistic, and emotional interaction with natural and human environments, allowing the DMIS to model a mechanism of intercultural adaptation (Wurzel 2004:73-74).

Although Piaget's research has been incredibly influential in the field of cognitive development, several principled criticisms of his theoretical premises have been put forward. One of the features of the theory that has been criticized is the theory's vagueness about the mechanisms of developmental change. For decades cross-cultural Piagetian research was concerned mainly with structures and stages and little discussion was devoted to processes. This was probably due to the fact that Piaget's notions of 'adaptation' (assimilation and accommodation) and "equilibration" are so general that they do not easily give rise to operational procedures, and more specific process-oriented models were not yet widely known or accepted (Dasen 1977:9-10). More recently different kind of criticism has been directed in this area. Whereas Piaget's account of development postulates distinct stages, information-processing accounts (Craik 1972, Goleman 1995) almost uniformly postulate incremental advances in cognitive abilities over the course of development. Working memory, for instance, has been shown to increase gradually over the course of childhood. These increases in basic cognitive resources may be the driving force behind many of the advances that Piaget though were due to the dual processes of assimilation and accommodation. This increase may, in combination with various skills and acquired knowledge, be enough to account for development.

3.7   The theoretical premises of Bennett's DMIS model

The way Bennett (e.g Wurzel 2004) explains the development from one stage to the next in his model is that each change in worldview structure generates new and more sophisticated issues to be resolved in intercultural encounters and the resolution of the relevant issues activates the emergence of the next orientation. In the Denial stage, there is a need to attend to the simple existence of other cultures to assist in making the perceptual distinctions that allow cultural facts to be recognised. In the Defence stage, there is a need to establish communality, not to establish more sophisticated understanding of difference. In the Minimization stage, the issue that needs to be resolved in cultural self-awareness. The major issue to be resolved at the Acceptance stage is value relativity. Adaptation stage deals with the issue of authenticity by learning to define oneself more broadly with the possibility to perceive and behave in culturally different ways and still "be yourself". Integration stage does not bring about any new intercultural competence issues as such, but it describes a fundamental shift in one's cultural identity, enabling a movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. Since within this process issues may not be totally resolved, movement may be incomplete and one's experience of difference diffused across more than one worldview. However, movement through the orientations is posited to be unidirectional, with only occasional "retreats". In other words, people do not generally regress from more complex to less complex experience of cultural difference (Wurzel 2004:74). Bennett stresses that the DMIS is not a model of cognition, affect, or behaviour, but rather a model of how the assumed underlying worldview moves from an ethnocentric to a more ethnorelativist condition (Wurzel 2004:74-75).

As it is depicted above in constructivist terms as increasingly sophisticated stages of intercultural sensitivity and potential for more intercultural competence, where the changes in knowledge, attitudes or skills are taken as manifestations of changes in the underlying worldview, the DMIS does indeed provide a thorough theoretical and explanatory framework on the subject, accounting what the different stages consist of, and what are the main issues that need to handled when moving from one stage to the next.

However, the above mentioned criticisms of Piagetian tradition concerning the vagueness about the mechanisms of developmental change and the nature of the process of change in general can also be seen in the DMIS to a certain extent. Bennett has very little discussion concerning how the relevant issues that need to be resolved at each stage are concretely tackled in practice through specific mechanisms in order for change and development to take place.   As an intercultural trainer, I have felt this lack in the otherwise very useful model. There is a need to understand the psychological mechanisms of change affecting the assumed underlying worldview to describe the process of intercultural learning and to provide concrete tools for handling this change for effective intercultural training.

3.8   Applying the dialectic and critical pragmatic approach to Bennett's model

My dialectical approach in looking at the in-between spaces within the different stages of Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity is an attempt to answer the need discussed above. It tries to bring to the open the underlying assumptions about the existing worldview and contrast it dialectically with the corresponding ones in the other party to the intercultural communication. I do not reject the cognitive constructivism of Bennett's model as it is. Instead, I add a new perspective to it by attempting to tackle what I see lacking in it, from a dialectic perspective. The cognitive-constructivist scheme answers what is developmental change and what are the elements needed to be tackled, while the additional dialectic approach provides the answers to the question how does the process of change happen in practice. The dialectic view of creating intercultural space through continuous opposing ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull also seems to fit in with the above mentioned view gleaned from information-processing accounts, which seem to correct the Piagetian view of the nature of the developmental process. Change does not happen in sudden leaps after a certain point of maturation is reached, but rather in a continuous movement in incremental steps. Thus my way of describing the developmental change as a continuous process actually brings into the DMIS the same aspect already recognised in later constructivist thinking. As already stated, Bennett says that movement through the orientations is unidirectional (Wurzel 2004:74). My dialectic approach includes a back-and-forth movement in the in-between spaces as a way or resolving the main issues, but on the whole, there too, the movement is eventually forwards towards increased intercultural sensitivity. Bennett talks about resolving the issues without saying how it is done. The dialectic movement suggested by me is about the way the resolving takes place. This is what I add to the model.

The critical pragmatic stance adapted in this research allows one take the best features of certain theoretical perspectives, without adopting the worldviews that support them in their totality. Hence it is possible to combine a dialectic scheme into a cognitive-constructivist model. The fact that the dialectic approach adapted into this constructivist model deals with an aspect of it that has not been at the centre of attention, makes the task easier, though it is not a necessary prerequisite. This way of combining the two "gets the job done", and provides a feasible description on how intercultural sensitisation takes place. Thus my theorising rests upon insights derived from a diverse selection of perspectives, the recognition of my own limitations, and a somewhat relativist stance, in a sense that interpretation is influenced by the perspective of the interpreter. This kind of ambiguity in connection with pragmatism does not mean that some interpretations are not better than others and as such, could form a basis of a theory. However, I am aware that the focus on getting things done does eventually divert the attention away from constructing a theory of pragmatism.

In classical philosophy, dialectic is controversy: the exchange of arguments and counter-arguments respectively advocating propositions (theses) and counter-propositions (antitheses). The outcome of the exercise might not simply be the refutation of one of the relevant points of view, but a synthesis or combination of the opposing assertions, or at least a qualitative transformation in the direction of the dialogue (Hegel 1874; Kant, Guyer & Wood 2003). The dialectic method requires focus on both at the same time. It looks for transcendence or fusion of opposites, which (1) provides justification for rejecting both alternatives as false and/or (2) helps clarify a real but perhaps veiled integral relationship between opposites that are normally held to be kept apart and distinct. The dialectic method also examines false alternatives presented by formal dualism (materialism vs idealism; rationalism vs empiricism; mind vs body, etc.) and looks for ways to transcend the opposites and form synthesis. In the dialectic method, both have something in common, and understanding of the parts requires understanding their relationship with the whole system. I see that the dialectical approach I have adapted provides a practical advantage by giving a more dynamic, explicit and transparent picture of the nature of developmental change than the vague treatment offered by the cognitive-constructivist view. In the dialectic view, the creation of intercultural space in the intercultural sensitisation process is described as a continuous negotiation between opposing pull-factors gives an added element. Within this back-and-forth movement the backward swing could mistakenly be interpreted as intermittent retardation of intercultural development. However, the localising and ethnocentric pull is still dynamic *movement,* and in the given context includes self-reflection, the very thing that allows for the mutual critique and adaptation to develop as the tools for developing intercultural competence as intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. The cognitive-constructivist view of perceptual development does not capture the dynamics of this continuous negotiation process as clearly, as its main focus is in the developmental end points. Rather than describing what is involved in the nitty-gritty business of the in-between stages, which is my interest in the dialectic approach, where making visible and understanding the process of change contributes towards understanding the end point, Bennett's constructivist model is not as transparent when it comes to describing how change takes place. It looks at the process of change "before " and "after the effect" in a manner of speaking, describing what are the issues that need to be handled and the kind of maturation that needs to have taken place before a certain stage is achieved.

However, my dialectic and critical pragmatic approach is not altogether strange in the company of Piaget. In explaining change, particularly in the later decades of his life, when the need for *explanation* (author's italics) of change grew louder, Piaget himself included the idea of reversibility as a central concept into his thinking. This is the ability to consider at once something and the reverse. In this, it is dialectical and revolutionary, because it puts in a nutshell the entire dynamics of growth and development by synthesis of

opposites. Another important general idea of Piaget's is that of groping, or trial and error. It is neither learning nor maturation, but an intelligent anticipation, contrasting with learning by negative enforcement (Gruber & Vonèche 1995:877). In a sense, this speaks to the same issue as critical pragmatism. In application to learning, critical pragmatism emphasizes reasoning and wisdom, experimentation, and approaching a problem from different angles in order to reach the best solution. It involves a healthy scepticism concerning any theorising and a certain degree of uncertainty as to whether the solution picked out is the correct one. Hence the term critical also involves self-criticism. Yet at the same time it is very much concerned about practical issues, getting the job done, warranting the label pragmatism (Michell 1994).

The interest of the cognitive developmental approach in testing and measurement is another reason that has led me to find alternative approaches in my research. I agree with Dasen (1977:51) that historical study leads one to re-examine the dominant view of measurement as the basic and most powerful tool for scientific discovery of general laws. He quotes Cronbach (1970:25) in making Kuh's claim (1961) that in the history of physical science, measurement rarely has led to theory but on the contrary, qualitative theory has usually preceded and often guided measurement. Insight into structures underlying observed phenomena is needed before we can hope to specify general laws relating measurable quantities that will direct us to experiments, further systematizing our psychological observations and illuminating and refining our ideas about structures. My modest personal experience in intercultural training attests to Dasen's above views and hence I have veered away from the cognitive approach of including diagnostic tools in measuring the condition of the learner's intercultural worldview in the training section of this research.

In taking the critical pragmatic and dialectic stance, I apply Seaver's (2000:17) view that critical thinking develops not through maturation and repetition of skills in artificial situations, but through thinking critically in situations that are meaningful to children of whatever age. In the context of Bennett's DMIS, which I consider to be one of the basic frameworks in intercultural training, the phrase 'children of whatever age' is replaced by 'persons of whatever intercultural developmental stage'. Regardless of the level of sophistication of the different issues to do with intercultural sensitisation at the various stages, the process of change can be set in motion by contexts that are, or are made to be, meaningful and thus incite critical thinking that calls into question the existing worldview and makes one to take a dialectic look at the situation. I see this kind of meta-awareness approach as much more fruitful to development at all levels, rather than starting with testing. One danger in testing is that for example interpretations pertaining to the process of cultural adaptation process, such as manifestations of culture shock symptoms expressed in the areas of cognition, affect and behaviour, get wrongly labelled as fixed attitudes, which can be discouraging to development and learning.

3.9   The critical pragmatic dialectic approach and adult learning theories

One reason why I have picked a critical pragmatic approach, and not chosen to stick by only one orientation to learning, such as cognitive approach for example, is that adult learning theories in and of themselves have very little consensus amongst them. There is great debate on an actual determined amount of theories that are even possible, as well as labeling those theories into groups. According to a literature review by Ross (2002), humanism, personal responsibility orientation, behaviorism, neobehaviorism, critical perspectives, and constructivism are all important facets of, and perspectives on, adult learning theory. Collins (1991) explores adult learning as the interactive relationship of theory and practice. In basic terms, the adult learner studies a particular theory and then puts it into practice when presented with the opportunity to do so. Thus, the understanding of an adult learning theory can prompt practice and practice can prompt adult learning theory revision. Merriam and Caffarella (1991:138) map out four orientations to learning: behaviourist, cognitivist, humanist , social and situational

In the cognitive theories, the view of the learning process is internal mental process, including insight, information processing, memory, perception. The locus on learning is internal cognitive structuring. Manifestations in adult learning include cognitive development , intelligence, learning and memory as function of age, learning how to learn. In the humanist theories, the view of the learning process is that of personal act to fulfil a potential. The locus of learning if affective and cognitive needs and manifestations in adult learning include self-directed learning and adult-specific strategies of learning (andragogy). In the social and situational theorising, the view of learning is interaction and observation in social contexts. The locus of learning is interaction and observation in social contexts as movement from the periphery to the centre of a community of practice. The locus of learning is learning in relationship between people and environment. Manifestations in adult learning are socialization, social participation, associationalism and conversation The different orientations are not totally mutually exclusive, but there a various ways in which they overlap and draw upon each other.

From the above it is clear that the humanist view fits in very well with the goal of gaining deep level intercultural competence as interculturally sensitised identity, as promoted in this research. Carl Rogers (1983) is a good example of this tradition. As an educationalist, he wanted to engage with the whole person and with their experience for learning that combines the logical and intuitive, the intellect and feelings. 'When we learn in that way', he said, 'we are *whole*, utilizing all our masculine and feminine capacities' He saw the following elements as being involved in significant learning: It has a quality of personal involvement, it is self-initiated, it is pervasive, it is evaluated by the learner, its essence is meaning (Rogers 1983:20). The basic tenants of the social learning theory in turn resonate well with the goal of gaining surface level intercultural competence as intercultural communicative effectiveness. The bottom line of this orientation is that people learn from observing other people. By definition,

such observations take place in a social setting' (Merriam and Caffarella 1991: 134). Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action (Bandura 1977: 22).

This short discussion points out the fruitfulness of adopting a critical pragmatic approach that combines elements from different traditions in a dialectic manner.

4 Connecting with other research on intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is defined in various ways. Some of the prominent interculturalists of today divide its constituent components differently from what I do in this research. However, their cover term 'intercultural' may actually be equated with my concept of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional. Some definitions of intercultural competence make qualifiying statements, or distinctions into the narrower and broader categorisation of the concept, much in the way I talk about surface level and deep level cultural adaptation. They either differentiate between the more abstract and theoretical concept of competence on the one hand and the more practical concept of effectiveness on the other hand, or alternately equate these two.

Chen and Starosta (2003:344) divide intercultural competence into three interrelated components: 1. Intercultural sensitivity (affect and aspect, referring to the development of readiness to understand and appreciate cultural differences in intercultural communication). 2. Intercultural awareness (cognitive aspect that refers to the understanding of cultural conventions that affect thinking and behaviour). 3. Intercultural adroitness (behavioural aspect that stresses these skills that are needed to act effectively in intercultural interactions).

The above definitions come close to the way I conceptualise and divide the components of intercultural effectiveness, except that I combine Chen and Starosta's (2003) first two categories of sensitivity and awareness into one single category of sensitivity, with contents that are very similar to the ones included in their categories of sensitivity and awareness. Their third category matches with my category of intercultural competence as intercultural effectiveness expressed through communicative competence. In line with the interdisciplinary and dialectic approach adapted in this research, I have conceptualised intercultural sensitivity quite broadly, including in it components that deal with developing intercultural identity and the cultural adaptation process from the point of view of social psychology.

Sippola and Hammar-Suutari (2006:17) summarise the components of intercultural competence used by various researchers in the following manner: "Narrowly thinking, intercultural competence can be seen to include only those skills and technical tools that can help one to perform one's assignments satisfactorily. From a broader perspective, this can be seen, for example, to comprise four dimensions: skills, cognition, attitudes and action (e.g. Nieto 1996; Noel 1995; Banks 1994). The broader view also stresses that intercultural competence is not something one can memorise. Rather, it must be internalised as a part of one's attitudes, behaviour and action"(Clough and Holden 1996).

The fact that other researchers' definitions of intercultural competence, such as the ones quoted above, also talk about an interculturally competent *person* (italics added), rather than just about the acquired skills detached from the persons themselves, mean that cultural adaptation is seen as touching the whole identity of a person: An interculturally competent person is able to act flexibly and skilfully in changeable situations with different kinds of people. They are also capable of making decisions that are not bound to preconceptions or prejudices (Gudykunst and Kim 1984). Therefore the cognitive or attitudinal qualities or behaviour of an interculturally competent person are not biased to one culture's norms but are, on the contrary, open to understanding and respecting cultural diversity (e.g. Pitkänen 2006, Jokikokko 2002).

Raising the self awareness brings to the fore one's cultural *identity,* (italics added) causing one to immediately plunge deeper into the issue than just at the surface level of skills and gimmicks for intercultural survival (Martin and Nakayama 2007). To reiterate, deepening one's cultural self-awareness has ramifications for intercultural competence that go beyond the more narrow application to skills and cognition. It also affects a person's or groups' attitudes. Consequently it also activates the acquired skills in an effective manner.

I also touch on the relational aspect of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts by looking at the relationship among the aspects of communication and cultural adaptation, viewing these holistically, rather than in isolation. From this relational study arises the third dialectical perspective of holding contradictory ideas simultaneously. A dialectical approach requires that one transcends dichotomous thinking in studying and practicing intercultural communication, and that contributions of the three perspectives are accepted simultaneously (Martin and Nakayama 2007:70-71).

4.1   The interrelatedness of language and culture

Research into intercultural competence also needs to address the interrelatedness of language and culture. As is evident from both the quantitative and qualitative results of the research, language problems feature as prominent stress factor in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts. Some of these problems have to do with language ability in a wider sense of the word, not just as it is understood in a narrow, technical sense of being able to speak a certain language correctly as far as the vocabulary and

grammar are concerned. In fact, many of the intercultural misunderstandings and consequent stress caused by this stress factor have to do with the interconnectedness of language and culture.

Languages are divided into different camps through such opposing pairs for example as preference for high-context or low-context communication, using direct versus indirect style, elaborate versus understated styles and the forms and extent of non-verbal communication utilised. To this can be added variations in contextual rules, such as administrative contexts, which is under study in this research. All of these are part of a person's culturally bound linguistic repertoire.

Even though in an intercultural dialogue a person knows how to speak the other party's language, this repertoire, or speech pragmatics of one's mother tongue, are unconsciously present and utilized in the situation. This may cause disconfirmed expectations and misattributions when the normative communication styles of the two languages clash. In addition to the concept pairs differentiating languages which were mentioned above, these can also include, for example, the way an argument is developed (Scollon and Wong-Scollon 1991), the directness of the presentation (Yeung 1996), the amount of self-diclosure (Gudykunst and Kim 1997) and the topics of conversation (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989). In fact, the negative consequences may even be more dramatic when one speaks the other's language fluently from the technical point of view. In these cases it is easily assumed that because one knows the language, one should have 'known better'. This can set into motion the cycle of misattribution by counter-attack (Felson 1987).

One example of this kind of clash of linguistically bound concept formation and a clash of communication styles is the Finnish civil servants' strong reaction against the use of one's personal name by the customers as a form of address in the official context of serving customers. There are several other examples quoted in the research showing the Finnish civil servant's linguistically-bound perceptions concerning such issues as what is considered appropriate use of language in official contexts, and what does certain style of language use indicate about a person's integrity. These cause misinterpretations about the customers' motives and intentions.

4.2   The relationship between language and perception

Thus research into intercultural communication and cultural differences in communication can benefit even further by expanding the link between language and culture to a careful study of the relationship between language and perception. Significant research on this topic has been conducted by Strømnes (e.g. 1982, 2006) from the points of view of cognition, pyscholiguistics and mental representation. He has shown differences correlating with language structure between pictorial structure in Finnish and Indo-European filmed versions of the same plays. He demonstrates that while the Finnish versions stressed Gestaltness, the relationship between static forms in a two-dimensional space, the

Scandinavian versions contained more movement, which seemed to be geared to three-dimensionality. Johansson (Johansson and Salminen 1999) has shown corresponding results to those presented by Strømnes (e.g. 1982) concerning Indo-European languages showing a greater concern in their thinking for such variables as movement and time. Finns, on the other hand, concentrate more on static relations, indicating the different mental models held by people speaking different languages. He concludes that the possibility of there being more profound differences in thinking between people speaking different languages than we have hitherto known, should be of concern for those dealing with minorities and multinational enterprises where people from different language communities work side by side (Johansson 1999:38).

A follow-up study by Strømnes showed the Finnish versions displaying prominence of Gestaltness in confined space, with the Scandinavian versions stressing continuous movement in three-dimensional space. In the abstract of an article summarising these findings he argues that "the results can be generalised to a population of communicative behaviours, stating that explanations of theobserved differences in terms of cultural variables seem to be untenable. The findings are interpreted in the light of a theory of language[40], which considers the visual mode to be primary in the transmission of information. The findings correspond with previous laboratory investigations concerning the respective structures of Finnish and the Scandinavian languages." (Strømnes, Johansson, Hiltunen 1982). To bring these results to a more concrete level of language use: "Europeans want first to know the 'where and when', after that the 'what and how', and only after that the 'who *does* what to whom'. A Finn, however, first asks the questions of 'who *is* in which relationship with whom', after that the 'what and how', and only then, if at all, the 'where and when' questions (author's italics, quotation marks added) (Hiltunen 2002).[41]

As for the history of the relationship between these two concepts, the long-standing debate in the fields of linguistics and communication study concerning the relationship between language and culture has been between the nominalist and relativist positions. The nominalist view is that perception is not affected by the language one speaks. Consequently, everybody has the same capacity for expressing the same thoughts, which are then expressed in different ways depending on which language is utilised. The orthodox relativist position is best represented by the Sapir (1921)-Whorf (1956) hypothesis. It has had a vast influence on thinking about the impact of language on everyday communication, indicating that people with differing mother tongues do not share the same perceptual world or the same social reality. Based on linguistic research conducted on Native American languages, it was proposed that language is not merely an instrument for voicing ideas but is itself the shaper of ideas, the guide for the individual's mental activity (Hoijer 1994:194). More

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[40]   Finke, R. 1980

[41]   Translation by the present author. Original quote in Finnish is as follows: "Eurooppalaiset haluavat ensin tietää missä ja milloin, sen jälkeen mitä ja miten ja vasta sitten kuka kenelle *tekee*. Suomalainen kysyy ensin kuka kenelle, sen jälkeen mitä ja miten ja vasta viimeisenä, jos silloinkaan missä ja milloin *on*."

recent research by communication scholars (e.g. Steinfatt 1989) does not support a strict interpretation of the original relativist stance.

This research takes the qualified relativist position in the discussion concerning the relationship between language and perception in stating that the particular language we use predisposes us to think in a certain way, rather than in some other ways, but that people are not strictly bound by these constraints. Other ways of perceiving the reality are developed as languages change and develop by people using them in novel ways and with exposure to different languages.

This awareness can be brought to bear to the training concerning language differences in the intercultural communication context. It is of utmost importance to bring to a conscious level the often unconscious nature of the relationship between a particular language and the concepts it describes. This will enable one to examine whether linguistically bound concepts are behind the communication confusion or misunderstanding. More research definitely needs to go into this area. One ongoing research project in this area is currently conducted in Finland by Johansson[42]. She asks the question: "Can work be done without language?" She looks at the linguistic concepts of knowledge work. Johansson[43] asks whether language is understood as a tool, as an action, as a skill or is left to play a minor role only. She has analysed several reports that map out future scenarios for the different sectors of the Finnish working life, i.e. 'future talk'. Her findings are that language *is* a problem, but the persons were not aware of it, 'it was invisible', even though it was the tool they used for their work. Language issues and language problems came out in a haphazard, diffuse, unorganised and minimal way. The actual contents of the possible problems were not spelled out.

4.3   Developing feeling for other cultures

In this research I restrict the intercultural social interaction mainly to verbal interaction, with extensions of limited nature to non-verbal and wider cultural spheres. However, I am very much aware of the connections and relationships at work in cultural adaptation being much wider, touching all of our senses. There is great value in the field of intercultural training for the idea of 'getting the feel' for another culture. "Culturally adapted behaviour is not generated solely by employing cognition with the appropriate attitude, as is sometimes supposed in intercultural theory" (Bennett and Castiglioni in: Landis et al. 2004:260). An additional link is suggested that can generate the feeling for the other culture, defining it as the embodied feeling of culture. The crucial factor in attaining this kind of holistic experience of another culture with the totality of one's mind and physical body is empathy. This is gained by first becoming culturally self-aware, a state described as embodied ethnocentrism. Bennett and Castiglioni (2004) state

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[42]   Original title of the paper presented at the seminar *Työelämän Tutkimuspäivät III, Tampere, 6.-7.10.2006*: 'Voiko työtä tehdä ilman kieltä? Kielelliset käsitykset tietotyöstä, Marjut Johansson, Turku University, 2006

[43]   Ibid

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that there is a connection between different cultural structures and psycho-physiological states, which are described as *ethnophysiological* (author's italics) (Bennett and Castiglioni in: Landis et al. 2004:253). This is in line with the thinking that orientation and interpretation of the world are never a given for humans, as culture is part of the physical condition of existence (Gehlen 1942/1990).

Many of the Finnish civil servants involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts can quote personal experience of this. To mention but one example of many, in the course of my intercultural training sessions for the staff members of the Directorate of Immigration, one participant remarked that in handling the residence permit applications, while picking up a certain nationality's passport with its distinctly recognizable smell, immediately a familiar, cosy feeling of: "Now I'm in X-nationality mood," came over her.

4.4   Different perspectives of intercultural competence

With the rapid expansion of global interdependencies, intercultural competence is quickly gaining importance worldwide, particularly in professional settings. Successful intercultural social interaction in multicultural contexts calls for effective intercultural strategies from all parties involved. To start with, it is good to recognise the complexity of the issue and state the difficulty in identifying and confirming the direct influence of single variables on psychological adjustment during cross-cultural transition (Ward et al. 2003). Takai (1989) confirms this fact, as well as the significance of taking into account personal and situational factors, language fluency, expectations and hosts' reactions (Ward et al. 2003:90).

In the context of the present research, host culture members are dealing with multiculturalism in their own cultural environment. Even though this research looks at the intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity issue from the host culture adaptees' perspective, it also brings to the fore the above three variables. The next question is to ask how, if in any way, is the host culture members' perspective different from the other possible perspectives on the intercultural scene?

In discussing the division of studies on intercultural competence, Salo-Lee (2006) differentiates four such perspectives. The first one is the expatriate immigrants perspective of '*We there*' (author's italics and quotes). This perspective consists of three competencies, which are professional competence, social interaction and adaptation (Kealey 1990:9). The last-mentioned competence component also includes acceptance, participation and satisfaction. In a later publication (Kealey and Protheroe 1995:80) the concept of intercultural effectiveness is extended from the above-mentioned personal attributes to also include the two additional elements of organisational effectiveness and an enabling environment. These are different types of competencies from the 'micro-level' personal attributes. These two new 'macro-level' competencies are introduced in the context of project management, which is often the working scene in international overseas assignments. They denote the social, economic

and political/administrative settings of the multinational/international projects. Sustainable skills-building efforts depend greatly on a congenial or 'enabling' (authors' quotes) environment surrounding the projects, or at least on the minimisation of negative influences in these two areas (Kealey and Protheroe 1995:83).

Tolerance of ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, goal orientation, sociability and interest in other people, empathy, non-judgmental attitude and meta-communication skills are listed by Stahl (2001) as the relevant intercultural skills, or context-related competencies, for managers working on overseas assignments.

The second intercultural perspective is the immigration perspective of *'They here'* (author's italics and quotes) (Salo-Lee 2006). An example of this is host communication competence, which includes environmental factors (e.g. host receptivity, host conformity pressure), predisposition (preparedness for change, ethnic proximity) and communication (e.g. ethnic interpersonal and media communication, or host interpersonal and media communication) As a transformation process, this means a new, psychologically well functioning intercultural identity with new 'social currency' to empower the immigrant to participate actively in the society (Kim 2001).

The third perspective is the inclusive local perspective of *'We all here'* (author's italics and quotes) Salo-Lee (2006). In addition to those host culture members with only local cultural experience, this perspective also includes the perspectives of those groups in the local context with intercultural exposure, such as the perspective of returning expatriates with multicultural identities and competencies. However, these competencies do not always get translated into corresponding competencies at home.

Included in this perspective is the issue of the emerging and growing multiculturalism of many societies, bringing the views of the immigrant population into the local perspective, including the present day discussion in Finland concerning "Who are the Finns?" and "What is Finnishness?" which calls for a reconsideration and new kinds of answers to these questions. The boundaries between 'we' and 'they' (author's quotes) are becoming justly blurred also in Finland (Salo-Lee 2006). These comments, taken together with the earlier discussion in this research concerning the related questions of "How can we live together?" asked by Touraine (2000) and "How is it possible for members of two different cultures to understand each other without one culture surrendering its integrity to the other?" by Young (1996), obviously point to the fact that also in the Finnish context the intercultural issues are becoming ever more crucial.

The fourth perspective is the inclusive global perspective of *'We here and there'* (author's italics and quotes) (Salo-Lee 2006). This is often looked at from the point of view of international, interdisciplinary working groups or teams, where interactants come from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, meeting in each other's cultures, or in a culture foreign to all interactants. People define and influence each other mutually, and each communication situation is thus unique (Scollon and Scollon 1995). The ability to be

participative means to be a productive part in common projects, with the main competence being the ability to create an atmosphere for effective transfer of knowledge despite cultural ambiguity and differences (Holden 2002). This kind of knowledge transfer in multicultural working life takes place through intercultural dialogue as a form of communication that transcends linguistic borders. Listening, empathy, understanding, openness and responsibility are all composite factors of dialogue. In the global context intercultural competence is a complex issue and requires constant refining (Salo-Lee 2004).

The question I ask in connection with this research is "How does the host culture adaptees' intercultural competence fit into this scheme?" Should it just be included under the immigrant perspective as the other party in the social interaction, defining and influencing the communication mutually with the immigrant counterpart? However, when looked at solely as part of the immigrant perspective, as it mainly has been done, the tendency is to *overlook* the host culture perspective, as already suggested by the fact that only one party is explicitly stated in the descriptive term. Thus if one adapts this approach, the host culture's viewpoint tends to be lost.

An alternate solution is to include the host culture members' intercultural competence under the inclusive local perspective of *'We all here,'* as party to the process of blurring boundaries between 'we' and 'they'. When viewed within this perspective, as a phenomenon in an emerging multicultural society, host culture members' intercultural competence presents itself as a process, rather than a state of social interacting. In this sense it can be described as a gradual move from a perspective I classify as the local exclusive perspective of *'Only we here'*, which excludes those outside the dominant culture and marks a lack of intercultural competence, into the local inclusive perspective of *'We all here'*, with intercultural competencies both developed and practiced. With this approach, the host culture members' competencies become visible. However, adapting a process view means that the contents of the concept only get conceptualised in a vague manner, as moving from one stage to another.

Alternatively, one may ask whether the most appropriate place to examine the host culture members' intercultural competence would be under the inclusive global perspective of *'We here and there'*. The experience of the Finnish civil servants, as they are expressed in this research, can be interpreted to match Salo-Lee's (2006) discussion on this perspective.

First of all, the clientele represents many different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, calling for multiple strategies, which also is the context of the inclusive global perspective. Secondly, the Finnish civil servants have a high need to impart the necessary information to their multi-ethnic clientele in the face of possible cultural misunderstandings. This calls for a high level of participative competence, which is listed as part of the inclusive global perspective. Thirdly, the intercultural social interaction in the multi-ethnic customer contact needs to be executed in a manner that hopefully leaves the customers satisfied with the way they have been treated, which is about dialogical competence, another component of the inclusive global perspective.

A fourth solution is to handle the host culture members' intercultural competence as partly belonging to, and operating under, all of the four above-mentioned perspectives. In one sense it is one acceptable way of dealing with the matter, as this discussion has pointed out.

However, the question remains whether there is something so specific in the nature of the host culture members' intercultural competencies, and/or in the process of gaining these competencies, that it warrants a separate perspective? If that is so, how should it be defined and described? The fact remains that "multiculturalism in one's own culture requires redefining intercultural" (Salon-Lee 2006).

4.5   The globalizing/localizing perspective: 'In-between our/their culture'

If the host culture members' intercultural competence is viewed as being in a state of interacting socially, rather than as the process of describing how it is arrived at, as detailed in the inclusive local *'We all here'* perspective, then it can also be conceptualised as an independent intercultural perspective. I suggest that it be called the globalizing/localizing perspective, which is further defined as *'In-between our/their culture'*. Alternative ways of describing the cultural state of in-betweenness could be: *'We and they being here and there'*, or *'Being in-between here and there.'* This is not just playing with words. Whichever of the above qualifying definitions one uses for the globalizing/localizing intercultural perspective, and regardless whether the pronouns are left out or not, the picture that emerges is one where both sides are partly involved in, or at least exposed to, each other's communicative cultures.

I base the use of the term 'in-betweenness' to Lie's (2003) adaptation of Turner's (1969) concept of liminality into the context of creating intercultural spaces, as discussed earlier on. To briefly recap my earlier treatment of this topic, the liminal state can be defined as one that has no social definition, and where the identity of the person or the group is unclear. This is a position offering a possibility for a dialectic of reflection and critique.

The Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts provide a sample context, albeit a limited one, for examining the in-betweenness perspective. Physically (or environmentally in Kealey's (1995) sense of the word) and organisationally, these contacts happen in the *'here'* perspective, on one's 'home turf', in one's home country and within the domains of one's own professional administrative culture. Yet, communication-wise a picture of liminality emerges, as far as the intercultural nature of the social interaction is concerned. Of course one needs to bear in mind that there are other factors also at work in the situation besides the intercultural aspect. Liminality is evoked by the fact that the culturally conditioned Finnish administrative way of dealing with the customers does not always work, raising issues of integrity of one's identity when the multi-ethnic clientele brings the aspect of *'there'* into the equation, as shown by this research.

Thus, even though from the civil servant's point of view the working context is that of a regular Finnish government office, where the civil servants are secure in their roles and duties, in the particular slice of their work experience that deals with multi-ethnic clientele, these routine definitions may be lost if the clientele does not adhere to, or is interpreted not to be adhering to them. This kind of contradictory set-up between the civil service and the multi-ethnic clientele is reflected in uncertainty concerning one's professional, and times also the personal, identity. These kinds of sentiments of uncertainty are being quoted in this research time and time again, both in explicit and implicit terms.

From the multi-ethnic clientele's point of view, when utilising their own cultural patterns of communicating with the authorities in the Finnish context, situations of intercultural misunderstandings in communication are a mirror image of the corresponding situation for the civil servants. The clientele can also be in a liminal state culturally speaking, experiencing identity confusion in their customer's role, which they may be acting out subconsciously, according to their accustomed culturally bound communication patterns. In the liminal in-between state with ethnically non-Finnish customers, one's familiar and regular professional props get stripped off. This creates room for critique of these props on the one hand, while at the same time causing one to try to understand the corresponding cultural props possibly relied on by the ethnically non-Finnish customer in situations of intercultural miscommunication. This realisation of both parties 'being in the same boat', having lost the familiar symbols in the communication situation, gives the chance, in the terminology of liminality, for the civil servant to create a sense of equality, camaraderie and communitas. In this sense, the *'we all here'* perspective could suffice also for the host culture members.

However, my choice of keeping the concepts of 'our' and 'their' separate reflects the fact that for the present purposes it is helpful to keep the host culture members' perspective conceptually separate. This allows one to examine whether or not it differs, either content-wise or in the manner it is acquired, from the other four perspectives looked at above, while exploring the Finnish civil servants' intercultural competence as an example of host culture adaptees' intercultural competence.

Part of the intercultural competence of the civil servant is the ability to explicate the mutuality of the process of intercultural adaptation and critique. As already mentioned earlier, this kind of awareness also includes the responsibility for initiating this process in the other party to the communicative situation, if it is considered necessary. For ideal results both parties in intercultural social interaction need to take responsibility for the communication to proceed effectively, one party's taking an active role can also make a difference (Ting-Toomey 1996). The double perspective, implicit in the concept of mutuality, is one reason I include in this perspective both the words 'we' and 'they' in the form 'our/their' rather than just calling it '*Us all being in-between cultures,*' which could also be one legitimate way of looking at the role of the host culture members in cross-cultural encounters.

Presenting this perspective as a simultaneous pull between one's own cultural views and those of the person from another culture in an intercultural communication situation, depicted by the wording 'our/their', bears witness to the host culture adaptees' paradoxical situation. It can be likened to the situation between globalizing/localizing identities. I have therefore adapted this concept pair from communication studies to this particular intercultural communication perspective as a basis for, and a parallel to the opposing pull between 'us' and 'them'.

Another reason I see the need to keep the concepts of *'our'* and *'their'* separate in the definition of the host culture members' intercultural competence, is on account of the reality of differences in the extent of intercultural awareness, experience and competence between the two parties in the intercultural encounter. The *'we all'* phrase suggests a merging of the concepts of *'we'* and *'they'*, and could be interpreted to denote the ideal situation where both parties come to the intercultural communication situation with equally well-developed intercultural sensitivity and competencies. In practice this rarely is the case.

In the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts, a particular ethnically non-Finnish customer may have a much wider intercultural experience of the two, or likewise the opposite may be true, as the Finnish civil servants' intercultural exposure may also vary greatly. Thus the dynamics of the globalizing/localizing identities work in a unique manner in different communicative contexts for the two parties, depending on the extent to which the intercultural sensitivity and intercultural effectiveness as communication competence of the two parties overlap. Separating the *'we'* and *'they'* in this manner in theintercultural perspective of *'Being in between our/their culture'* perspective alsoaddresses the issue of power differences operating in the intercultural contactsituation.

In intercultural encounters between the host culture members and the immigrant population within this profile (as also with the other profiles), the extent of success in communication, measured by the absence of, or by the ability to sort out intercultural communication clashes and reaching of mutual understanding, calls for one or both parties to behave in such a manner that at least a near balance of the intercultural scales is arrived at (Lie (2003). To recap the above, it calls for a creation of a sufficiently wide cultural overlap in at least one of the two areas of cultural adaptation; either in the area of intercultural sensitivity, operating through a mutual give and take, or in the area of practical intercultural communication competencies.

Lastly, separating these two terms also reflects the nature of the concept of globalizing/localizing identities, as I have applied it in this research from Lie (2003). It is not about total merging, but rather about flexible back-and-forth movement between the *'we'* and *'they'* perspectives, at times reacting to one another, at other times acting in harmony. Yet at all times one is creating the common space, the intercultural space, where effective communication and the reshaping of identities can take place. This can happen in a manner where both

parties are able to hold on to their integrity, realising that intercultural adaptation does not mean losing one's own cultural identity. Utilising the phrase *'we'* and *'they'* instead of the *'we all'* thus also addresses this aspect.

5   The interconnectedness of the research themes

This research looks at two types of interconnectedness between the main themes. First of all the connection between the intensity of the cultural adaptation process and the ensuing intercultural competence is examined specifically through the phenomenon of culture shock. The deep level intercultural competence, which I have labelled intercultural sensitivity, is compared with the surface level intercultural effectiveness, which in turn is expressed in communicative ease in intercultural situations. As a logical consequence of the interest in these to areas of interconnectedness, I also examine the extent to which these two connections in reality are two facets of the same thing, at least in connection with a person's identity becoming interculturally sensitised.

5.1   Connecting effectiveness and sensitivity through mindfulness

The critical pragmatic intercultural professional engages in mindful intercultural communication. This mindfulness is described as being the influence of deep level cultural adaptation on the identity of a person in such a manner that it gets reflected in the surface level competencies of skills and behaviour in a smooth, sensitive, natural, i.e. 'mindful' communication with persons from other cultures. Ting-Toomey's (1996) concept of mindfulness parallels the above view on mindfulness in the context of intercultural communication. To her, intercultural communication is defined as "the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation." Alternatively, individuals may stay in a very superficial relationship without ever moving the relationship to a satisfactory level. Intercultural communication is conceptualised as a four-stage staircase model consisting of four stages (Ting-Toomey 1996:51-52).
> "To develop quality intercultural or interpersonal relationship, communicators need to integrate knowledge and skills, and practice mindfulness in their communication process" (Ting-Tome 1999:16-17). This is in accordance with Young's description of critical pragmatic professional with the ability to negotiate shared meanings in the context of intercultural communication in a way that allows both parties to feel that they do not have to forfeit their identities. When Ting-Toomey[44] talks about encountering ourselves and the others in the flow of the interaction moment, in a similar vein Young (1996: 209) talks about critical pragmatism, with critique being no more than the mediating moment in

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[44]   Ibid

rational learning, consisting of the process of appraisal or judgement whereby we enter into a dialectic between our existing frameworks of sense-making and the circumstances which force us continually to adapt them.

Like Bennett (e.g. 1986, 1993), Ting-Toomey (1999) also addresses the change from ethnocentric to ethnorelativist orientation, with the possibility of remaining in a superficial relationship in intercultural encounters without ever moving the relationship to a satisfactory level. Ting-Toomey (1999) also has a parallel ethos with Young's (1996) critical pragmatic professional, which is also the stated goal for the kind of intercultural training developed in this research on the basis of the empirical data collected. Hence Ting-Toomey's[45] process approach is a useful theoretical complement to Bennett (e.g. 1986 and 1993) and Young (1996) for the intercultural training scheme presented in this research. It reinforces and enhances it by giving it added breadth.

In mindful communication, competent intercultural social interaction emphasizes the importance of integrating knowledge and motivational factors and putting them into mindful practice in everyday social interactions. Identity valuation skill is a major skill to master in mindful intercultural communication: By conveying our respect and acceptance of group-based and person-based differences, we encourage interpersonal trust, inclusion and connection. Lastly, by verbally and nonverbally confirming the desired identities of the cultural stranger, we reaffirm the intrinsic worthiness of the dissimilar other. Identity valuation skill can be conveyed through a word, a glance, a gesture, or responsive silence. Mindful intercultural communication emphasizes the appropriate, effective and satisfactory negotiations of shared meanings and desired goals between persons of different cultures.

The feelings of being understood, respected and intrinsically valued form the outcome and dimensions of mindful intercultural communication. Mindful intercultural communicators are resourceful individuals, who are attuned to both self-identity and other-identity negotiation issues. They are mindful of the antecedent, process and outcome factors that shape the dynamic interplay of the intercultural communication process. They are also able to adapt to intercultural differences, flexibly and creatively, in a diverse range of communicative situations. This description again parallels the qualities of the interculturally critical pragmatic professional identity, the development of which is one of the main focuses of this research. As a further point of application to training motivation in particular, it is important to note that while it is assumed that the efforts of both communicators are needed to ensure competent identity negotiations, the effort of one individual can set competent communication in motion (Ting-Toomey 1996:40).

The Finnish civil servants' customer contacts are situations where informal integration of the clientele continually takes place in the flow of the customers' cases being handled, as a by-product, whether the two parties involved in this social interaction are aware of it or not. Targeted intercultural communication

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[45]   Ibid

training utilising Ting-Toomey's (1996) concept of mindfulness and all that it entails can address this issue by giving the personnel of the government offices the awareness of taking on this task as a conscious role. It can provide the tools for being able to be the initiators in setting in motion the kind of competent communication where the increased intercultural understanding, respect and mutual support for the perceived identity needs called for by this theory are met in this particular communication context.

The identity negotiation perspective in Ting-Toomey's (1996) theory is an integrative theory that draws from the work of social identity theory (e.g. Abrams and Hogg 1990), symbolic interactionism (e.g. McCall and Simmons 1978) identity negotiation (e.g. Ting-Toomey 1988, 1989a, 1993) and relational dialectics (Baxter and Montgomery 1996). Social identity theorist derive their ideas from the sociological arena. The identity negotiation and dialectical approaches reflect theoretical and research work in the communication discipline (Ting-Toomey 1996:27). The identity negotiation perspective emphasizes the linkage between cultural values and self-conception. It explains how one's self-conception profoundly influences one's cognitions, emotions, and social interactions. It explains why and how people draw intergroup boundaries. It illustrates the different needs and wants of individuals in desiring inclusion-differentiations and connection-autonomy in their relationships. It also maps out the factors that contribute to identity shock when individuals move from a familiar cultural milieu to an unfamiliar one.

Ting-Toomey's (1996) conceptualisation of mindfulness is adapted into this research to formulate the ethos for bridging the concepts of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural effectiveness. It is a useful framework in theorising about creating an environment for mutual learning, where there is genuinely mutual give and take, and where one party to the communication can initiate the process for mutual development.

5.2 Effectiveness vs. sensitivity: a question of different starting points

The Communication Display Exchanges are utilized in this theory mainly as a means to gain surface level intercultural communicative effectiveness. The reinterpretation of Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and the concept of mindfulness adapted from Ting-Toomey (1996), on the other hand, are useful in describing the development of interculturally sensitised professional identity. However, the vice versa is also true to a certain extent. The CDPE model is also about intercultural sensitisation and likewise, the outcome of the MDIS is most definitely meant to be intercultural effectiveness. In fact, my understanding is[46] that Bennett equates intercultural effectiveness with the attainment of ethnorelativist orientation towards other cultures on his sensitivity development continuum. I also acknowledge in my above application of Ting-Toomey's theory that her concept of mindfulness can be viewed as a bridge

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[46]   In personal discussion with professor L. Salo-Lee

between the deep level intercultural competence of sensitivity and surface level intercultural competence of effectiveness.

I see the difference between these to be that even though they all deal with both intercultural effectiveness on the level of skills and behaviour and with intercultural sensitivity on the level of awareness and attitudes, as I define these concepts, they start from opposing ends, and hence work towards opposite directions. The CDE starts with surface level practical communicative effectiveness and tries to gradually sensitise a person's identity. The MDIS and Mindfulness as a systemic model start with the deep structure and work from there towards the surface level practical outcomes.

I see this being a parallel issue to the more general question as to what is the best order for a person to be interculturally sensitised? Cultural adaptation, intercultural learning, or intercultural sensitisation, or whatever term is used for it, consists of three parts. It happens through the processes of developing intercultural awareness, gaining culture-specific and intercultural knowledge and by taking action (Matinheikki-Kokko 1997b). There are individual and cultural differences as to the order in which these three components are intrinsically utilised in intercultural contact situations. This also has implications for intercultural training.

6 Summary of the general analytical framework

The legitimacy of adding the host culture aspect to the intercultural theory with full weight, not just in name, as a passing notion, is thus well established by the research community, even though very few researchers have taken up the exhortation to do so. The bi-directional nature of the cultural adaptation process is firmly rooted in the social sciences, from which intercultural communication as a discipline can draw on for a more complete understanding of the interconnectedness of culture, communication, social reality and language in human experience. The present research on the multi-ethnic customer contacts of the Finnish civil servants looks at the above-mentioned interconnectedness from an interdisciplinary point of view, as it looks at the host culture members' cultural adaptation from the point of view of developing professional intercultural communication competence. It examines how this impacts the Finnish civil servants' professional identity, i.e. what kind of identity changes does this acculturation process, which is limited to their professional contacts with non-Finns, possibly create in them. The mainstream psychological literature has long recognized that the stress and coping studies complement the social skills analyses in the study of human behaviour. Managing stressful circumstances includes 'instrumental control of the situation and maintenance of personal integrity and morale' (Ward et al. 2003:90). Trower, Bryant and Argyle (1978) connect the learning of social skills with the psychology of adjustment by stating that some types of adaptation difficulties are caused or

intensified by the lack of social. They also noted the reciprocal relationship between the two domains, saying that social inadequacy leads to isolation and psychological disturbance and that psychological distress affects behaviour, including an array of social skills and interactions (Ward et. al. 2003:90).

The analytical framework presented in this chapter can be summarised by describing it as three tiers that feed into one another. The intercultural philosophy defines the goal that is strived for. The interdisciplinary theorising employed lays down the parameters within which to work for achieving this goal. These parameters are framed by the three strands of cultural adaptation, i.e. stress and coping, social learning and acculturation approaches. These manifest themselves as identity issues, cultural and communicative competencies. The model describes the means of working towards the desired goal within these parameters. This tripartite framework provides the theoretical scaffolding for what is being studied, why a certain research angle is being taken, who are being studied, and how the research topic is approached.
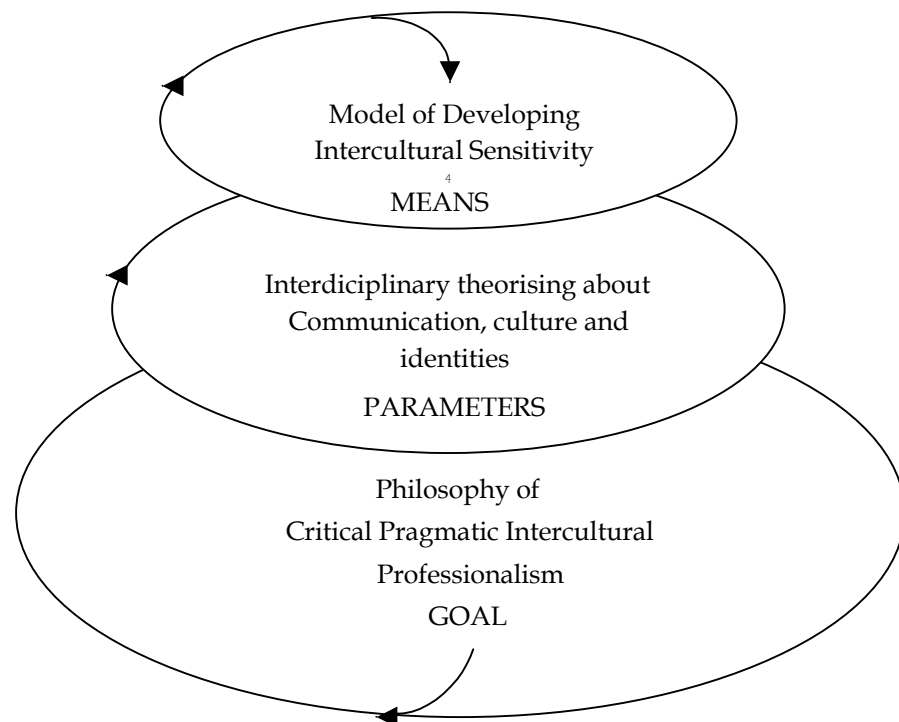
FIGURE 3. The general analytical framework of the research

CHAPTER 3. THE SUBJECTS AND METHODOLOGY

The previous chapters discussed the motivations for researching the topic of host culture adaptees and laid out the general analytical framework concerning goal, parameters and means through which to handle the main themes. This chapter introduces the subjects of study and the methods employed for this research.

This research addresses the need for understanding the intercultural issues in the context of customer service in the two governmental bodies that are being studied. The starting point dates back to the spring of 2004, when the Directorate of Immigration prepared its first ever Action Plan for Well-being in the Workplace. In connection with that, an in-house working group on well-being in the workplace was established. Based on the action plan, the group was given the tasks of mapping out some of the obvious stress factors within the working environment, and to help plan for appropriate measures to maintain and enhance the well-being of the personnel, as this was considered to directly correlate with working ability and work satisfaction.

Customer contacts play a fairly central role in the Directorate of Immigration, with a large number of the personnel daily dealing with customers over the phone. In the above mentioned working group's discussions it was established that one major stress factor affecting the well-being in the workplace in all those units with customer contacts is the multi-ethnic nature of the these contacts. Since dealing with the ethnically non-Finnish clientele has relevance to the tasks of a large number of the Directorate of Immigration's personnel, the working group chose this topic to be one of the first areas to tackle. The smooth running of customer contacts has relevance both to the customer satisfaction and to the feeling of job satisfaction amongst the personnel. As customer contacts of any organisation are a window to how it operates on the whole, it was considered vital to put particular effort into ensuring that they are handled with due care within the The Directorate of Immigration.

In this respect the working group expressed concern that the public image of the Directorate of Immigration, as expressed in the public media, at times is quite negative. It was put forward that one reason for the negative feedback concerning the way the personnel handles customer contacts is the misunderstandings in communication between the Finnish government servants and the ethnically non-Finnish customers. Since I had been running

regular in-house intercultural communication training sessions for the personnel of the Directorate of Immigration as part of my job, it was decided that in connection with the next four intercultural training sessions planned for the coming year and aimed at four different units within the Directorate of Immigration, I would conduct surveys concerning the various stress factors in the customer contact work. The working group acknowledged being aware of the mutual stress involved in the situation both for the civil servants and for their clientele. It wanted to address the issue to ensure a smoother running of the customer contacts, to lessen the stress experienced in them and to increase the experience of job satisfaction and well-being of the personnel in the performance of this task. The results of these surveys form one part of the empirical data for which this research is based.

1 Introduction to the Finnish Directorate of Immigration

The Finnish Directorate of Immigration is subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, being the agency that processes and decides on matters related to immigration, residence, refugee issues, and Finnish citizenship*. In practice, the Directorate of Immigration is involved with the following issues:
- granting residence permits to foreigners who come to Finland, including students, employed persons, self-employed persons, returnees, and family members of foreigners living in Finland
- processing applications for asylum from investigation to decision-making
- granting aliens' passports and travel documents for refugees
- deciding on refusals of entry and deportation
- dealing with of naturalisation applications, declarations concerning Finnish citizenship, and definition of citizenship status
- maintaining the register of aliens
- producing information services for international needs and domestic decision-makers and authorities

The Directorate of Immigration implements Finland's official immigration and refugee policy, with the stated principal aim of promoting controlled immigration. This means taking into consideration human rights and other fundamental rights, good administration and legal protection, as well as preventing the abuse of the legal provisions on immigration. The Finnish Directorate of Immigration is a decision-making organisation with expertise in matters related to entry into and residence in the country, international protection and Finnish citizenship. The Directorate of Immigration also maintains a register of aliens and provides information services in support of political decision-making and national and international co-operation. The services of the Directorate of Immigration are based on flexible decision-making, active and open communication and expert advice.

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* On the 19th of April 2007 the first ever Minister of Migration and European Affairs was appointed in Finland.

The values of the Directorate of Immigration are: openness, and justice. The Directorate's Vision 2012 is: "From entry into the country to citizenship – top knowledge in a changing world for the good of the individual and society." [47]

2 Introduction to the Social Insurance Institution of Finland

The second part of the empirical data for this research is collected from the personnel of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland. It is the government institution, which provides basic social security for all persons resident in Finland, covering the different stages of their lives. Besides the residents of Finland, the institution serves persons who, while living outside Finland, are covered by the Finnish social security legislation. KELA operates under the supervision of the Finnish Parliament. Founded on the 16th of December 1937, KELA was at first exclusively a pension provider. Since then, the operations have been expanded, diversified and modernized. Especially during the 1980s and 90s, KELA was entrusted with many new programme responsibilities, so that its services now reach the whole Finnish population.
The Benefits Available from KELA are:
- National Pension Insurance: National Pension, Survivors' Pension, Care Allowance for Pensioners, Housing Allowance for Pensioners, Front-Veterans' Supplements
- National Health Insurance: Maternity and Parental Allowances, Sickness Allowances, Reimbursements of Medical Expenses, Occupational Health Care
- Unemployment Security: Basic Unemployment Allowance, Labour Market Subsidy, Training Allowance, Job Alternation Compensation
- Family Benefits: Maternity Grant/Package, Family Allowance, Child Day Care Allowances
- Rehabilitation, Disease Prevention
- Disability Benefits: Disability Allowance, Child Disability Allowance
- General Housing Allowance
- Financial Aid for Students, School Transport Subsidy
- Conscripts' Allowance

KELA's mission statement and core values are expressed in the following manner on their web pages: "KELA's mission is to protect and strengthen the health and income security of all residents of Finland and to promote autonomy and self-initiative at all stages of life. Our operations are guided by the following values:
- Respect for the individual,
- Expertise,
- Cooperation,
- Renewal[48]

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47   Source: http://www.uvi.fi/netcomm/content.asp?path=8,2470

The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA) is one of the government institutions that every foreigner coming to Finland has dealings with. Thus KELA staff is one of the main group of civil servants in Finland who regularly come into contact with ethnic non-Finns in their customer contacts, particularly in the bigger towns where there are large concentrations of immigrants. KELA has a total of 260 full-service offices and about 70 secondary offices, and additionally participates in approximately 100 shared-service projects. In the year the data for this research was collected, KELA had about 18 million customer contacts. According to KELA statistics, approximately 100 000 of these contacts were with ethnic non-Finns.[49] KELA takes its customer satisfaction seriously, which is evident from the fact that in the KELA's statement of values the first postulate is expressed by the following statement:

"Clients come first"

In providing services to its clients, KELA follows the principle that benefit claims must be determined expeditiously, consistently and correctly." A few lines later, in the statement of values it is noted that "KELA reviews the quality of its client service."[50] This is a continual process that is carried out in various ways, such as regular customer satisfaction surveys, technical improvements, training of personnel etc. Presently one large-scale activity in connection with achieving the goals set for the general quality standards of KELA is a project for revamping the customer service, which is being carried out between the years 2004 and 2008. One of its aims is to develop a more flexible approach in customer service. Special questions are addressed through separate modules in the project.

One of these modules is KELA's multi-ethnic customer contacts. The activities planned for that module include a series of one-day training seminars on intercultural communication and dealing with multicultural clientele. In the spring of 2004, I was contracted to run three such training seminars. The instructions given to me were that the main cause of stress for the staff involved in multi-ethnic customer service was how to deal with the language problem in general, i.e. how to explain the special Kela-terminology and the vast body of complicated instructions and guidelines[51] in an understandable manner to the ethnically non-Finnish clientele. These persons come from varied backgrounds, and may not understand the Finnish legislation and policies and how they apply in their particular cases. I was told that due to the above factors, multi-ethnic customer contacts cause emotional and mental strain to the staff involved in them. KELA's stated goal for these training seminars was to help the staff to give better quality service to their ethnically non-Finnish customers, and to develop intercultural understanding in order to prevent the formation of negative attitudes. The researcher was asked to address the topic of how to

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[48]   Source: http://www.kela.fi/in/internet/english.nsf/NET/210102150531RH?Open Document

[49]   Source:Tapio Johansson, Kela, 8.10.2004, verbal information obtained at a planning session.

[50]   http://www.kela.fi/in/internet/english.nsf/NET/260302103631EH?openDocument

[51]   Kela has altogether 20 000 pages of various instructions and guidelines on how to apply the relevant legislation in particular cases under varying circumstances. Source: Tapio Johansson, Kela, 8.10.2004, verbal information obtained at a planning session.

handle one's emotional reactions that arise due to difficulties and misunderstandings in multi-ethnic customer contacts. This was a concern for KELA, as their staff members had expressed such views as: '*Am I a racist when I feel like this after a difficult customer contact with an immigrant?*'

3   Conducting the surveys

The three surveys forming the basis of this research were conducted between May 2004 and December 2006. The data collecting took place in connection with the in-house intercultural training seminars I conducted for the personnel of the Finnish Directorate of Immigration (DOI)[52] and for the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA) [53] during that time span. The participants were asked to fill in the survey questionnaire as preparation for taking part in the said training seminars in order to get them thinking about the topic by reflecting on their experiences in the multi-ethnic customer contacts prior to participating in the seminar.

Four of these seminars were held for the DOI personnel. The first one was a pilot survey for the Directorate of Immigration's Naturalisation department staff, looking at the telephone contacts with the multi-ethnic clientele. This produced a total of 27 replies. The Migration unit, the Asylum and Refugee unit and the Kuhmo regional unit were given an extended Survey questionnaire, which included both telephone and face–to-face customer contacts. This produced 49 replies. The same survey questionnaire[54] was utilised for the participants of the three intercultural workshops I conducted for the KELA staff members, who came from various local offices around Finland, except that a question was added to it asking for the number of years the respondent had worked for the KELA.[55] These training sessions produced 57 replies. Thus a total of 133 replies were collected. In addition to the quantitative data obtained from the multiple choice questions, the data collection produced a total of 767 individual comments concerning various aspects of the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts.

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[52]   An agreement was given by the General Director of the Directorate of Immigration to utilise the survey results for the purposes of this research.

[53]   An agreement was signed by KELA to give persmission utilize the results of the survey questionnaires filled out in connection with my lectures for the purpose of this research.

[54]   Please see Appendix 1. for the English translation of the Survey Questionnaire utilised for the 2nd DOI Survey and the Kela Survey.

[55]   At the time of the DOI surveys, it was not thought to ask about the length of the staff members' work experience in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, but only about their position in the organization, which affects the nature of their customer contacts.

3.1 The profile of the KELA personnel involved in the research

As already mentioned, only the KELA questionnaire includes a question concerning the length of involvement in customer service within the respondent's work history in Kela. The diagram below shows that this experience ranges from 1 to 35 years:

Number of working years in the Social Insurance Institution (KELA)
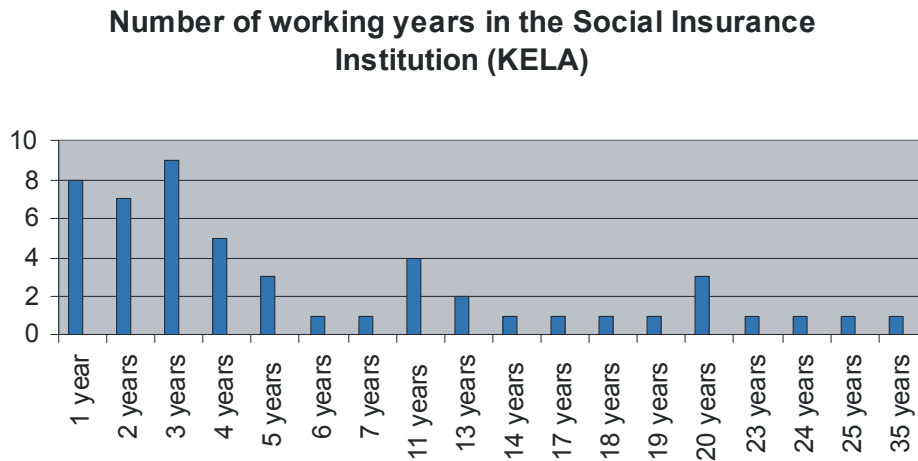
FIGURE 4. Length of work experience in KELA

The chart below demonstrates that almost half of the respondents, 42 %, have only 1 – 3 years of working experience with KELA, and on fifth have 4 – 7 years of work experience. This means that about two thirds of the respondents, 63 % in all, fall between the 1 – 7 years bracket, with a little over one third having over 11 years of work experience in the multi-ethnic customer contact within KELA.

Distribution of working years experience in the Social Insurance Institution (KELA)
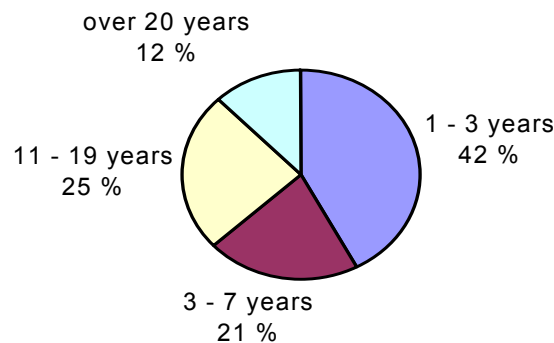
FIGURE 5. Summary of the length of work experience in KELA

From the 58 responses collected from KELA staff members, more than half of them, 36 persons, have been involved in an equal amount of customer service

in face-to-face contacts and telephone contacts, with 22 respondents having mainly experience only in face-to-face contacts.

3.2 The profile of the DOI personnel involved in the research

As far as the Directorate of Immigration is concerned, generally speaking the respondents have had much more experience with customers through telephone contacts in comparison to face-to-face contacts. Out of the 76 DOI respondents, 63[56] recorded having mostly been involved with the customers through telephone contact, while nine persons' reported that the main face-to-face contacts with the customers for them were the asylum interviews. Only four persons were mostly involved with customers in face-to-face contacts, by having a regular slot in working at the customer service counter. This distribution between telephone and face-to-face contacts is reflected in the answers in the following ways: Telephone contacts receive a much larger volume of comments from the respondents than face-to face contacts. The limited experience with face-to-face contacts also partly explains why the multiple-choice questions concerning face-to-face contacts received a much larger number of 'I do not know' answers compared to the respective answers concerning telephone contacts.

The nature of the customer contacts also differs between the different units within the DOI. In the Immigration unit, the customers themselves usually contact the office. With the asylum seekers, it is often the customer's lawyer, the social worker of the reception centre, or the local police who contact the DOI on behalf of the customer. Due to the confidentiality of the political asylum cases stipulated in the law in order to protect the applicants and their family members, the DOI is not allowed to give out any detailed information concerning the case over the phone to anyone other than the official representative of the customer. In principle, confidential details concerning asylum cases should not be discussed over the phone, as one is not able to verify the identity of the caller. This can cause stress in situations where one needs to explain to callers why they cannot be given the information over the phone, and that they should come to the office in person with the customer.

Most of the face-to-face contacts of the DOI staff that took part in this survey have been interviews with people who apply for political asylum. Otherwise they meet their customers fairly seldom. Some of the customers utilize the option of making an appointment with the DOI in order to bring in personally some additional information requested by the office, so that they can better explain their situation. Another reason for making customer appointments is when customers have difficult and complicated matters to ask about, which they consider to be time consuming and easier discussed in person, rather than during the telephone hour.

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[56] This figure includes the 27 respondents from the Naturalisation Unit, who were only asked about their telephone contacts.

The comments by the respondents suggest that the customer contacts made by special appointment are not usually problematic or stressful. Apart from the special appointments, the customers have been able to come to the DOI at any time during the office hours to drop off some required documents in connection with their application, and have it checked by the staff, or to make enquiries. This kind of limited customer service has been handled by the security staff in conjunction with their other duties and by a small number of volunteer staff from the various units within the DOI. However, full time face-to-face customer service was not part of the DOI's operations at the time the surveys upon which this research is based, were conducted.[57]

As for the type of work the respondents from the DOI are involved in, out of the 49 persons who replied to the extended questionnaire, five were in a management level position, with the responsibility of being the final decision maker in the customers' cases; twenty-one persons were involved in preparing the preliminary decisions for approval or disapproval by the final decision makers; sixteen persons worked on the secretarial level, and seven persons in the telephone exchange and general information ice.

3.3   Parameters not included in the profile

The age, gender or educational background of the respondents is not taken into account in these surveys. The only uniting factor among the respondents is their involvement in multi-ethnic customer contacts in the course of their work. They were not asked about their previous exposure to intercultural issues, such as experiences of diversity in their previous work places, living abroad or contact with persons of foreign extraction in any other contexts. This is not to say that these factors do not have an influence on the matter.

The main aim of this research is to take an overall look at the process of how the Finnish civil servants gain mindful intercultural competence in their dealings with multi-ethnic customer contacts, rather than the differences in attitudes between various subcategories of persons involved in these kinds of customer contacts. Thus the respondent group is quite heterogeneous. The age span ranges from people in their late teens, or early twenties, all the way to those who are nearing retirement age. The educational background of the respondents is also varied, ranging from high school diploma to various kinds of secondary and tertiary level education, such as secretarial training and university education, mostly in the fields of law, administrative science and humanities. There is also a considerable amount of in-house training continuously going on in both of these workplaces.

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[57]   The situation has changed since then. As a result of the surveys and the work of an in-house customer service improvement project, as of the 2nd of January 2006, the Helsinki office of the Directorate of Immigration now has customer service every working day during office hours, with regular staff rota from all the different units. Also, in addition to the three times a week telephone hour in each of the units handling the enquiries concerning particular applications, there is a service line answering general queries every working day during office hours.

The main bias of the response group is their gender, as most of them are women. This reflects the general gender bias in the customer work within the two work places under study in this research. Over the years it has been very much female-dominated.

All in all, the respondent profiles reflect the everyday reality of the personnel structure involved in the multi-ethnic customer contacts in these two workplaces at any given time. There is always a mixture of new and old staff members with varying backgrounds and ages, and thus with varying readiness to deal with the multi-ethnic clientele. One strand of this research also examines whether the survey results show any kind of transfer of knowledge from the more experienced to the less experienced staff in dealing with the multi-ethnic customers and if so, to what extent, and in what ways does this kind of peer support for cultural adaptation manifest itself.

3.4 The survey reports

The survey materials were worked into three reports, which were handed over to the Finnish Directorate of Immigration and to the Social Insurance Institution of Finland respectively, to make use of them in developing a better understanding of their customer contacts with the multi-ethnic clientele. The following three reports of these surveys were prepared in three consecutive years as follows:

DOI Training Report No. 1: The Telephone Contacts of the Naturalisation Department of the Finnish Directorate of Immigration: A Pilot Survey, August 2004.[58]

The Directorate of Immigration's multicultural customer contacts: Second survey on well-being in the workplace, July 2005.

The Social Insurance Institute of Finland (KELA) survey, April 2006

The Surveys were conducted in the Finnish language, and the original Survey Reports were likewise written in Finnish. For the purposes of this research, they were translated into English. Thus the comments of the Finnish civil servants quoted in this thesis are English renditions of the original ones. Careful consideration has been taken to ensure that the original sense, emotions

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[58] The results of the pilot survey have also been published in a condensed form in a Finnish language article: *Kulttuurien kohtaaminen viranomaiskontakteissa*, in a book titled: *KULTTUURIENVÄLINEN TYÖ (EDITA), 2005*. As the book is meant for lay readers, it is non-technical in nature. It was produced as proceedings from an international conference titled: *Dealing with Cultural Diversity in Workplaces*, Joensuu University, 23.4.2004. The seminar was held in connection with the Finnish Academy-funded Research Project called Learning Intercultural Competence in the Workplace (2003-2005) as part of the Life as Learning Research Programme (LEARN). This research was adopted into the above-mentioned Research Project in the middle of the project span on a non-stipendary basis, for the compatibility of its research goals with the other studies in the project. For further details, see: http://www.aka.fi/modules/page/show_page.asp?id=1007940FCACA46AE98BED2837A4ACB71anditemtype=00308B787886459385F296A5AFD4FA74andtabletarget=data_1andpid=56A10C7F2FED4141847066A1FED39871andlayout=aka_tutkimusohjelmat2006

and connotations of the comments have been retained in the English translations.

3.5 The survey questionnaire

The questions posed in the survey questionnaires reflect the researcher's theoretical and methodological choices, with host culture adaptation seen as coping with stress and learning new skills. As to the selection of the individual stress factors chosen for the surveys, their formulation was based on a recurring, extensive dialogue in connection with in-house intercultural communication training sessions conducted for the DOI staff and for the Helsinki Police Department between the years 1998 – 2004, as well as on the information gleaned from the feedback forms filled in by the participants in the above mentioned seminars. These comments reflect the Finnish civil servants' expressions of how stressed they felt about various matters in their multi-ethnic customer contacts in the course of their work. The pre-set stress factors and the topics of the open-ended questions chosen for the survey questionnaire thus represent the most commonly expressed, and acutely felt, concerns which have been voiced to me by the Finnish civil servants over the years.

The first eleven questions of the survey consist of multiple-choice questions, in which the general stressfulness of the customer contacts and the stressfulness of ten factors pre-set by the researcher are rated with the following scale: 1. No stress 2. Occasionally somewhat stressful 3. I do not know 4. Often quite stressful 5. Every time stressful. The purpose of the quantitative data gleaned by this method is to gauge the amount of subjective stress experienced by each stressor to be able to place them in an order of stressfulness. This will help the two government institutions in question to prioritise the necessary corrective measures for the improvement of the customer contacts. In addition to this, with each question the respondents were given the opportunity to comment the topic freely to get qualitative material to complement the quantitative information gained by the multiple-choice answers. The comment field also gave the respondents a chance to raise issues, which the researcher had not envisaged as being important, but which the respondents thought relevant to the stressfulness of the multi-ethnic customer contacts.

The following stress factors were included in the surveys as multiple-choice questions:
- The customers' level of ability in Finnish, or alternatively, difficulty in understanding the customers' foreign accent when using Finnish
- The customers' level of ability in the foreign language used in the customer contact, or the civil servants' difficulty in understanding the customers' foreign accent in that language.
- The civil servants' own level of ability in particular foreign languages
- Customers' emotional reactions
- The civil servants' emotional reactions

- Cultural differences in communication between the Finnish civil servant and ethnically non-Finnish customer
- The difficult nature of the customers' cases
- The power relationship at work in the customer contact: representative of the administrative authority vs. the customer
- Matters pertaining to internal work processes that affect the customer contacts
- Some other factor, which causes stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts

There was no conscious effort on the part of the researcher to place the factors in a certain order of stressfulness in the survey questionnaire.

The rest of the questions deal with the multi-ethnic customer contacts from the following angles: the respondents' subjective feeling of success in them, their perceived effect on the respondents' feeling of well-being in the work place, their perceived gains and drawbacks both to their work as a whole and personally, perceptions of good and bad communication by the authorities, communication difficulties pertaining to customers of a particular nationality, strategies for dealing with difficult customer contacts and for relieving the stress caused by them, and finally suggestions for the smoother running of the multi-ethnic customer contacts.

Through the way the questions are set, the survey partly looks at the same things from different angles. This approach was adopted to verify and double check, which are the most crucial stress factors, how do they present themselves in the different aspects of customer contacts, how they are interconnected with, or contradictory to one another, and what this relationship means for the cultural adaptation process.

This perspective of interconnectedness in the way the research questions are set is also a reflection of the theoretical and methodological choices, as described earlier on. This kind of dialectic approach helps to analyse how those matters, which according to the researcher pertain to intercultural communication, are often at work on the subconscious level, while being perceived on the surface level as reactions to, or interpretations of, some other factor. Again, this is something that has been evident time and time again in countless discussions during the in-house intercultural communication training sessions I have run over the past years.

This intertwining of other factors with an undercurrent of the intercultural communication factor is also manifest in the results of the three surveys: things that in reality belong to the sphere of intercultural communication, are continually commented on by the respondents in connection with all the other factors, not only in the slot allotted to the intercultural communication per se.

One of the purposes of this methodology is to recognise and bring to a conscious level the latent effect of intercultural communication factors. The results will help in developing useful intercultural communication training materials that are based on practical examples of customer contact situations. Knowing how to work successfully in multi-ethnic customer contacts is part of

building up the professional competence of the Finnish civil servants in the midst of the increasing multiculturalism of the surrounding society. In addition to that, it will also have a positive effect on their well-being in the workplace.

4   Research methodology

This research addresses the situation of the host culture members in the intercultural contact situation through the client contacts of Finnish civil servants in two government departments, the Directorate of Immigration (DOI) and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA). These two institutions are of central importance in the field of intercultural communication, as most foreigners coming to reside in Finland need to be in contact with them at some point in the course of their stay in the country. Methodologically, this research approaches adaptation as learning new skills, while acculturation is seen as identity development towards intercultural sensitivity. Part and parcel of this process is dealing with intercultural stress constructively.

The cognitive, affective and operational indicators for the DOI and KELA staff members' multi-ethnic client contacts are looked at through various factors that are assumed to cause them stress. The research questions look at the empirical reality of the multi-ethnic client contacts, examining how the Finnish civil servants operate in this context; what do they think about the ethnically non-Finnish customer's behaviour, how do they see themselves and their role, what do they feel and how do they cope with the stress in difficult situations, how do they process their experiences afterwards and what kind of training they wish for to help them in this task.

The acquired data is then analysed by ranking the stressors, to see what factors cause the greatest stress and what kind of adaptive processes, if any, have either taken place, are currently going on, or are required for the development of intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity in multi-ethnic customer contacts. The application section of the research makes recommendations on the content of theory-based intercultural training with a view of becoming a critical pragmatic intercultural professional. The aim is to develop an ability to bridge misunderstandings and foster understanding in intercultural contexts in general, not only in certain specific cultures. It means being able to take on and negotiate 'multiple professional identities' culturally speaking. Developing this kind of intercultural aptitude and repertoire can even go beyond the present day conceptualisation of multiculturalism. The next step in the ever widening cultural horizons is the realization of super-diversity, a term coined by Vertovec (2007).[59] With this concept he describes the increasing complexity and diversity in the nature of intercultural relationships. It is a reflection and a parallel of similar trends of multiplicity of diversifications in the mobility of groups and individuals in today's society. In discussing the

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[59]   http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/publications/papers/2007-04-Vertovec-CIC-Thinkpiece.pd

applications of the concept of super-diversity, Vertovec[60] addresses the same issue which is also tackled in this research with the following quote: "Public service provision needs to shift strategies from 'community knowledge'-based to "generic skills to respond flexibly to all encounters' with individuals" (Kai 2003). In this research, the same issue is talked about as the need to take on multiple identities rather than having some culture-specific coping skills in a limited number of cultures.

As already stated, this methodological choice was guided by an informal dialogue with the staff members in the Directorate of Immigration. The stressors looked at in this research were selected in the course of intercultural training sessions in dialogue with the participants, reflecting the everyday reality of the participants' experiences in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. The participants themselves described them as 'stressful' due to various reasons. The second methodological strand apart from stress utilised in analysing the data in this research is the social learning approach, with its emphasis on the role of development and growth within the acquisition of culturally appropriate skills. Both of these strands are inevitably involved, and equally needed in the process.

Kim (2001), at the end of her good historical overview on the theories and empirical studies on adaptation as problem vs. adaptation as learning/growth concludes with a similar conviction by stating that the problem-oriented stress and coping approach and the learning/growth oriented approaches are not mutually exclusive, a collocational clash of concepts. Any experience of intercultural adaptation, regardless of its length, is always both problematic and growth producing at the same time. As difficulties are encountered in culturally new and strange environments, at the same time new knowledge concerning intercultural issues or other cultures is gained, and this knowledge is internalised and integrated into one's identity.

> "Cross-cultural adaptation is thus a double-edged process, one that is simultaneously troublesome and enriching. Despite, or rather because of, the differences crossing cultures entails, people do and must change some of their old ways so as to carry out their daily activities and achieve improved quality of life in the new environment" (Kim 2001:21).

4.1   Making the intercultural learning process visible

Making the process of intercultural learning *visible* is one the main aims of this research. This central theme of examining the process of gaining mindful intercultural competence also has particular practical relevance for application to intercultural training, which is the topic of the final chapter of this research. I want to point out how conscious awareness of the many processes involved in interculturalisation can promote effective intercultural learning. My experience

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[60]   III ETMU days, Tampere, 28.10.2006. In a keynote lecture titled: From Multiculturalism to Super-diversity.

from several years of running intercultural communication seminars for persons involved in working life is that in layman's mind, the main conceptual confusion seems to be that things pertaining to the *processes* of intercultural learning often get misinterpreted as fixed attitudes towards the culturally other. This confusion can slow down successful intercultural learning, or even prevent it. In effective intercultural training, there is a need to point out the conceptual separation of the two, as well as their connection to each other.

Often expressions of host culture representatives' culture shock reactions and intercultural adaptive stress are mistakenly confused with lack of receptivity and negative attitudes towards the culturally other. In a similar fashion, the host culture representatives may misjudge the foreigners' expressions of adaptive stress as lack of willingness to adapt or integrate into the host society. Receptivity and willingness to adapt or integrate are concepts that have to do with attitudes. Attitudes can be characterised as having certain permanence about them, in that they are typically not changed very easily and people often adhere to them consciously and openly.

Contrary to this, expressions of adaptive stress are not deep-rooted attitudes, but can be better described as a transient feature that subsides with time, as people undergo a certain level of intercultural transformation. Adaptive stress, or intercultural stress, can of course be, and often is, a recurring feature. For example, with the various stages in the cultural learning, this stress can recur at different levels and in varying contexts. For example, it may be that in the initial stages the intercultural stress in the new cultural environment is mostly felt in the affective field. With the subsequent cultural learning, intercultural issues gain in depth, reaching beyond the affective level also the cognitive and operational fields. This kind of deepening and widening of intercultural horizons does not necessarily take place in similar depth in all areas of life, but only in certain contexts with relevance to the person's life, either work-wise or socially. Various factors effect on which levels, in which contexts and how the intercultural adaptive stress is expressed, as well as the frequency and duration of these 'stress attacks'. Even though they may resurface from time to time for as long as a person is living in a culture that is not one's own culture of socialization, the fact remains that unlike attitudes, they are transient in nature, serving the purpose of helping the person to cope with the cultural adaptation process.

Expressions of adaptive stress also differ from attitudes in that they are not intentional and well-developed patterns of thought or behaviour. Instead, they are unintentional stress reactions and the persons themselves are often quite unaware of the real reason for their particular kind of reactions and the stress experienced in the intercultural communication context. It exacerbates the difficulty and conceptual confusion even further if the persons mistakenly attribute their own reactions and those of their counterpart to be on the attitudinal level. This can generate misplaced guilt and misplaced accusations of negative attitudes towards each other, or of even racism in extreme cases.

Concerning the newcomers' adaptation to the host culture, Verma (2005)[61] states that those employees who are ethnically non-native in origin, and are in direct customer contacts with host culture representatives, need special support measures which help to initiate them into the silent knowledge concerning the host culture' (in: Pitkänen 2005: 61).

I postulate that this is also true for the representatives of the host culture vis-à-vis their ethnically non-native clientele, of which the Finnish civil servants are an example in this research. In order to become culturally conversant with their multi-ethnic clientele, they too need special support measures in gaining this kind of silent knowledge, which I term critical pragmatic intercultural professional competence. One essential element in gaining this competence is to understand the connection between the learning *process* and the *outcome* on the attitudinal level.

Since it is important to let the voice of the DOI and KELA staff members be heard as much as possible, the text includes a number of direct quotes expressing the respondents' experiences, opinions, musings, feelings and suggestions. For the sake of readability and relevance, some of the quotes have been shortened and quoted only in part. These quotes, or comments, as they are alternatively called in this research, are an integral part of the interpretive approach adapted in this research. They are provided as examples that show how the conclusions that emerge from this research were arrived at.

4.2   Analysing and presenting the qualitative data

As I wanted to have a 'hands-on feeling' on the whole complexity of the cultural adaptation process and capture the whole panorama in as comprehensive a way as possible, I considered manual analysis to be the most fruitful method in this context. It allows for a more in-depth and detailed analysis, trying to ensure that all angles are covered and that no relevant details are missed, or misconstrued, due to the fact that the computer assisted analysis might separate the various aspects of the same process into different categories.

Another related factor affecting the decision for manual qualitative analysis was that while the quantitative part of the research concentrates on looking at the amount of subjective stress caused by various factors, the qualitative data is utilized to gain multiple viewpoints on these stress factors. The qualitative analysis is not employed as a means to support the quantitative analysis in a sense of attempting to arrive at the same information already gained by it. Thus manual analysis was opted for in order to retain this desired multifaceted view, which is also reflected by the interdisciplinary approach utilized in this research. It also fits in with the epistemological and ontological presumptions of this research.

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[61]   Author's translation of the Finnish rendering of Professor Verma's lecture as quoted in the book *Kulttuurienvälinen Työ* ed. by Pirkko Pitkänen (Edita, 2005). In the original lecture, which was given in English, the phrase 'culturally conversant in the mainstream culture' was used instead of the phrase 'silent knowledge'.

The body of the comments was colour-coded manually for the multiplicity of meanings beneath the apparent surface level meaning, and thus reduced to different categories under various themes that emerged upon detailed and careful scrutiny.

Part of the commenting has a self-focus, while at the same time expressing attainment of intercultural competence and sensitivity. The civil servant discuss the recognition of the constructive nature of the stress in intercultural learning, how they cope with the stress and the decrease or absence of stress as a mark of having become interculturally more competent. This increased intercultural sensitivity on the cognitive and affective level is also applied in practice as adaptive measures in how the civil servants handle the multi-ethnic customer contacts. These types of comments were grouped together.

One subgroup of comments was formed from the quotes focusing on the customer's point of view in an attitude of intercultural empathy.

Another subgroup was formed from comments that took a holistic perspective, not focusing only on the civil servants' own person and role, but as much to the social interactive situation, to the institutional systems and society as a whole, as well as to the customers' concerns.

Likewise a separate group was formed from those comments with negative value judgements, regardless of whether the focus was on self, clientele, the organisation or society.

Even though the multiple-choice question part of the survey explicitly asked about stress concerning various aspects of the multi-ethnic customer contacts, the free comments given by the respondents under the different questions not only deal with stress, but also look at the multi-ethnic customer contacts from a more general perspective. Likewise, part of the open questions in the surveys also focused on other aspects of the multi-ethnic customer contacts apart from stress. Hence, those comments that explicitly mentioned the word stress, or displayed some stress reactions in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, were separated into one group. These 'stress'-comments were examined particularly from the point of view how they address the culture shock phenomenon.

4.3 Categorising the data into perspectives and main themes

Upon subsequent readings, the above mentioned five categories of comments were re-divided into four categories, each taking a certain perspective on the multi-ethnic customer contacts. I labellelled them as follows:

1. Comments defending the civil servants' point of view vis-à-vis the multiethnic clientele, or comments placing value judgements on the clientele. I named this category of comments the localizing tendency perspective.
2. Comments taking the multi-ethnic clientele's point of view, and/or expressing attainment of intercultural communication competence and

intercultural sensitivity. I named this category of comments the globalizing tendency perspective.

3. Comments dealing with objective identity perspective, i.e. 'how others see me'.

4. Comments dealing with ideal identity perspective, i.e. 'how I ought to present myself'.

Often comments were seen to express a multiplicity of perspectives, and at times even conflicting views between localizing and globalizing of objective and ideal identity, and were thus placed in more than one category. The following comment exemplifies the case in point: '*Taking a neutral approach, I do not take things personally. However, I also try to defend my own position in an appropriate manner. (2DAB263[62])* Here the first phrase: '*taking a neutral approach*', talks about ideal identity, while the second phrase: '*I do not take things personally*', can be interpreted to address the issue of having gained intercultural understanding in the sense of realising that intercultural issues that come up in the multi-ethnic customer contacts are not about interpersonal conflicts but rather about intercultural mismatches. The third phrase: '*defend my own position*' fits the first category comment of defending one's own view in a localizing perspective, while the last phrase: '*in an appropriate manner*', talks about intercultural sensitivity on the one hand, and about objective identity on the other hand.

On the one hand this comment exemplifies the complexity faced in the categorising process of the comments in this research, but most importantly it exemplifies the reason and motivation for the way the qualitative data is examined in this research. First of all, rather than split the above comment into four phrases, placing each one as a truncated sentence under an appropriately named category, I wanted to keep comments like this intact, placing the whole sentence under each relevant category, bolding the part of the sentence with relevance to the category in question.

This approach was adapted to be able to hold on to one of the two main foci of the research, i.e. to look at the cultural adaptation process as a whole on the level of an individual respondent, to see how the various components involved in this adaptation affect each other and what is happening in the actual process, rather than labelling the various categories or subcategories arrived at as expressions of static and fixed attitudes.

The lists of comments within the above four perspectives were then regrouped according to which of the main research questions or subquestions they were seen to address, while at the same time still keeping record as to which of the four above mentioned perspectives they addressed.

This was an inductive process, starting from the individual comments, looking through which issues and which perspectives they address the research

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[62] The letter in the code denotes the question under which the comment was given, and the number indicates a running digit by which the comment is identified under that particular question. For a complete list and explanation of the codes, please see Appendix 2.

questions. In this manner, a categorisation of three main themes was arrived at, which are the following:

1. The nature of the process of cultural adaptation
2. Exhibiting intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity
3. Communication orientations used within the multi-ethnic clientele

As the constructive handling of the process or cultural adaptation is the foundation upon which the intercultural competence, expressed as effectiveness in communication and interculturally sensitised personality rests on, this theme takes the central stage in this research. Thus the comments falling under this category are elaborated in an in-depth manner, through several subthemes, to illustrate the nature of this process as fully as possible. The main reason for this is the stated motive of this reseach to bring to the fore the host culture adaptees, or host culture nationals (HCN), whose cultural adaptation process is genrally less studied. However, the comments falling under the other two themes, the intercultural competence as intercultural effectiveness and interculturally sensitised identity, as well as a gird of possible communication orientations of the Finnish civil servants, are also examined in some depth to illustrate the interconnectedness of the process with the goal, demonstrating what factors influences the host culture adaptees' success or failure in gaining intercultural competence.

4.4   The emergence of three vistas in the cultural adaptation process

Within the first main theme, the nature of the process of cultural adaptation, which is one of the main foci of this research, three vistas[63] emerged from the comments. They were subsequently formulated as the main components, or vistas, in the cross-cultural adaptation in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts. They are:

Communication

Integrity

Cultural learning

I approach the above three vistas by asking how do they address the process of gaining intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. In a situation where all of the three above-mentioned categories are recognized to be at work equally, the picture can be represented by a triangle where all the sides are of equal length. This shape depicts the components at work in the intercultural contact situation, and in the formation of a multicultural identity, with room allowed for the creation of intercultural space. (Figure 6.)

Depending on the varying levels of influence between the three categories, the triangle changes shape and can be pictured with parallelograms of varying shapes and sizes. In any given communication context, depending on which of the three vistas, and/or which of the relationships between any two of them is most influential, the intercultural negotiations take on varying shapes,

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[63]   In subsequent chapters, I use the word 'component' interchangeably with 'vista'.

sometimes being mostly about communication concerns, at other times being more concerned with integration issues, and so on.
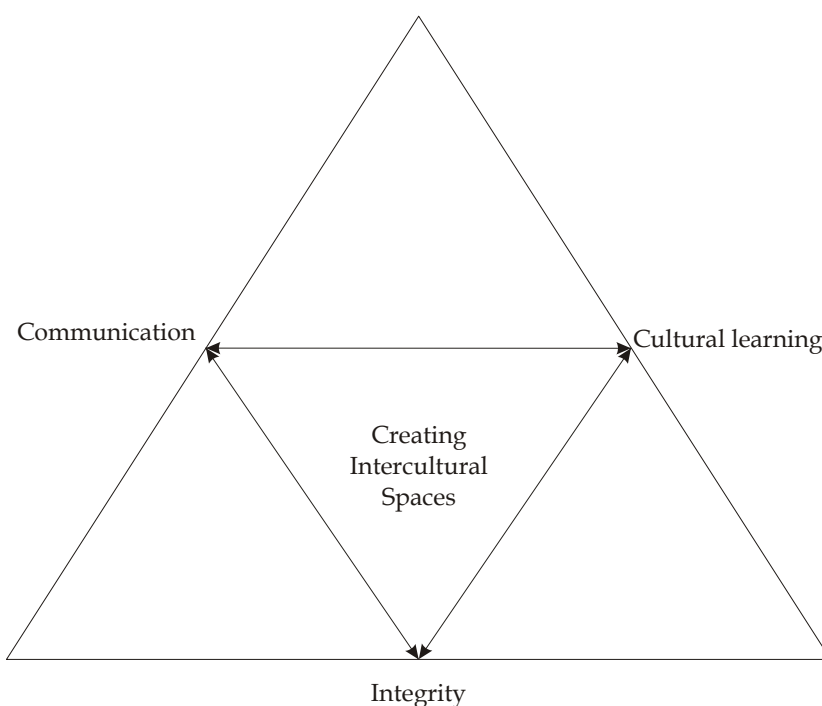
FIGURE 6.   The three vistas of Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts

5   Summarising the process of reporting the data

As I have repeatedly and carefully, in a holistic manner, pored over the Finnish civil servants' comments in the three surveys upon which this research is based, the sense I get is that through the comments the respondents are taking a long, often reflective, look at the multitude of factors, both societal and individual, which affect their experiences in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. For some of them this type of work experience ranges over several decades, while others have just a year-long vista to look back at. At the same time some of the comments also look into the future, anticipating future vistas of how the offices they represent, or they themselves both personally and professionally, can manage even better in this line of work. The comments portray the reality of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts in the Finnish Directorate of Immigration and in the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, showing how things are actually handled in them, how the civil servants think and feel about the successes and failures in communicating with the clientele, about themselves and the ethnically-non-Finnish customers.

Through a careful perusal of the body of comments concerning the 'what, why and how' of the Finnish civil servants' experiences in their multi-ethnic customer contacts, a crucial discovery was made: many of the comments actually address more than one main perspectives or theme, and likewise on the

finer levels of analysis, may represent more than vista or sub-theme within a vista in an overlapping, intertwined manner. Either part of a comment, or the whole comment, could fit in several places, depending from what angle it is viewed. For this reason I have utilized the word 'vista'[64] in this research in a sense of a panoramic view that takes in the whole picture. My definition of the contents of this term in the context of this research can be described in the following manner: While taking in a panoramic view, a person's head is slowly turned from left to right and the focus of one's gaze keeps changing to different points in the scene one is facing. Thus different pictures keep emerging, yet the continual training of one's eye to the ever-changing scene is all part and parcel of the same panoramic experience. The various vistas flow into one another, creating the complete picture one is reflectively gazing at. This depicts the multifaceted nature of the actual process of cultural adaptation; i.e. how it is expressed as mindful intercultural competence in general on the one hand, and as communicative competence as an example of it.

Table 1. on the next page exemplifies how the comments and the overt issues expressed in them were inductively categorised into perspectives, main themes and sub-themes. Through these quotes the civil servants' own voice is allowed to be heard as much as possible, giving validation to their own experience, in line with one of the main tenets of this research for the need of such validation. It is to be noted that an individual comment, which contains material fitting under more than one theme or under more than one of the vistas in the cultural adaptation process, is not always quoted in the research for all of its aspects, but perhaps only on the account of one or two aspects it represents. At times, a comment with particular relevance is utilized in more than one context.

The inclusion of both multiple choice questions to gather quantitative information, as well as open-ended questions for the purposes of qualitative analysis through the same data gathering method is done for complimentary purposes in the sense Layder (1993) talks about. The primary intention of this kind of multi-strategic approach is not to increase the validity of the knowledge gleaned from the research in the sense of arriving at the same information with the two different methods. Rather, the utilisation of mixed strategies is chosen for the density of empirical coverage, to obtain different viewpoints to the topic being researched. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (12004:32) quote Layder (1993) in saying that this kind of approach in fact does also increase the validity, but at the same time it also makes the process of developing the theoretical framework easier and that quantitative data can also be used in the building up and creation of a grounded theory, not just in testing the theory.

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[64] One dictionary definition for the word 'vista' is '*a mental view of long succession of remembered or anticipated events*' (The Oxford English reference Dictionary, Second edition, Oxford University press, 1996 Oxford)

TABLE 1. Example of the analysis process

Comment	Issues	Perspective	Main theme	Sub-theme
'To the foreigner it is a question of life-sized matters. The worry can be vast and ability to take care of one's matters in a foreign country may be limited. I understand their stress and frustration really well. I get even more stressed, when I think what the negative decisions I have to make cause in people's lives.'(2DAA254)	Empathy for the customers' life situation Recognising the customers' inter-cultural difficulties Empathy for the customers' behaviour and feelings Reflection of one's own role	Globalizing perspective: Intercultural sensitivity	Cultural adaptation: Cultural learning issue Integrity issue Exhibiting intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity	Challenging the Finnish frames of reference: empathy for the clientele Adaptation orientation as empathy
'The stress does not get dealt with and lingers on in my own head. I feel bad and think "how horrible", and keep wrestling with the feeling of failure, thinking that this is stupid. (SX353)	Culture shock reactions as prolonged negative feelings after the customer contacts	Localizing perspective	Cultural adaptation Integrity issues	Culture shock: Challenging the cultural identity
In the face-to-face contacts the foreign customer is seldom alone. When he is accompanied with a large crowd, the customer service situation gets more difficult.'(SL84)	Cultural differences in handling customer contacts; individualism vs. collectivism	Localizing and Globalizing perspective	Cultural adaptation Inter-cultural communi-cation	Communication concerns Preference for face-to-face contacts
*One must **get rid of** the' **all-powerful** civil service **image**.' attitude.(2DW187)*	Professional role and Professional identity and Equal treatment and People-oriented outlook	Globalizing perspective Ideal identity and Objective identity	Exhibiting intercultural effectiveness and sensitivity	DMIS Adaptation orientation in the civil servants comments Adaptation orientation in connection with exercise of power

In Chapter 4 next I discuss the answers to the multiple-choice questions of the surveys on which this research is based. They gauge the subjective stress levels of various aspects for the Finnish civil servants in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. This provides the quantifiable stress data. I then consider the significance of the stress figures thus obtained from the point of view of culture shock. Thus this data provides initial answers to the sub-theme within the first research question as to which factors cause stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts and to which extent. It also begins to shed light to the second sub-theme of the first research question as to what is the role of stress for cultural adaptation.

Chapter 5 deals with the qualitative data, obtained from the free comments attached to each multiple-choice question and from the answers to the open ended questions in the surveys. It answers more fully the second sub-theme of the first research question by providing a deeper analysis of the nature of the culture shock phenomenon as part an parcel of adaptive stres. It also deals with the third sub-theme of the first research question concerning the issues through which the Finnish civil servants deal with cultural adaptation process. The pre-set stressors and questions presented in the surveys serve as scaffolding with the help of which the deeper and wider issues in cultural adaptation can be expressed.

In the integrity vista, the main issues that come up are societal rules and values in the form of work ethics, priniciple of equality and communication rules in the public context. The perceived challenge in these areas can cause initial culture shock, the role of which in successful cultural adaptation is then looked at.

In connection with the cultural learning vista, the comments of the Finnish civil servants are perused to see to what extent they express success in gaining intercultural effectiveness and sensitivity and which factors help or hinder the learning process.

As for the communication vista, the issues that come up in the comments deal with both language and culture and show that the reasons for misunderstanding are initially often attributed to some other factor, not to intercultural issues, which actually are behind the miscommunication. This gives rise to training considerations and thus begins to deal with the second research question concerning what are the needed components areas of the Finnish civil servants intercultural comptence.

The rest of chapter 5 elaborates more on the second research question's two remaining sub-themes. It answers the sub-theme of how is the cultural adaptation process interlinked with intercultural comptetence by pointing at evidence for mutual adaptation, critique and self-reflection in cases of successful cultural adaptation process in the comments. This is followed by looking at the sub-theme that asks what existing models can be utilized for portraying the orientations towards persons from other cultures in order to check one's own level of intercultural competence? It does so by checking the body of comments against the adaptation orientation within Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (eg. 1986, 1993) and against

the bi-dimensional model of host culture acculturation orientation (Bourhis 1997). At the end of the chapter, some conclusions concerning the research questions are arrived at.

Chapter 6 then approaches the two research questions with their sub-themes from a theory-building perspective, based on the data presented in the previous two chapters. In addition to taking a holistic look at all the themes of the research questions and placing them into a general framework within the multiplicity of intercultural theories, particular attention is drawn to the first two sub-themes of the second research question. The first of these is what are the general and contextualised intercultural competencies of the Finnish civil servants. Based on the data of the previous chapters and on the existing research on intercultural competence, the demands of the particular context of the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts are looked at in more detail.

Chapter 6 tackles the third sub-theme of the second research question, which is how is the cultural adaptation process interlinked with intercultural competence. In this connection, a model for developing critical pragmatic intercultural professionals is presented.

Chapter 7 is an application section of the research. It presents a model for intercultural training, which is directed at host culture adaptees.

CHAPTER 4.   ANALYSING THE STRESS FACTORS: QUANTITATIVE DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a brief summary of the quantitative results of two of the three surveys on which this research is based. The figures below only include the responses from the Second Survey within the Directorate of Immigration and the Social Insurance Institution. As the Naturalization Unit's Pilot survey confined itself only to the telephone contacts, and did not include all the questions in the other two surveys, they are not included here. The only exception is the question concerning the subjective feeling of success in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, where the responses of all three surveys are included in the percentage figures represented by the respective pie chart.

1   GENERAL STRESSFULNESS

In summary, the total stress percentage for the telephone contacts is as high as 76 %, while the respective figure for face-to-face contacts is 43 %. Thus it can be deduced that the multi-ethnic customer contacts cause a fair amount of stress to the civil servants in the Directorate of Immigration and Social Insurance Institution.
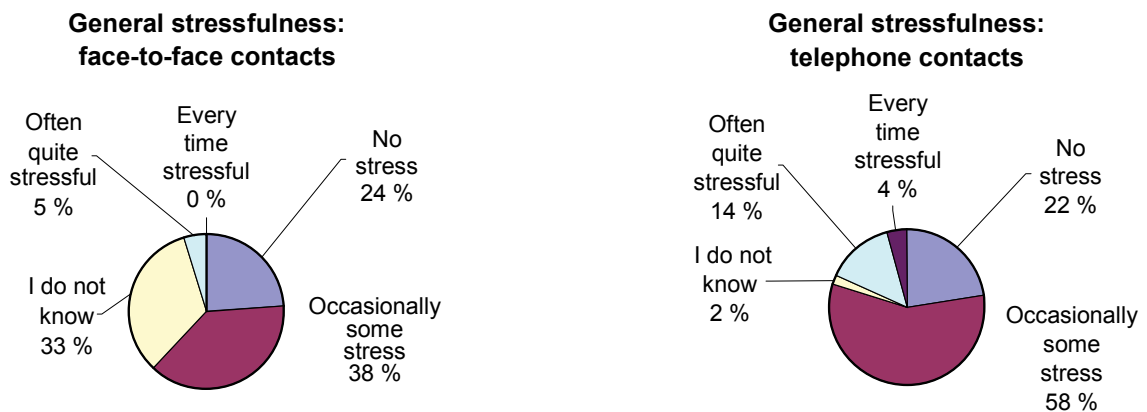
FIGURE 7. General stressfulness

The overall pattern is that telephone contacts with the multi-ethnic clientele are considered to be more stressful than face-to-face contacts. Almost two thirds of the respondents felt occasional stress with the telephone contacts, while the respective figure for the face-to-face contacts is a little over one third of the respondents. Also, the number of those experiencing stress quite often is about 10 % higher with the telephone contacts, and some respondents even reported feeling the stress every time with this mode of customer contact with the ethnic non-Finns. This option received zero percent of the answers in connection with face-to-face contacts. The largest difference between the two modes is with the 'I do not know' option, where over third of the respondents reported not being sure whether they felt the stress or not, while with the telephone contacts only a very minimal number of the respondents, 2 %, reported this kind of uncertainty. On the average, with both modes of customer contacts approximately one fourth of the respondents reported feeling no stress.

2 RANKING THE STRESS FACTORS

The orders of stressfulness of the various factors under study are looked at next. First the sum totals of various levels of stress reported by the respondents with each factor are added together to create a ranking order of stressfulness. Next, similar ranking orders are created with the response options 'Occasionally stressful', 'Often quite stressful' and 'Every time stressful.' This gives a wider picture of which factors feature as the main stressors, allowing us to see the distribution of stress percentages in more detail.

Sum totals of various levels of stress

TABLE 2.   Total stress percentages

TOTAL AMOUNTS OF PERCEIVED STRESS IN PERCENTAGES

	Telephone contacts			Face-to-face contacts
1.	Civil servants' language ability	79 %	73 %	Complicated nature of cases
2.	Complicated nature of cases	76 %	65 %	Civil servants' language ability
3.	Internal work processes	68 %	54 %	Customers' emotional reactions
4.	Customers' emotional reactions	62 %	53 %	Customers' foreign language ability
5.	Customers' foreign language ability	62 %	49 %	Internal work processes
6.	Intercultural communication matters	61 %	47 %	Intercultural communication matters
7.	Civil servants' emotional reactions	56 %	47 %	Civil servants' emotional reactions
8.	Customers' ability in Finnish	54 %	46 %	Customers' ability in Finnish
9.	Other factors	44 %	44 %	Other factors
10.	Power relations	29 %	25 %	Power relations

It is a significant find that almost one-half of the respondents experience some level of subjective stress in connection with all of the set factors apart from the power relations, and even with that factor, around one third of the respondents in the telephone contacts and approximately one fourth of the respondents felt some level of stress.

The same five factors are listed as the top five in both modes of customer contacts, but in different order. The bottom five factors are in an identical order in connection with both modes of customer contact.

Intercultural communication issues only rank in the middle of the stressfulness scale. This enforces the assumption made at the onset of the research that the true intercultural nature of these issues is not necessarily recognised. The customers' emotional reactions can be a consequence of an intercultural clash and hence a manifestation of an intercultural communication issue, to which the Finnish civil servant may unconsciously react in a manner that misses the intercultural aspect of the communication situation. Misinterpretations may be due to limited knowledge or lack of knowledge concerning intercultural issues.

With the telephone contacts, the civil servants' own ability in foreign languages is considered to cause even more stress than it does in the face-to-face contacts. The customers' emotional reactions are considered to cause more stress than the difficulties caused by their poor language ability or the accents that are hard to understand. However, the stressfulness percentages of the customers' and civil servants' language abilities, and those for the emotional reactions are very close to those obtained by the factor 'Intercultural issues', all coming within 8 % of one another. With the telephone contacts, the fourth place is shared by the 'Customers emotional reactions' and 'Customers' ability in foreign languages' and the 'Intercultural matters' is only 1 % lower. Similarly with face-to face contacts, the sixth place is shared by the 'Civil servants' emotional reactions' and 'Intercultural matters'. These two factors can actually be closely linked. The emotional reaction of either party in the multi-ethnic customer contact can be caused by some intercultural misunderstanding.

Customers' ability in Finnish comes out as the second last from the ten factors in the stressfulness scale, indicating it is not a high stress factor. Yet in the KELA survey it gets a second highest ranking both when measured in total stress percentage, as well as in the ranking list of three most stressful factors.

Also in the free comment fields it gets a lot of mention as being a great cause of stress, both in the KELA and DOI 2nd surveys, even though in the DOI 2nd survey this factor is only placed as the sixth most stressful factor when the total stress percentages are looked at, and gets placed only seventh when the respondents are asked to name the three most stressful factors out of the ten factors listed.

In the DOI Naturalisation Unit's Pilot survey there was only one question concerning the customers' language ability, which combined both the Finnish ability and the competence in any other language. In that survey this factor received the lowest total stress percentage, with 50 % of the respondents, and in

naming the three most stressful factors the customer language ability does not feature at all. Yet in the free comments the customers language ability gets a fair amount of mention as causing stress.

2.2 Every time stressful

TABLE 3. Percentage figures for 'Every time stressful'

PERCENTAGES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED EVERY TIME				
Telephone contacts				**Face-to-face contacts**
1	Civil servants' language ability	20 %	16 %	Civil servants' language ability
2.	Complicated nature of customers' cases	6 %	3 %	Complicated nature of customers' cases
3.	Customers' emotional reactions	5 %	3 %	Other factors
4.	Customers' foreign language ability	3 %	3 %	Customers' foreign language ability
5.	Customers' ability in Finnish	3 %	2 %	Customers' emotional reactions
6.	Other factors	3 %	1 %	Internal work processes
7.	Intercultural communication matters	2 %	1 %	Intercultural communication matters
8.	Internal work processes	2 %	1 %	Customers' ability in Finnish
9.	Civil servants' emotional reactions	2 %	1 %	Civil servants' emotional reactions
10.	Power relations	1 %	0 %	Power relations

Only one factor, i.e. the civil servants' own ability in foreign language, is considered to be a stress factor of any significant magnitude every time.

Only two factors differ in how their stressfulness is experienced every time in telephone and face-to-face contacts: 'Customers' ability in Finnish' is considered to be a bit more stressful in telephone contacts and 'Other factors' are placed higher on the stressfulness scale, though they receive the very same low 3 % mark with both modes of customer contacts.

Both with the telephone contacts and face-to-face contacts the 'Every time stressful' option is distributed fairly evenly between the different factors and receives very low percentages. The only exception is the factor 'Civil servants' own ability in foreign languages', which is thought to be stressful every time by as many as one fifth (20 %) of the respondents in the telephone contacts and by almost as many (16 %) in the face-to-face contacts.

Within the telephone contacts three factors to do with languages and some other additional elements share the third place at 3 %, while two factors share the fifth place at 2 %. Likewise with face-to-face customer contacts, the second place is shared by three factors at 3%, the third place is shared by two factors at 2 % and the fourth place is shared by a cluster of three factors that intertwine language and intercultural issues, at a very low 1 %. The combined effect of these stress factors is quite diffuse, and the stress is caused by them every time only to a minimal number of respondents.

2.3 Often stressful

TABLE 4. Percentage figures for 'Often stressful'

PERCENTAGES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED OFTEN				
Telephone contacts				**Face-to-face contacts**
1	Complicated nature of cases	24 %	26 %	Complicated nature of cases
2.	Internal work processes	20 %	13 %	Customers' emotional reactions
3.	Civil servants' language ability	18 %	13 %	Other factors
4.	Other factors	11 %	11 %	Civil servants' language ability
5.	Customers' emotional reactions	10 %	9 %	Intercultural communication matters
6.	Civil servants' emotional reactions	8 %	9 %	Internal work processes
7.	Intercultural communication matters	8 %	7 %	Customers' ability in Finnish
8.	Customers' foreign language ability	7 %	6 %	Civil servants' emotional reactions
9.	Customers' ability in Finnish	5 %	3 %	Customers' foreign language ability
10.	Power relations	1 %	2 %	Power relations

The greatest difference between the two modes of customer contacts is with 'Internal work processes of the organisation; they cause stress in telephone contacts 11 % more frequently than in face-to-face contacts, where it is easier to explain the work processes of the organisation and perhaps at times even to work around them.

Customers' emotional reactions play a somewhat more prominent role as a stress factor in the face-to-face contacts in comparison to telephone contacts.

'Customers' ability in Finnish received a lot lower placing in the stressfulness scale in the telephone contacts in ranking comparison with the face-to-face contacts, but the actual quantitative difference is only 1 %.

Within the telephone contacts, the 'Civil servants' emotional reactions and 'Intercultural matters' share the sixth place. This is quite predictable, as these factors often intertwine with each other.

Within the face-to-face customer contacts, the second and fourth places are shared by two factors.

The overall percentages received are higher and spread more evenly across all the factors than with the 'Every time stressful' option, where only one factor received over 10 % stress figure and the rest only very low percentage figures.

2.4   Occasionally stressful

TABLE 5.   Percentage figures for 'Occasionally stressful'

PERCENTAGES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED OCCASIONALLY			
Telephone contacts			**Face-to-face contacts**
1. Customers' foreign language ability	52 %	48 %	Customers' foreign language ability
2. Customers' emotional reactions	52 %	44 %	Complicated nature of customers' cases
3. Intercultural communication matters	51 %	40 %	Civil servants' emotional reactions
4. Complicated nature of cases	46 %	39 %	Internal work processes
5. Internal work processes	46 %	39 %	Customers' emotional reactions
6. Customers' ability in Finnish	46 %	38 %	Civil servants' language ability
7. Civil servants' language ability	46 %	38 %	Customers' ability in Finnish
8. Civil servants' emotional reactions	46 %	37 %	Intercultural communication matters
9. Other factors	30 %	23 %	Power relations
10. Power relations	27 %	20 %	Other factors

With the 'Occasionally stressful' option the division of the subjective feeling of stress among the various factors and between the two modes of customer contacts is the most even in comparison with the 'Every time stressful' and 'Often stressful' options: In connection with telephone contacts, with most factors approximately half of the respondents feel occasional stress in connection with the listed factors, and even with the two least stressful factors

around one third of the respondents feel some stress. The face-to-face contacts reflect the same trend, albeit with a slightly lower average percentagewise**.**

These results show that the occasionally felt stress gets spread around much more diffusely amongst various factors than the more acute type of stress which is felt either quite often or at every customer contact with an ethnic non-Finn. These more intense types of stress are reported to be focused around a couple of factors only.

In line with the above, this diffusion is clearly demonstrated with the telephone contacts; the three highest figures fall within 6 % of each other, and actually comprise of seven factors, as the first place is shared by two factors and the third place by a total of four factors. Even the next lowest factor, the fourth most stressful factor is only 4 % lower. This means that eight out of the total of 10 stress factors fall within 11 % of each other, again showing that approximately half of the respondents feel occasional stress in their customer contacts over the telephone with their ethnically non-Finnish customers. This similar phenomenon of the stress being spread in a diffuse manner fairly evenly between the different factors in connection with the 'Occasionally somewhat stressful' option' can also be seen within the face-to-face customer contacts. However, there the stress percentages are slightly lower, between 20 – 48 %, when compared to the 27 – 52 % within the telephone contacts. There is also a slightly greater spread between the individual factors, even though it is a matter of few percents only. Only the fourth and fifth places are shared by two factors. However, the picture is very similar with both modes of customer contacts.

In connection with the telephone contacts, the customer's foreign language ability and the customers' emotional reactions share the first place. In the surveys these two factors are the source of frequent comments, often reflecting very strong emotions and attitudes, as well as clearly unresolved and misunderstood intercultural issues. This means that although the respondents have answered that they experience only 'occasional' stress due to these factors, still half of the respondents experience these kind of strongly negative reactions. In this respect the answer 'Occasional stress' may not fully reflect the total picture: These kinds of strong negative reactions, if left festering and unresolved, can have longstanding negative consequences in the civil servants' ability to learn intercultural communication skills, and they may become hindrances in furthering their ability to serve ethnically non-Finnish customers. The greatest difference between the telephone contacts and face-to-face contacts with the 'Occasionally somewhat stressful' option is the factor 'Intercultural communication matters' which was considered to be the second most stressful factor in the telephone contacts with a high 51 %. In the face-to-face contacts, this factor is ranked sixth with 37 %, after shared fourth and fifth places (which means it could be said that actually was only 8th in the order of stressfulness). The difference is 14 %. This indicates that intercultural differences cause occasional stress much more often to the Finnish civil servants in the telephone contacts than what they do in the face-to-face customer contacts with ethnic non-Finns.

3 A DETAILED LOOK AT THE STRESS FACTORS

This section looks at the stress percentages of each pre-set factor individually. They are presented in a descending order of stressfulness from the telephone contacts' point of view.

3.1 Civil servants' ability in foreign languages

KELA & DOI
Civil servants' foreign language ability: face-to-face contacts

Every time stressful 16 %
Often quite stressful 11 %
I do not know 8 %
No stress 27 %
Occasional stress 38 %

KELA & DOI
Civil servants' foreign language ability: telephone contacts

Every time stressful 20 %
Often quite stressful 18 %
I do not know 6 %
No stress 15 %
Occasional stress 41 %
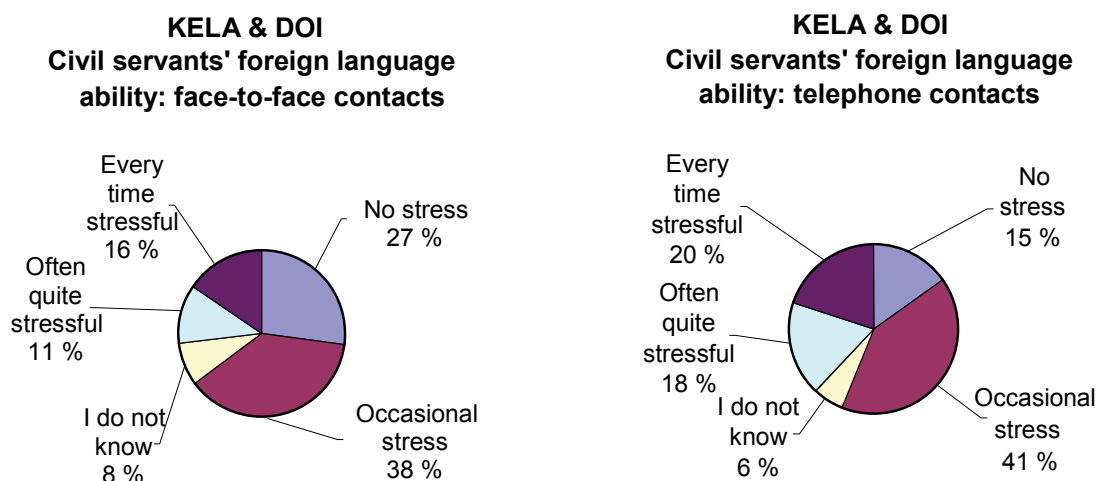
FIGURE 8. Civil servants' foreign language ability

This factor received the largest sum total of various levels of stress in connection with the telephone contacts and the second highest score in the face-to-face contacts. It received the highest scores of stressfulness for both modes of customer contact in connection with the 'Every time stressful' option. It is also noteworthy that the difference between the stress percentages of this factor in comparison to all the other factors is significant with both modes of customer contact. This the only stressor of real significance causing stress every time to some of the Finnish civil servants in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. With the options 'Often and occasionally stressful'', 'Civil servants' language ability' was ranked the third most stressful. The only exception is in the face-to-face contacts with the 'Occasionally somewhat stressful' option, where it was only ranked as the fifth most stressful factor. However, as with the rest of the rankings discussed here, the difference between the rankings 2 to 5 is actually just a matter of a couple of percentage points, indicating an almost equal level of stressfulness.

It is also quite a significant fact that the 'Every time stressful' option received such high percentages in connection with this factor, 20 % in the telephone contacts and 16 % in the face-to-face contacts. In connection with the rest of the factors, the 'Every time stressful' option only received very minimal percentages, ranging from zero to 6 % only. It can therefore be deduced that the civil servants' language ability is a very strong stressor overall.

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3.2   Complicated nature of customers' cases

KELA & DOI
Complicated nature of cases:
telephone contacts

Every time stressful 6 %
No stress 15 %
Often quite stressful 24 %
I do not know 9 %
Occasional stress 46 %

KELA & DOI
Complicated nature of cases:
face-to-face contacts

Every time stressful 3 %
No stress 9 %
Often quite stressful 26 %
I do not know 18 %
Occasional stress 44 %
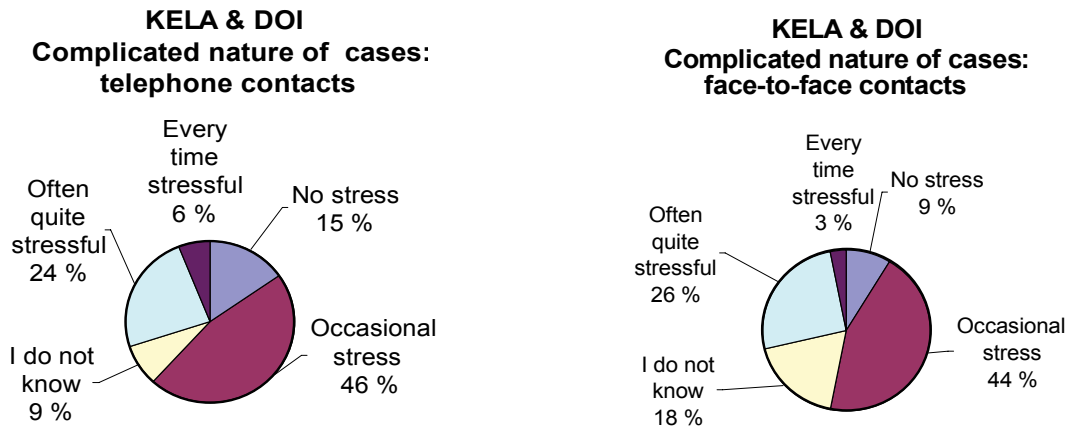
FIGURE 9.   Complicated nature of customers' cases

The stress factor 'Complicated nature of the customers cases' received the second highest overall ranking of stressfulness in connection with the telephone contacts (76 %) and the highest stressfulness score in the face-to-face contacts (73 %). It also ranked second with the 'Every time stressful' option with both modes of customer contact. For the less intense stress of 'Often quite stressful', it received the highest stress ranking amongst all the factors studied in connection with both modes of customer contacts. As to the mildest form of subjectively experienced stress, the 'Occasionally somewhat stressful'-option war ranked third with the telephone contacts and fifth with the face-to-face contacts.

The fact that this factor gained the highest stress percentages from all the factors in connection with the 'Often quite stressful' option indicates that the stress felt owing to the difficult nature of the customers cases is quite intense for about one fourth of the respondents. The number of those feeling the stress due to the complicated nature of the customers' cases only occasionally is about twice as many as those feeling it often. This is almost half of the respondents, which is a considerably large figure.

3.3   Internal work processes

KELA & DOI
Internal work processes:
telephone contacts

Every time stressful 2 %
No stress 15 %
Often quite stressful 20 %
I do not know 17 %
Occasional stress 46 %

KELA & DOI
Internal work processes:
face-to-face contacts

Every time stressful 1 %
No stress 18 %
Often quite stressful 9 %
I do not know 33 %
Occasional stress 39 %
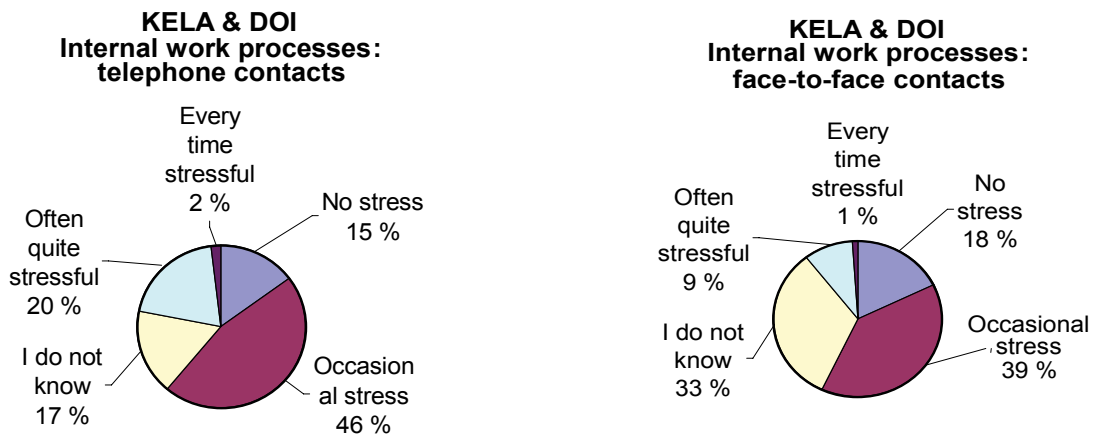
FIGURE 10. Internal work processes

In connection with the stress caused by the 'Internal work processes' within the two government bodies under study, the distribution of the stress percentages follows a similar pattern with both modes of customer contact, with the telephone contacts receiving slightly higher percentages of stress. The largest difference in the stressfulness figures, 11 %, is recorded with the option 'Often quite stressful'. The largest stress figures are obtained by the option 'Occasional stress', with almost half of the respondents recording stress due to this factor from time to time in their customer contacts with the ethnic non-Finns. To summarise, the internal work processes cause a fair bit of stress occasionally to almost half of the respondents and intense stress to one fifth of the respondents in the telephone contacts and only to about half as many respondents in the face-to-face contacts.

The largest percentage difference recorded between the two modes of customer contacts is 16 %, and it is in connection with the option 'I do not know'. About one third of the respondents feel like this in connection with the face-to-face contacts and about one fifth in the telephone contacts. This follows the same pattern that comes out all through the survey with the other factors also: In general, face-to-face contacts receive lower stress percentages than telephone contacts, but a higher percentage of uncertainty. In answer to a specific question concerning which mode of customer contact is more stressful, the majority of the respondents in the surveys think that it is the telephone contacts, a fact which is also borne out by the higher stress percentages received by this mode of customer contact. However, the uncertainly remains greater with the face-to-face contacts, partly because with the telephone contacts it if often quite clear to perceive whether the communication runs into difficulties or not, leaving little room for guessing. However, in the direct customer contacts the non-verbal clues can be somewhat misleading at times, thus leaving the civil servants more unsure about how the interaction with the ethnically non-Finnish customer actually went from the customers' point of view.

3.4   Customers' emotional reactions
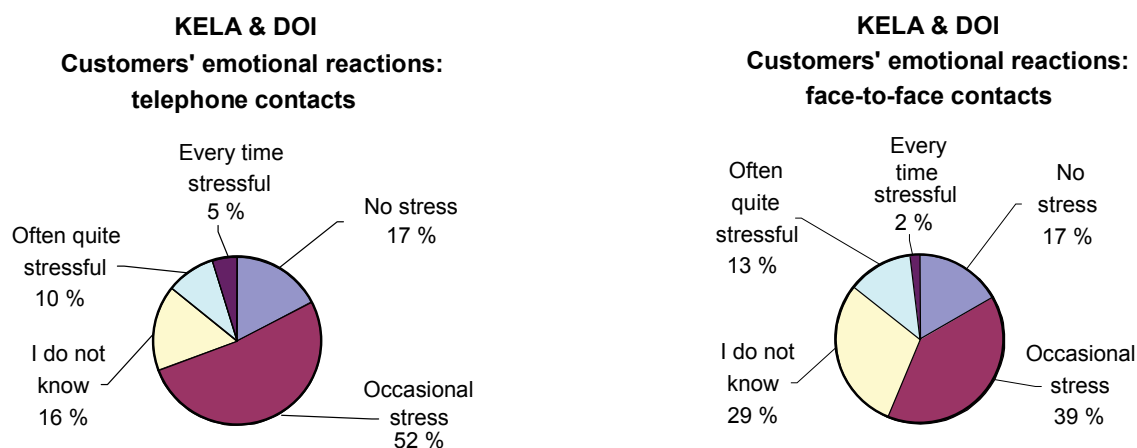
FIGURE 11. Customers' emotional reactions

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The results with the factor 'Customers' emotional reactions' resemble pretty much those received with the factor 'Internal work processes'. The only marked differences are in connection with the option 'Often quite stressful', where the customers' emotional reactions cause 10 % less stress with the telephone contacts and only a few percent more stress in the face-to-face contacts than they do with the internal work processes. Once again the 'I do not know' option receives a much higher score in the face-to-face-contacts than it does in the telephone contacts.

3.5   Customers' foreign language ability
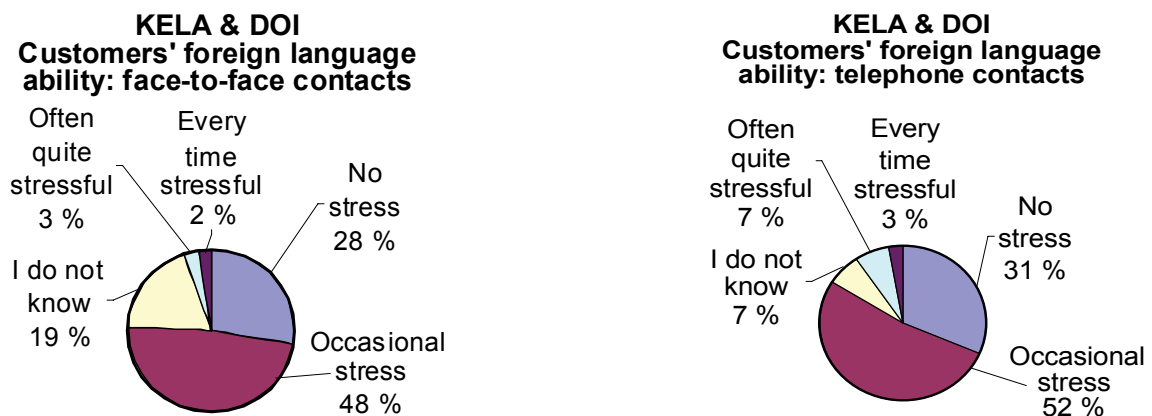
FIGURE 12. Customer's foreign language ability

Even though the 'Customers' language ability' factor only ranked as the fifth most stressful factor in connection with the telephone contacts and the fourth most stressful factor in connection with the face-to-face contacts when the sum totals of all the various stress levels are looked at, it is noteworthy that in connection with the option 'Occasional stress' this factor came out as the most stressful one in both modes of customer contact, with ½ of the respondents feeling stress due to this factor. This indicates quite a significant amount of stress, particularly as the stress percentages obtained by the different factors are quite spread out: The range between the highest and the lowest percentages obtained by the various factors in connection with this option is 25 % for the telephone contacts and 28 % for the face-to-face contacts. Thus, even though the customers' ability in foreign languages does not cause intense stress as often as some of the other factors, it nevertheless is a major factor in causing low-level stress from time to time.

3.6 Intercultural issues

**KELA & DOI
Intercultural issues: telephone
contacts**

Often quite stressful 8 %

Every time stressful 2 %

No stress 23 %

I do not know 16 %

Occasional stress 51 %

**KELA & DOI
Intercultural issues:
face-to-face contacts**

Often quite stressful 9 %

Every time stressful 1 %

No stress 28 %

I do not know 25 %

Occasional stress 37 %
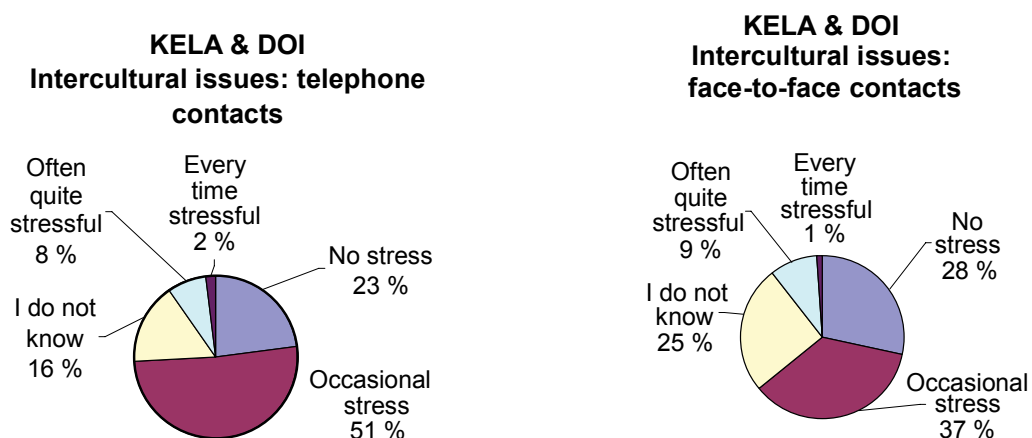
FIGURE 13. Intercultural issues

On the two most intense scales of stressfulness, i.e. 'Every time stressful' and 'Often quite stressful' the 'Intercultural issues' factor have almost identical results for the two modes of customer contacts, with just 1 % difference. With the less intense, occasional stress, the effects of this factor are felt more often in the telephone contacts, where half of the respondents report subjective feelings of stress, while in the face-to-face contacts the respective figure is a little over one third of the respondents. These figures show that intercultural issues are considered to cause low-level stress to a fair number of respondents and more intense stress only to 10 % of the civil servants in the Directorate of Immigration and KELA.

3.7 Civil servants' emotional reactions

**KELA & DOI
Civil servants' emotional reactions:
face-to-face contacts**

Often quite stressful 6 %

Every time stressful 1 %

I do not know 20 %

No stress 33 %

Occasional stress 40 %

**KELA & DOI
Civil servants' emotional reactions:
telephone contacts**

Often quite stressful 8 %

Every time stressful 2 %

I do not know 10 %

No stress 34 %

Occasional stress 46 %
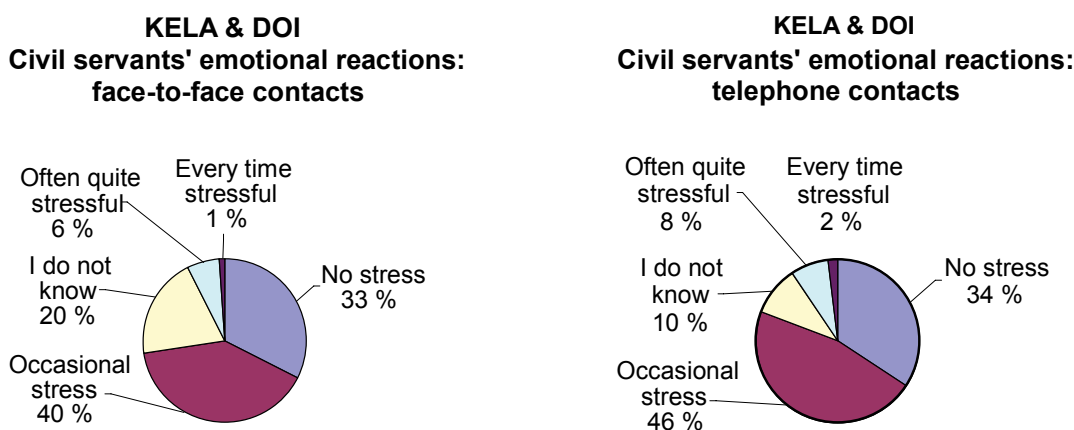
FIGURE 14. Civil servants' emotional reactions

The responses with the factor 'Civil servants' emotional reactions' follow a similar pattern with both modes of customer contacts. The only discrepancy is that the option 'I do not know' receives a score that is twice as high in the face-to-face contacts in comparison to the one obtained by telephone contacts. This is in line with the general trend observed in this research. As many as one third of the respondents record experiencing no stress due to this factor, indicating that they are able to keep their emotions in check even in difficult situations with the multi-ethnic customer contacts. In the telephone contacts, 10 % of the respondents report struggling with the issue of their own emotions in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, either often or every time. The respective joint figure for these levels of stress in the face-to-face contacts is 7 %. In comparison to the other stressors, these figures are quite high. In addition to that, as many as almost half of the respondents record getting occasionally stressed about their emotional reactions during their multi-ethnic customer contacts. The figures indicate amounts of stress which is not to be taken lightly.

Generally speaking this factor only came out quite low in the stressfulness scale, seventh in the overall percentages, ninth with the option 'Every time stressful', sixth and eight respectively in the telephone and face-to-face contacts with the option 'Often quite stressful'. Only with the option 'Occasional stress' did the civil servants' emotional reactions receive as high as the third place with both modes of customer contact. With the telephone contacts, however, this position was shared by three other factors, indicating a diffuse spreading of stress over various factors. Likewise with the face-to-face contacts, the third place is separated from the next lower rankings only by a couple of percentages, indicating a trend similar to that of the telephone contacts.

Does the lower stressfulness-ranking mean that the civil servants' emotional reactions are not a significant feature in their multi-ethnic customer contacts? Separate questions in the questionnaire concerning what their emotional state is after a multi-ethnic customer contact, how they deal with the stress felt in them and what they consider to be good communication with the clientele by the civil servant show otherwise. They reveal that the civil servants in fact often experience quite strong and deep emotional reactions in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, but feel that it is not professionally appropriate to show it to the customers, only letting the emotions come out afterwards. The ideal way of communicating in official context is not to be emotional, but to take care of the business in as neutral a manner as possible, taking note of the ideals of equality and efficiency. This kind of approach can be misinterpreted by some of the clientele, causing mutual emotional reactions in both parties in the interactive situation, which the civil servant then tries to hold back. The qualitative date shows that the civil servants' emotional reactions feature in the customer contacts in a more prominent way than what is shown by the qunatitive data when measured as stressfulness ranking.

3.8   Customers' ability in Finnish

KELA & DOI
Customers' ability in Finnish:
telephone contacts

Often quite stressful 5 %
Every time stressful 3 %
I do not know 4 %
Occasional stress 46 %
No stress 42 %

KELA & DOI
Customers' ability in Finnish:
face-to-face contacts

Often quite stressful 7 %
Every time stressful 1 %
I do not know 16 %
Occasional stress 38 %
No stress 38 %
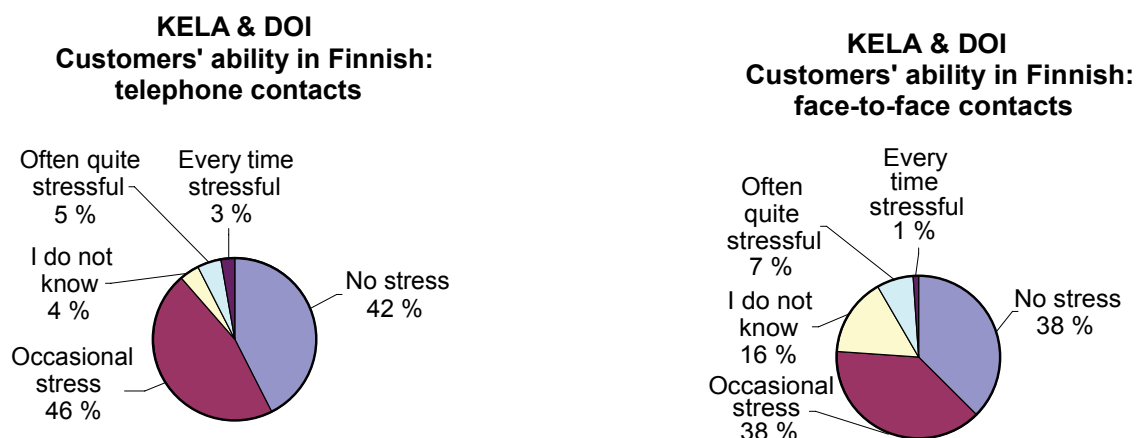
FIGURE 15. Customers' ability in Finnish

It is quite significant that nearly half of the respondents in connection with telephone contacts and more than one third with the face-to-face contacts state that they do not experience any stress due to the ethnically non-Finnish customers' ability in Finnish. This is the second highest 'No stress' score obtained from all the factors looked at in this research. This can be interpreted to be in line with the low overall stressfulness ranking received by this factor, number eight out of a total of ten. Yet, in the free comment fields problems connected with this factor receive prolific mention. These problems are recounted in connection with several factors, with the civil servants recognising that inadequate language ability also affects the other factors. This means that the customers' ability in Finnish features more prominently in the multi-ethnic customer contacts than is expressed by the stressfulness ranking received by it.

3.9   Other factors

KELA & DOI
Other factors: telephone contacts

Every time stressful 3 %
Often quite stressful 11 %
No stress 15 %
I do not know 41 %
Occasional stress 30 %

KELA & DOI
Other factors: face-to-face contacts

Every time stressful 0 %
Often quite stressful 13 %
No stress 16 %
I do not know 51 %
Occasional stress 20 %
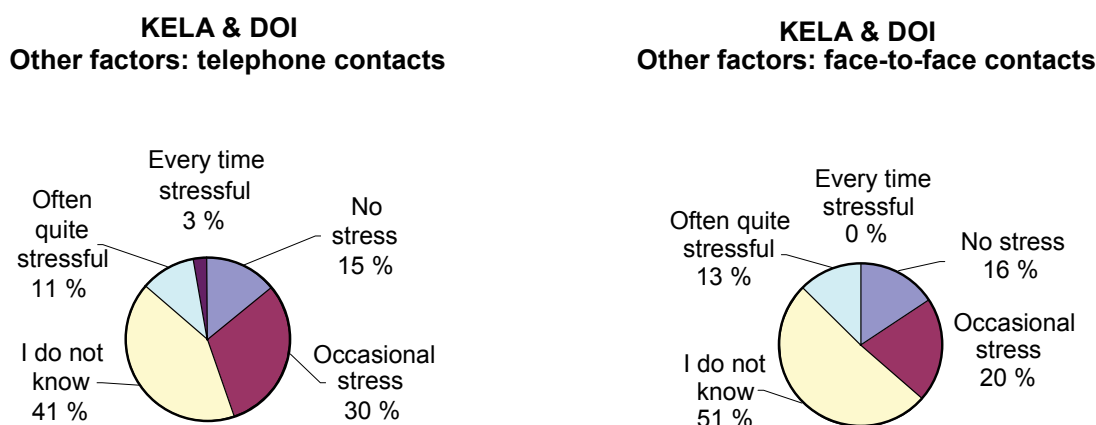
FIGURE 16. Other factors

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This is a very general category, where the respondents could comment on anything that came to mind. However, the responses to the general comment field show that in connection with this factor, half of the respondents reiterated those factors that they felt to be most stressful to them. As such, the distribution of the stress percentages with this factor seems to be fairly close to a mean average of those of the other factors. Only the 'I do not know' option received figures that are higher than average, indicating that the other half of the respondents felt that they had already said what they wanted to say and felt no need for further comment.

3.10 Power relations
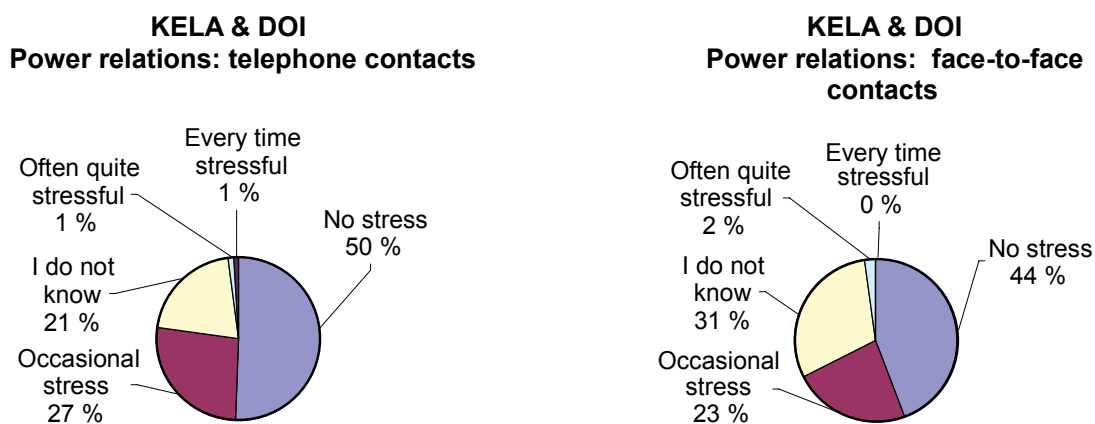
FIGURE 17. Power relations

Power relations ranked as the lowest stress factor and the distribution between the responses for the two modes of customer contacts is quite similar; around ½ of the respondents do not experience stress due to them, around one fifth feels the stress occasionally, and only 2 % experience more intense stress due to this factor. As with the other factors, the 'I do not know' option receives a higher score with the face-to-face contacts.

4 Comparing the greatest stress factors for DOI and KELA

The diagrams on the next page show the order of stressfulness of the various factors in the DOI and KELA in connection with the question where the respondents were asked to name the three most stressful factors for them:

The order of stressfulness: DOI
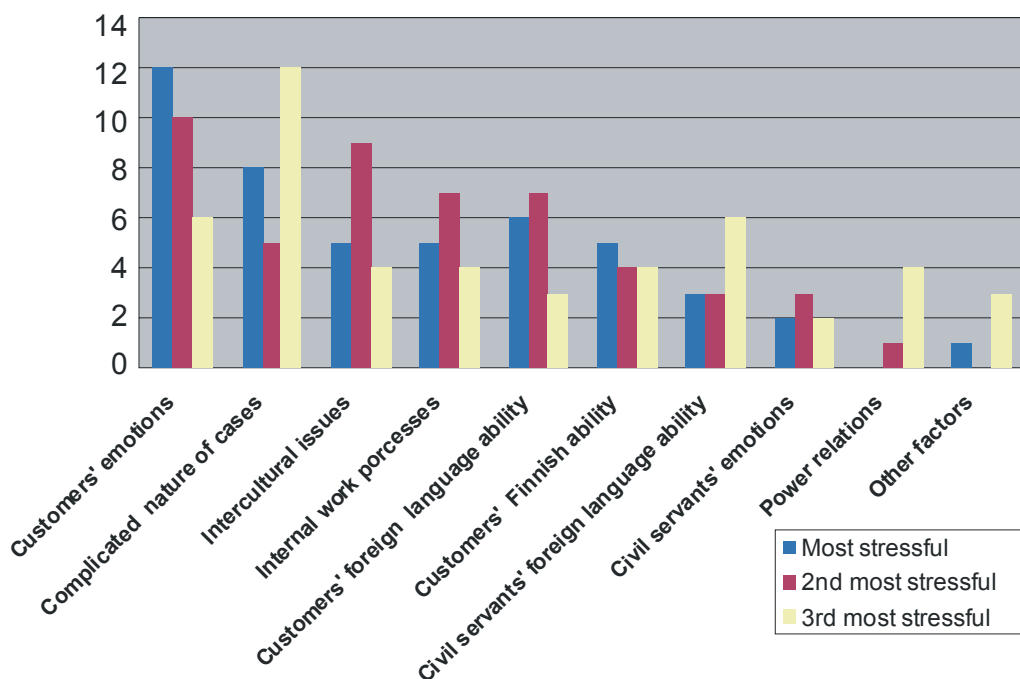
FIGURE 18. Order of stressfulness: DOI

The order of stressfulness: KELA
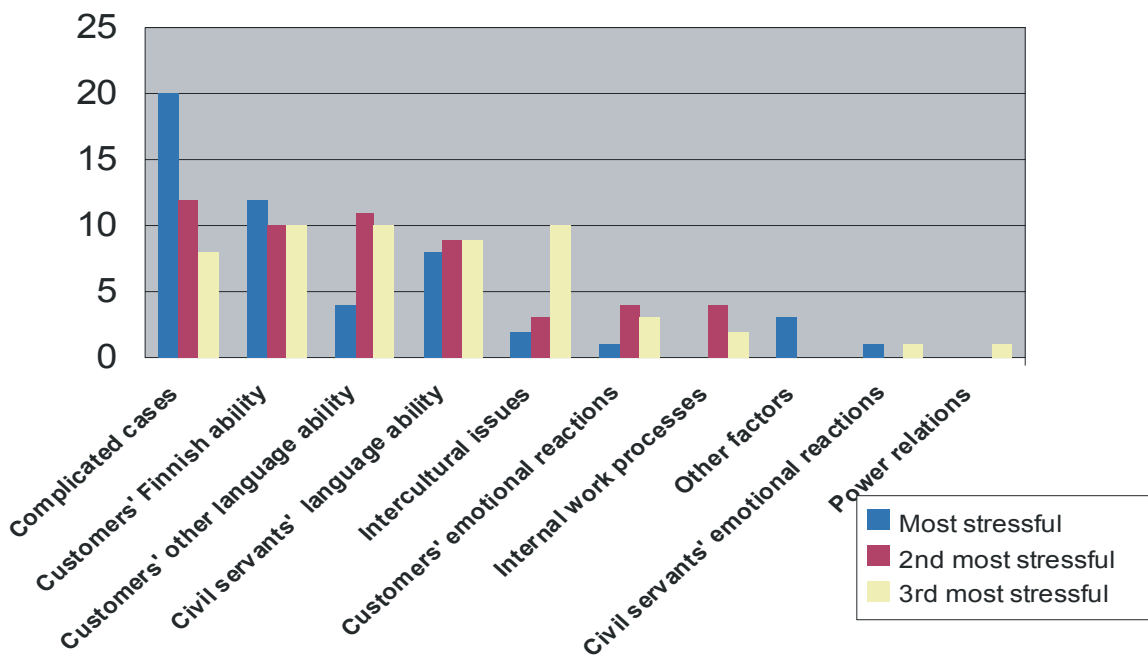
FIGURE 19. Order of stressfulness: KELA

In comparing the stressfulness order for the DOI and KELA respondents in connection with the question of three most stressful factors, only the 'Complicated nature of customers' cases' was amongst the top three factors for both groups; in KELA it was considered to be the most stressful factor and in the Directorate of Immigration as the 2nd most stressful factor. Otherwise the results for this question differed between the two respondent groups, as is evident from the two diagrams above.

In the KELA responses, both the civil servants' and the clientele's inadequate language abilities rose to centre stage of stressfulness in addition to the complicated nature of customers cases. It can be said that the four topmost factors are actually closely linked to each other. Indeed, the many free comments in connection with these questions show that the role of language problems get emphasized precisely because the matters that KELA handles are often quite complex in nature, requiring extensive and specialized vocabulary to do with culturally bound social security system that may be very different from the one the non-Finnish client is used to. The comments also note that the social security system can be difficult to explain even to a Finnish customer.

In contrast to this, within the Directorate of Immigration the most stressful factor turned out to be 'Customers' emotional reactions' when asked to list the three most stressful factors. In KELA, this factor only came out as the sixth most stressful factor. As already stated, 'Complicated nature of customers' cases' got the second place. The third most stressful factor by the DOI respondents with this way of measuring stress was considered to be 'Intercultural issues'.

This shows that intercultural issues rise to the fore when one has to rank the stressfulness of ten different factors in a reductionist way so to speak, by simply stating what given factors cause stress, without having to analyse in more detail the amount and frequency of that stress.

It is to be noted that in addition to the specific factor dealing with intercultural issues the questionnaire included certain other factors, which the researcher had purposefully included to chart their possible connection on intercultural misunderstandings. It was assumed that Finnish civil servants are often unaware of intercultural issues, and their stress reactions in connection with intercultural misunderstandings in multiethnic customer contact situations are partly misplaced. This was one of the major research assumptions, which was born out of four years experience of running intercultural communication training seminars for Finnish civil servants. During these training sessions, in repeated dialogues with the participants, the same factors seemed to crop up as the misplaced and misunderstood causes of stress, where the civil servants did not see the real cause of the stress, but only reacted to the surface phenomenon, thus continuing to repeat the stress cycle in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. Thus the position of these factors on the stressfulness scale can also indicate something about the effect of intercultural differences to the level of stress experienced by the Finnish civil servants in their multicultural customer contacts, even though it is not named as such. It can be be for example that the most stressful factor, 'Customers' emotional reactions' can actually be a manifestation of the intercultural issue.

In KELA, 'Intercultural issues' came out in the middle of the stressfulness scale, in the fifth place out of the total of ten factors. In the additional comments however, it is quite obvious that also in KELA intercultural issues play a major role in causing stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. This is verified by the fact that comments clearly pertaining to intercultural misunderstandings or intercultural issues in general are also given in connection with all the other factors. This again points out that cultural differences show up and are felt as stress in the customer contacts in many ways on several levels. Their importance in KELA is thus much greater than is indicated by the stressfulness figures obtained by the individual factor 'Intercultural issues', i.e. only the seventh most stressful out of the ten factors when the total percentages of the various lvels of stress are looked at, or by the fifth place on the stressfulness scale when naming the most stressful factors.

 From the combined results of the quantitative and qualitative data it can be concluded that intercultural issues also influence many of the other factors, permeating the Finnish civil srvants multi-ethnic customer contacts with a unique type of stress, affecting the way the civil servants handle the customer's case. It has ramifications on the performance of their professional task on the behavioural, cognitive and affective levels and on their attitudes towards culturally other.

Does the fact that the Directorate of Immigration staff placed 'Intercultural issues' as the third most stressful factor indicate that they are more aware of this issue compared with the KELA staff, who only placed this factor as the fifth most stressful? One indication of this is that in the free comments fields of various stress factors, not just in connection with the Intercultural Issues-factor, the KELA staff comment widely on intercultural issues. Or, is this result at least partly due to the nature of the issues handled by the DOI, causing their multi-ethnic customer contacts simply to exhibit more stress due to intercultural factors? Most customer contacts with DOI are with non-Finns. On the other hand, the fact that the 'Customers' emotional reactions' rose to the most stressful place on the scale of 'Three most stressful factors' clearly shows that intercultural issues and cultural differences are not recognized for what they are, but instead their effects are interpreted to be caused by some other factors. What does this mean for the customer service and for the development of the communications policies of these two government institutions?

In the Directorate of Immigration, the fourth most stressful place was shared by 'Internal work processes' and 'Customers ability in other foreign languages'. Sixth place was taken by 'Customers' ability in Finnish' and seventh by 'Civil servants' foreign language ability'. Thus in the Directorate of Immigration the factors dealing with language ability came out in the middle of the stressfulness scale, one after the other, while in KELA they were at the top of the stressfulness scale. Ranked as eight was 'Civil servants' emotional reactions', ninth was 'Power relationships', and the least stressful one one was the general category of 'Other factors'. Thus the same three factors were considered to be the least stressful by both groups, albeit in a different order.

5 Subjective feeling of success

The figures below indicate that there is not a great difference between the telephone and face-to-face contacts as far as the subjective feeling of success is concerned. Approximately one third of the respondents feel that they succeed well in the multi-ethnic customer contact, while a total of 57 % with the telephone contacts and 51 % with the face-to-face contacts feel a varying level of recognised uncertainty about their success with the ethnically non-Finnish clientele. It is interesting that the number of those who do not know how to answer this question is twice as high, 21 %, with the face-to-face contacts in comparison to the 11 % with the telephone contacts. In one sense, one would be inclined to think that it is much easier to judge how things went in face-to-face situations. Yet this result can partly be explained by the fact that non-verbal communication in the cross-cultural communication context can be quite confusing, as it is often culturally bound and there can be mutual conflict between the two parties, thus resulting in greater uncertainty concerning the actual success of the communication. With the telephone contacts, the channels of communication are more limited and thus in a sense there is also less room for misinterpretation, or the confusion and misinterpretation of the communication by the clientele for example does not come across as clearly as in the face-to-face contacts.[65]

Subjective feeling of success: face-to-face contacts

Often unsure 5 %
Every time unsure 1 %
I do not know 21 %
Good 28 %
Sometimes unsure 45 %

Subjective feeling of success: telephone contacts

Often unsure 9 %
Every time unsure 0 %
I do not know 11 %
Good 32 %
Sometimes unsure 48%
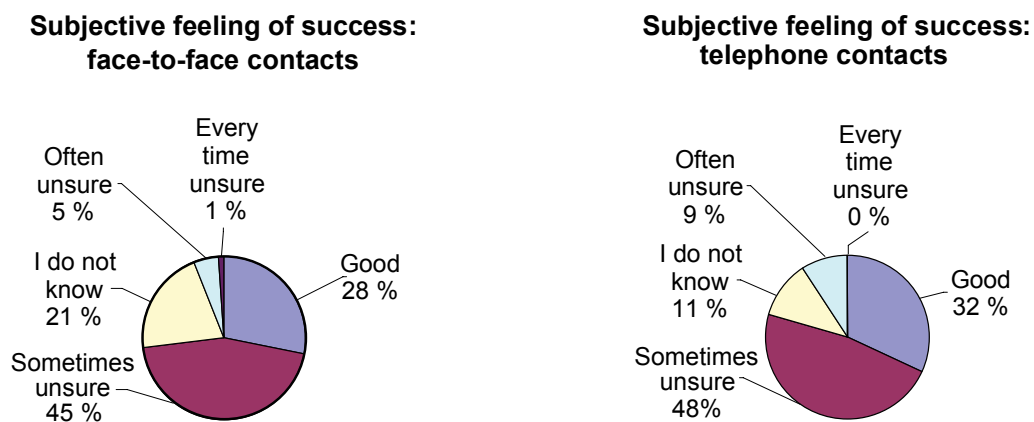
FIGURE 20. Subjective feeling of success

6 Effect on well-being in the workplace

The distribution of answers between the three options given is spread quite evenly. A little over third (38 %) of the respondents recorded positive effects of multi-ethnic customer contacts to their well-being in the workplace. Again, slightly under one third of the respondents were of the opposite view that these

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[65]   In connection with this question, the replies from the Naturalization Unit within the DOI are included in the figures.

kinds of customer contacts had a negative effect on their well-being in the workplace. A slightly smaller percentage of the respondents (27 %) recorded being unsure of the nature of the effects multi-ethnic customer contacts have on their well-being in the workplace.

**Effect of multi-ethnic customer contacts
on the well-being in the workplace: KELA & DOI**
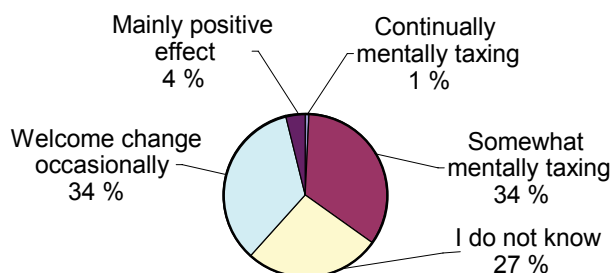
FIGURE 21. Effect on the well-being in the workplace

Only a very marginal number of respondents, 1 %, feel that the multi-ethnic customer contacts are a continuous mentally taxing activity to be involved in, thus affecting their well-being in the workplace extremely negatively.[66]

7   Distribution of stress between the two parties

The respondents were asked to evaluate which of the two parties felt more stress in the customer contacts. Almost half of the respondents, 40 %, thought that the stress is felt equally by both sides, while one third of the respondents considered the customer contact situation to be more stressful for the ethnically non-Finnish customer, as they do not necessarily have good command of Finnish, English or some other main language that can be used in the customer contact. Often the things that these customers deal with in the office are difficult already in Finnish and moreover, the DOI and KELA may be one of the first, if not the very first government authority that people deal with after their arrival in Finland. (Figure 22.)

Those who thought that the civil servant felt more stress were in the minority with only 9 % of the respondents holding this view. The greater stress of the civil servants was often connected to the uncertainty they feel due to their own language ability. The number of those who were not sure about the matter is one fifth of the respondents.

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[66]   The Pilot Survey for the Naturalisation Unit within the DOI did not include this question, so the above figures only represent the responses from the DOI Second Survey and from the KELA survey.

**Distribution of stress between the civil
servants and customers**
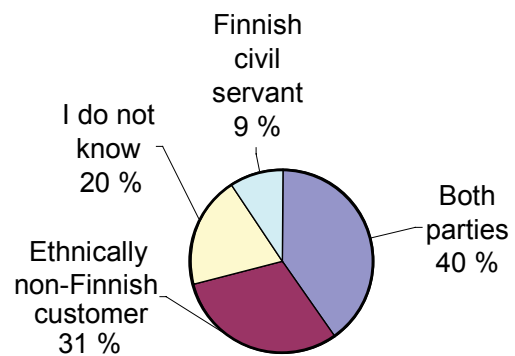
FIGURE 22. Civil servants' subjective opinion on the distribution of stress

CHAPTER 5.   THE NATURE AND ROLE OF STRESS: QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION

1 Wider examination of the research questions

The quantitative and qualitative results of the two surveys presented in the previous chapters establish the fact that a considerable amount of stress is experienced in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts due to various factors. Thus it verified one of the three assumptions underlying this research, and answered the sub-themes of the first research question concerning what things in the multi-ethnic customer contacts cause stress and to what extent

Based on the qualitative data from the three surveys upon which this research rests, the following treatment looks at the first research question through its remaining two sub-themes concerning the role of stress in cultural adaptation and the issues through which this process takes place.

First of all, the nature and role of the stress in the Finnish civil servants' cultural adaptation process in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts is examined.

Secondly, the cultural adaptation process of the Finnish civil servants in its totality is approached through three different vistas, which I have labelled integrity, cultural learning and communication.

The above three vistas arise from the data as the main issues behind the pre-set stress factors in the three surveys upon which this research is based. I first view the different manifestations of the three stress vistas, and then go on to examine how some of the civil servants have learned to handle the intercultural stress constructively through adaptation, critique and self-reflection. This cultural adaptation process, viewed as creating intercultural space, is the central theme of this research, with a view of developing critical pragmatic intercultural professionals with mindful intercultural competence.

The second theme of this research, as raised by the second research question, is the actual intercultural competence of Finnish civil servants. It is derived as a sub-theme from the main theme of the cultural adaptation process, looking at the end result of it. The two component areas of intercultural

effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity, with the respective sub-components of 'skills and behaviour' and 'awareness and attitudes' are identified. These qualities are then further conceptualised into general and contextualized components of intercultural competence needed for multi-ethnic customer service, as the qualities displayed by intercultural professionals.

The attainment levels of intercultural competence within the areas of effectiveness and sensitivity are measured through the Adaptation Orientation of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity created by Bennett (e.g. 1986 and 1993) and through a modification of the bi-directional model of host community acculturation orientation by Bourhis' (1997). In this context, I have combined the components of intercultural effectiveness as communication competence with that of intercultural sensitivity to depict an accomplished state of the cultural adaptation process.

To summarise, the above themes are inter-connected, looking at the same issue from different angles. The end result of the first theme, the process of gaining intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity, or the process of creating intercultural space, is the accomplishment of a certain level of cultural adaptation in both of these areas, which is the topic of the second theme. This accomplishment is then expressed at various levels, of which one concrete example with special relevance to the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts is communication competence.

2   The actors and the scene: background and context factors

In the course of their work, the staff of the Directorate of Immigration and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland handles thousands of multi-ethnic customer contacts at their various offices in different parts of Finland. These contacts are handled either by phone, or in face-to-face contacts, with customers representing scores of nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, all with their culturally and linguistically conditioned communication styles. Quite often the customers' cases are discussed in a language which neither party speaks as their mother tongue, and at times interpreters are utilised. These factors make the multi-ethnic customer contacts professionally quite challenging.

The demanding nature of the multi-ethnic customer contacts in the context of immigration authorities are discussed by Brewis (Pitkänen 2005:140-141). The staff of the Directorate of Immigration needs to keep in mind that for their ethnically non-Finnish customers, dealing with the immigration authorities may be an extremely stressful situation. This is due to the fact that the issues at hand are often of vast importance to the customers, such as whether they themselves, or their family members, will be allowed to stay or arrive in Finland. At times the reasons why a person has had to leave one's country may be connected to the authorities of that country in some way, causing either a conscious or an unconscious reluctuance or even fear of dealing with authorities.

An extra degree of difficulty is added by the fact that immigration authorities and the Social Insurance Institution are usually the foreigners' first official contacts in the new country. Thus their first customer contacts with these offices are a kind of practice ground in how to handle ones' affairs with the Finnish authorities. For this reason, the effects of the mutual misunderstandings that can easily happen in the first contacts, when faced with a new and different communication style to that which one is used to in one's home country, may linger on as a negative feeling towards the office in the newcomer's mind, and cause wariness and defensiveness in the consequent contacts with these authorities.

The above sentiments also hold true for the authorities involved in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. The recurring intercultural clashes may stress and irritate them, causing them to take a defensive position vis-à-vis the ethnically non-Finnish clientele. One constructive way to deal with this stress is to have a clear awareness of one's double role in this contexts: With the ethnically non-Finnish customers, often the civil servant is not only taking care of the customer's case, but is simultaneously also doing another task, clarifying and exemplifying the Finnish administrative procedures to the new immigrants. Through the way they take care of the customers' cases, they are integrating the customers to the Finnish society. This awareness can assist the civil servant to take a more objective view of the intercultural conflicts and misunderstandings in the multi-ethnic customer contacts and help one to resolve them constructively with the clientele, making both parties more aware of the fact that perhaps the cause of difficulty is not always the matter itself, i.e. what is done, but how it is presented.

Another factor possibly at work in the background of the multi-ethnic customer contacts is that particularly when dealing with the immigration authorities the customer may, consciously or unconsciously, be facing his or her cultural 'otherness', the identity as a stranger in the new country of residence. The sheer fact of having to deal with the immigration authorities in the particular matter at hand makes one face the fact that one is still a 'foreigner'. This may partly affect the way the customer feels about contacting the immigration authorities in general.

Depending on the personality, personal history, present life situation and the reasons for having left one's country, each person deals with the issues involved in moving to, and living in a new country in an individual manner and at a differing pace. A person may have already lived in Finland for may years and speak Finnish well enough to take care of ones' affairs fluently, yet still feel that it is mentally stressful to deal with the immigration authorities. Even though one might have left one's own country voluntarily, as a personal choice, and one's life situation in Finland is fine, dealing with the immigration authorities may still bring to surface feelings concerning some unresolved internal or external issues related to having left one's country, which one is not even aware of in the course of one's everyday life.

The above types of conflicts and feelings of being an outsider, which surface in the immigration context, can be carried over to the customer contact situations with the immigration authorities and with the Social Insurance Institution in Finland, possibly finding expression as a communication conflict. The personnel involved in customer contacts in these two authorities need to be aware of these kinds of background factors at times affecting the customers' behaviour in a way that makes them overreact emotionally. Part of the mindful intercultural competence of the civil servant is to recognize that there are various motives and reasons for such reactions.

One also has to bear in mind that fear, uncertainty and defensiveness are quite common human reactions when faced with anything new or unknown to oneself, even though no real threat is presented by the situation. Recognising that these kinds of feelings and attitudes may be at work in the background in a multi-ethnic customer contact situation helps to alleviate, or even prevent, the negative effect they may have in this situation.

3   The three vistas of cultural adaptation

I stated the three vistas at work in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic-customer contacts to be 'Communication concerns', 'Integrity issues' and 'Cultural learning processes'. In this chapter I also look at the interconnectedness between these three, showing how all of them are at work in a multi-ethnic customer contact, affecting each other and causing the Finnish civil servants to simultaneously negotiate a multiplicity of issues, which seemingly pull at opposite directions simultaneously. It is within this area of interconnectedness that the intercultural spaces are created.

4   Integrity vista

A dictionary definition of the word integrity is '*moral uprightness, honesty, wholeness*'[67] For the Finnish civil servants in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, these concepts are expressed at the levels of society, the civil service and the administration represented by them, as well as on a personal level. The Finnish civil servants' professional integrity also becomes tied in with their personal integrity, as far as the dictionary meaning of 'wholeness' is concerned, as the various issues they grapple with make them feel that they are losing the integrity of their identity in a sense of losing face. Face is defined as the 'positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact' (Goffman 1956:213). When that line is bought into

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[67]   The Oxford English Reference Dictionary, Second Edition, ed by Judy Pearsall and Bill Trumble, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996. 731.

question by developments during encounters with others, we feel embarrassed (Smith and Bond 1998:251). Even though embarrassment is a universal experience, there is some evidence that persons from certain cultural groups feel more embarrassment across a wider range of social situations than those from other cultural groups (Yuen 1991). Metts and Hazelton (1978) distinguish between embarrassment as improper identity, which occurs when one's actions violate a social expectation associated with a role, and embarrassment as loss of poise, which happens when one's composure is undermined by events. Both kinds of situations abound in intercultural interaction.

In connection with the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts in the context of this research, the pattern emerging from the comments seems to be that of the intercultural communication conflict causing an 'improper identity embarrassment' to the customers. This in turn affects a 'loss of poise' reaction in the civil servants, particularly if the customer uses anger as an impression management (Li 1994) strategy. Becoming aware of this logic (albeit not in these very technical terms), and being able to work through this issue, expands one's cultural horizons as a person. In this sense, integrity issues are linked with the cultural learning aspect. Integrity issues are also very much linked to the communication concerns, inasmuch as a communication situation is not only about the content of the message, but also about the relationship between those communicating (Watzlawick et al. 1967). In this context, the 'disconfirmed expectations', due to cultural mismatch, are at times expressed in mutual negative misattributions, as evidenced in some of the comments quoted later in this section. Another concern that comes out in the comments is trying to avoid such misattributions.

4.1   Playing by the rules: Integrity of the civil service

The civil servants' comments in the three surveys illustrate a concern that the Finnish administrative system's integrity should be well presented by them, as an example of how the whole Finnish society works. The difficulties and misunderstandings caused by the differences in administrative and legal systems between the customers' countries of origin and Finland are recognised. The civil servants see their own role as mediators between the two cultures and as 'integrators' into the Finnish system. Central issues in this respect coming out of the comments are playing by the rules and the 'equal treatment for all' principle so central to the Finnish society: *'It can be somewhat stressful to make sure that one gives out the correct information and making sure that I represent the office well to the clientele and general public. In addition to that one should be able to make the customer assured that in our office things are handled according to all the rules.' (2DK85)*

It is also recognised that the administrative system is not always perfect. At times this puts the civil servant's professional and personal integrity at stake, when things pertaining to the guidelines, instructions and administrative procedures are taken care of in an unsatisfactory manner. This felt lack of

integrity in the administrative system comes out as stress: *'The stress is due to the fact that every now and then one has to try and make up an excuse to the customer.'(2DD26)* In cases like this, the customer is seen to be in the right: *'In a sense I agree with the customer, yet I have to try to defend our office's procedures.' (1DH17)* The need for an intact professional and personal integrity in cases where the customer is seen to be treated unfairly, can also express itself as an empathetic stress reaction: *'I myself also feel really stressed for the customer, if …he already calls for the fifth or sixth time concerning his application …and I have to say that it still has not been taken into active handling.'(2DB18)*

4.2   Negotiating the rules of integrity: Civil servants vis-à-vis the clientele

The Finnish civil servants also comment on the ethnically non-Finnish clientele's behaviour from the angle of integrity. The multi-ethnic clientele's ways of dealing with bureaucracy in manners that are not part of the Finnish administrative system are at times seen to challenge the integrity of both the Finnish civil service and society as a whole. At the same time the ethnically non-Finnish clientele is facing the Finnish administrative system and the civil servants as its representatives with varying degrees of awareness of the workings of the Finnish authorities, and possibly carrying over their own cultural way of dealing with bureaucracy into the Finnish context. In these kinds of communication situations between the Finnish civil servants and their multi-ethnic clientele, expectations and expressions of what is considered to constitute integrity in a particular context sometimes clash. The comments under the following subheadings exemplify the kinds of issues that the Finnish civil servants are working through in their multi-ethnic customer contacts, as they are developing interculturally professional identities.

4.3   'What do you do all day?' Questioning the civil servants' integrity

The customers' negative attitude towards the office that the civil servant works for is a cause of stress: The civil servants experience also is that if they criticize the ethnically non-Finnish customers' behaviour in situations where they feel justified to do so, their work ethic is questioned. The following comment shows that this is considered a direct criticism of their integrity: *'The customers often expressing the view that "You do not seem to do anything at your office!" 'If the customer has a negative image of our office, he may consequently present himself in an aggressive manner, commenting on our inefficient ways of working with glee. This irritates me, for in my opinion the customer often has no factual information concerning our work processes and ways of handing things. Perhaps the most irritating thing in it is that someone thinks that I am lazy and get nothing done, even though I think I do my work really well. I guess I mostly feel moral indignation in a situation like this, when some outsiders criticize us in emotional tones based on hearsay only.' (2DD30)*

Some civil servants feel that being in the role of civil servant means that some customers see it as their right to criticize them: *'To some customers the KELA person is a nobody, which means that the staff at the customer service can be*

treated in any old way, just because he is part of KELA and works for a government institution.' (SM105)

At times, accusations of racism are levelled at the civil servants. This is often felt quite keenly, even though it is understood that often this is an overreaction by the customer: *'Some customers exercise name-calling, for example calling us racists, if things do not go the way they want.' (2DB17)*

At times, the fear of one's integrity being wrongly put to question can prevent the civil servant from taking up an issue with an ethnically non-Finnish customer: *'It is easier to take up some inconsistency in the case with a Finnish customer, since one does not dare, or is too shy, to take up anything like that with an immigrant customer, as otherwise one is immediately labelled as racist.'(SQ172)*

One respondent expressed sheer fear of facing the customers face to face. The fear is caused by the fact that the office deals with decisions that are extremely important to the customer and thus the customer contact situation is seen to be an extremely sensitive one: *'I want to avoid face-to-face customer contacts. They frighten me. I wait for the day that someone might attack one of our staff member in the street.' (2DV174)*

Although the work context of the multi-ethnic customer contacts is a regular Finnish government office, in another sense it is not, for the regular Finnish communication methods do not always work with the ethnically non-Finnish clientele: *'I know how to do my job, but sometimes it just feels that I am not able to relay the needed information to the customers in a way that they understand!' 'There are some calls where it feels that no matter what I would do, the customer would not be satisfied.' (1DI21)* As this comment is given in the general context of problems dealing with intercultural communication, it is assumed the difficulties in communication and the dissatisfaction of the customer referred to indeed are due to cultural mismatch in communication. This kind of intercultural communication conflict may cause uncertainly about one's professional competence in the civil servants.

The customers' integrity is also taken up in some comments. In discussing which of the two modes of customer contacts is more stressful, telephone contacts or face-to-face contacts, the first one was chosen for the very reason that both parties are considered faceless in them and thus the integrity of the person can be more easily violated: *'Telephone contacts are definitely more stressful. It seems that it is easier to behave inappropriately towards a faceless civil servant than towards a person with whom one is face to face.' (2DY219) 'Telephone hour is more stressful; customer is 'faceless' and 'irresponsible', he can deny everything.'(2DY220) The use of improper language by the customers is indeed mostly connected with the telephone contact: 'When a customer starts the phone call by swearing and slandering me.'(2DJ70)*

4.4 Equal treatment: Integrity in applying the central values of society

One area where the integrity issue comes out is in the desire of some groups of ethnically non-Finnish clients to establish long-standing customer-relationships with the Finnish civil servants. This then causes stress as it is considered

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unnecessary. In Finland the principle of "equal treatment for all" ensures that any civil servant doing the same job in the office can handle any case: *'In the customer contacts with ethnic non-Finns it takes an enormous amount of resources and causes stress when the customer insists on talking with the person who has mailed the decision or the request of additional information. However, almost always the person who happens to be in the customer service at that time can help and advise the customer.'(SI64)* Yet, in some customers' countries of origin, establishing a more personalised contact with a particular civil servant within the government offices is the best way of ensuring that one's case gets handled in an expedient manner and the customers instinctively go for this mode of behaviour also in Finland.

The fact that the decision maker's name is shown in the paper copy of the decision posted to the customer, is seen to encourage the customers to try and form relationships with the civil servants, which runs contrary to the principles of neutrality as part of the 'equal treatment for all' principle, which the Finnish civil servants see as the basic pillar of their professionalism. They want to be very careful about their integrity in this respect, as the civil servant is bound by official duty[68] to obey these principles. *'The decisions ought to be able to be given anonymously. Of course within the office the name of the decision maker has to be known, but, as the decisions are based on the same principles and on the same legislation, it does not matter from the customers' point of view who has given the particular decision. Why does the customer get a decision with the name of the decision maker visible?' (SI63)*

Some civil servants feel stressed about the way some nationalities request special treatment in their cases. This offends their sense of equal treatment of every person, which is one of the basic tenets of the Finnish administrative system and a high value in the Finnish society as a whole. It is seen to go against the professional integrity of the civil service to grant special treatment to anybody who calls or comes to the office with such a request without some exceptional reason: *'It is stressful when the customers try and make us hurry the application along, especially when the customers' attitude is often quite selfish. I explain that the applications are handled in the order that they have arrived in the office, but the answer is always the same: "I understand but all the same, could you handle my case first, as my situation is the most difficult one, and so on and so forth!' (2DF39)* In some customers' home countries, it can be the normative way of communication with the bureaucracy to repeatedly contact the officials and to ask them to hurry the customer's cases along. Even though the civil servants understand that this is a cultural matter and not needed in Finland, they still react strongly to it: *'Stress is caused by customers coming from such cultures where people are used to things not proceeding with the authorities without bribery, or shouting and crying and continually chasing the authorities to hurry up with their case.' (SU297)*

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[68]   The Finnish term for it is 'virkavastuu'.

4.5 'Empty work': Integrity in work ethics

Repeated contacting about the same matter by the clientele is another cause of stress. In one sense the civil servants consider this to be a show of no confidence towards their office, and thus touching on their professional integrity, making them think that the clients do not trust them to do their work as is required of them without having to be prompted continuously. This is also a question about what is considered to be 'real' work and 'efficient' work, again matters that have to do with professional integrity. Integrity in connectin with work ethics means that wasting time at work and interruptions to 'real' work are not looked upon favourably. According to some respondents, certain types of customer contacts fall under the category of 'wasting time', which is considered to be bad work ethics: *'The fact that the phone calls are often (mostly) totally empty content wise – their only content is either a) When will the decision be ready? b) Can the handling of my case not be fast tracked? I have often toyed with the idea, that if only I had the use of a tape recorder, I could play back to the customers some pre-recorded standard answers. 'I feel that these kind of phone calls are a total waste of time, and while I am answering them, within the same time frame I could be making several decisions and thus get the customers' cases handled more efficiently, rather than just repeating the same answers on the phone. This total wasting of time causes stress.' 'I still hold the opinion that the telephone hour is mostly a very bad disruption factor in my work, causing stress.'(2DJ67)*

The above kind of comment does not take into account the 'invisible' work of unofficially integrating the customers, which happens for example in exactly the kind of situations the above respondent refers to, when by one's own example and in verbal affirmation the civil servants gradually bring about the awareness on how things are handled in the administrative context in Finland.

Those customers whose conduct is considered to be *'vague and unclear' (2DP138)* also cause stress. However, what is considered to be their opposite, as 'appropriate, business-like, clear and determinate' communication in official contexts, and what is considered to be an adequate time frame for taking care of certain things, can be very much culturally conditioned.

4.6 'Pressure' talk: perceived as test to the civil servants' integrity

The communication situation represented by the DOI and KELA customer contacts is considered to demand for a certain style of communication that is deemed appropriate for the official context. The communication code in the administrative context in Finland calls for a style where one is expected to present the facts truthfully in a neutral, efficient manner, and show of emotion is to be avoided. The multi-ethnic clientele's communication styles that differ from these norms are interpreted within the above framework of the Finnish communication style, again giving rise to integrity issues. The clients are seen as trying to put pressure on the civil servants to compromise their professional

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integrity by asking to fast track their cases for example. Conversely, the clientele's integrity may be called to question on account of such requests.

Communication style that is interpreted as persistant is considered to be inappropriate to the official context. It is interpreted as the customer putting pressure on the civil servants. Sometimes this is done in a manner that is considered forceful: *'Often aggressive behaviour, which often makes me see red. I get the sense that with this (kind of behaviour) the customer is not even trying to help me to understand him, and thus he has only himself to blame if taking care of his business does not go smoothly. If instead he would try to get his message across in a calm manner, it would be much easier to try and interpret what he is saying in co-operation with him.'(2DH57)* Other nationalities employ more gentle 'pressure': *'The Iranians way of taking care of things is persistent nagging. I have conducted over one-hour long conversations with them on the phone, where the only content of the discussion has been the fact that it is not possible to estimate when the decision will be ready. They do not raise their voices, but they are extremely persistent about repeating the same thing.'(2DZ243)* However, the civil servants are supposed to be 'civil' and the same is expected of the clientele. Perceived 'pressurising' of the civil servant is seen to reflect negatively on the customers: *'I do find it difficult to remain empathetic and understanding, if a customer is curt with me and keeps on nagging about the same thing over and over.'(2DG47)* At times the customers' integrity is questioned: *'Sometimes their apparent unwillingness to understand the matter by pretending that the message is not getting through to them; apparent lying.'(2DL8)* In cases where the above type of critique is unjustified, it may be a misinterpretation of a culturally conditioned communication style.

4.7 'Idle' talk: Integrity as clarity, brevity and sincerity in communication

In many comments, the cause of stress can be identified as a breech of the ideal of the concept of clarity, brevity and sincerity (C-B-S) in communication. This can be traced back to the ideology of the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002) developed the argument that the C-B-S style represents the preferred style of what they call the utilitarian discourse system. This is the dominant communicative system in the business and governmental world, which began with the Utilitarian philosophers but is now seen wherever Euro-American utilitarian values are present. Clarity and brevity demand that the speaker or writer answer the questions: Who? What? When? Where? How?'(Pan et al. 2002:15).

The data from the Directorate of Immigration and from the Social Insurance Institution reveal that this is indeed still very much the preferred mode of communication by the Finnish civil servants with their clientele. In answer to the question what is considered to be good communication by the Finnish civil servants, the C-B-S ideal comes across very strongly, as exemplified by the following comments: *'Communication that sticks to the point.'(1DK48) 'Clear, calm way of speaking, presenting plain facts and asking distinct questions.'(SS216)'Things get taken care of swiftly, in a clear manner and punctually. Short, factual, informative!'(2DW176)*

Through the C-B-S approach, the Finnish civil servant is able to maintain professional integrity with the concomitant neutral attitude required for the ideal of equal treatment. One wants to avoid being seen as condoning favouritism: *'I always try to remain very matter-of-fact and act in an appropriate manner. I always try to speak clearly about the things the customers ask and be careful about not being too friendly – for otherwise the customer will be under the false impression that the decision in their case will undoubtedly be positive.'(2DW181)*

The ideal of C-B-S promoted by the Finnish civil servants is also attested to by their responses to the question of what they consider to be poor communication. In many of these answers, the total opposites of the C-B-S ideal are brought forward as being undesirable communication style in the context of customer service. The following are some examples of this sentiment: *'Idle babbling,' (2DX192) ''overly polite' expressions.'(ST260) 'Speaking 'non-business' (talking about things that have nothing to do with the case). (ST261) 'Repeating the same thing over and over, dramatic, not normative.'(S12)* Particularly the last comment shows that what is considered to be the accepted norm for communication in official contexts with the government authorities is a quick handling of things in a neutral and unemotional manner.

Some of the above comments actually have to do with the way languages affect mental images and consequently the interpretations of how the communication is perceived. Oftentimes neither the Finnish civil servants nor their customers are necessarily aware of their culturally bound way of using either their own language, or some other language, which is used in a particular customer contact. This gives rise to misunderstandings and misinterpretations concerning such things as the other party's mood, motives and attitudes. The following comment is an example of where the Finnish civil servant *is* aware of the possibility of C-B-S style of speech being wrongly interpreted as being impolite: *'Style of speech that is too curt and reserved, which may give an impression of being rude.'(S4)*

4.8   Emotional talk: Integrity and the role of feelings in communication

The three surveys had countless comments on the stressfulness of emotions featuring too prominently in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. These comments were not only given in connection with the specific question concerning the effect of customers' emotional reactions on the customer contact situation, but also in connection with many other stress factors examined in this research. In particular, emotions were cited in connection with the questions concerning what was considered to be good and bad communication in official contexts. Feelings and thoughts concerning the integrity, or breech of it, by both parties in the communication situation are expressed. These thoughts are along the line of Ting-Toomey's (1985, 2005) face negotiation theory, where face is the sense of favourable self worth. She claims that conflict is a face negotiation process in which people often have their face threatened or questioned. Through various studies she has shown that members of individualist cultures

are more concerned about saving their own face in a communication conflict, while collectivistic cultures tend to use other-oriented face-saving strategies (Ting-Toomey et al. 1991).

At times the civil servants connect show of emotion with questions concerning how sincere the motives are behind them, and question the reasonableness of such behaviour: *'I do not understand why the customers cannot behave in a rational manner in their dealings with government officials. What do they think they are achieving by their strong reactions? Or, if they can not prevent them, why can they not avoid contacting the government officials till they have managed to get control of themselves?'(2DB8) 'Often clear pretentiousness in evidence.'(2DB10)*

The Finnish civil servants prefer the customers to behave in an emotionally neutral manner. This way they can hold on to their own professional integrity even in difficult situations: *'Customer work is stressful, if the customer's emotional reactions shine through his speech. If just the plain business is taken care of, and there is no emotion involved, even a very difficult matter can be handled without causing stress.'(B6/2DB9) 'I sometimes find it difficult to know how to deal with customers who cry or begin to feel physically ill, when the reasons for applying for political asylum still need to be made clear despite the emotional outbursts.'(2DB20)*

At times the customer contact is simply terminated by the civil servant due to the customer's emotional reactions, as they are considered improper in the situation: *'I generally finish a phone call with an aggressive or a howling client fairly quickly, by just saying directly that I will not listen to his yelling. I also may say something like: "Please can you call again when you have calmed down. Good day to you".'(2DB12)*

Particularly face-to-face contacts with the multi-ethnic clientele cause stress in this respect. The respondents wonder how to handle emotions in such contacts: Face-to-face customer contact is more stressful: *'It is easier to tell difficult things without seeing the customer, both parties can cover up their feelings more easily over the phone, over the phone certain kinds of situations are not as easily interpreted as threatening or embarrassing. On the phone it is easier to think more with one's brain and shut out emotions.'(2DY237)*

The following comment talks about integrity in the sense that is not considered correct for the civil servants to try and be involved in matters that they have no formal competence to handle, and which are not considered to be part of their job description. Handling customers' emotions is considered to be one such area. To the following respondent, to get involved is considered to be a breech of professional integrity: *'I take an extremely negative view on customers who yell or cry on the phone. Actually, I do not understand why it should be our task to also act as psychologists and strive to understand the customer's emotional reactions and try to calm him down or pacify him. In my opinion it is not part of the civil servant's duties, at least not in our line of work, and we have neither the training nor the for this type of task. I myself do not feel that I have studied in the University in order to be involved in this kind of activity.'(2DB11)*

The customers' emotional reactions are at times seen to totally disrupt the integrity of the communication situation, as a show of emotion is not

considered to be part and parcel of communication in official situations, which are supposed to be handled on a neutral, factual basis only: *'When the customer is shouting at me, and explaining things with great gusto, but does not listen to anything I tell him. Business-like, matter-of-fact discussion is impossible in a situation like that.'(2DJ70)*

According to the comments, the civil servants' own emotional reactions are mostly reactions to the customers' behaviour. It is realised that the emotions expressed are partly a cultural matter: *'My own emotional reactions are caused by the customers' behaviour. They are mainly negative reactions, such as irritation, which in turn gets me agitated, causing stress.'(2DG46) 'The customers getting upset and their aggressive emotional outbursts and behaving with an air of superiority. (These things are) partly to do with cultural differences.'(2DP136) 'Angry customers and those customers who use 'foul language' Mostly, though, the customer does not give me a chance to get acquainted with the matter and his aggressive attitude gets me too all locked-up inside. (SH53)*

4.9 'This is the way we do things': holding up the Finnish values

Differences in the value systems adhered to sometimes cause difficulties, at times causing the civil servants to feel that the integrity of the Finnish way of doing things, as an expression of the pertinent societal values, is at stake. Gender equality is one such area that comes up in the comments. *'As a young woman, the most awkward thing for me is dealing with a male customer coming from a male-dominated culture; attitudes such as underestimating me and disrespect towards me come up in the customer's behaviour.'(SU299)* Another area where cultural values show up is the individualistic vs. collective orientation, with cultures adhering to the latter-mentioned orientation being used to one person acting on behalf of someone else. This is in clear contradiction to the Finnish way of each person taking care of their own affairs, particularly when it comes to official contexts, where representing another person needs to be officially authorised. When these kinds of differences in societal values are accompanied by hostile and accusing statements, the customer's attitude is seen to hinder the smooth handling of the customer contact: *'Most problems in the customer service are caused by the fact the customer's affairs are handled by a spouse or some other relative without an official authorisation letter. When staff then refuses to give the information, the customer gets angry and may start to act in a threatening way. Foreigners easily call a person a racist if the answer does not please them, or the matter is such that it simply can not be taken care of there and then.'(SY393)*

The above kinds of comments show that the Finnish civil servants, in exemplifying the way things are done in Finland, and as representatives of the Finnish administrative system, are facing the reactions of the clientele to whom these systems and the values they represent may be new and unfamiliar. This is a sensitive and a demanding task. The civil servants are not only taking care of the customers' cases, but through their persons and working methods they are also integrating the customer. They feel the need to uphold the integrity of the Finnish administration's principles of good governance and the basic values of

the society, which they represent. Sometimes it is felt that the customers do not appreciate these measures: *'Different values and when one notices that the person is not even trying to become committed to the society, does not learn the language, does not go to any courses, which are offered, etc.'(SQ166)*

An attitude interpreted as indifference on the customers' part concerning how to take care of their own affairs causes the civil servants extra work and stress. This kind of attitude is seen as lack of personal integrity: *'When the same customer comes to the office week after week and every time something in his situation has changed, but I have to 'notice' it myself from the computer records, the customer himself does not think of letting me know about it and has not come to the office on account of that particular matter, but for some other reason.'(SQ171)*

Another area where the Finnish values surface in the comments is the way individual initiative is appreciated. The civil servants expect the clientele to show initiative in their own affair and the lack of can be interpreted as lack of integrity: *'Some people of foreign extraction do not seem to have any kind of initiative or taking responsibility for themselves, which is irritating. The same also applies partly to some of the Finns.'(SQ167)*

One comment places the onus on the success in the communication mainly on the customers' willingness to integrate into the Finnish society: *'Success in multi-ethnic customer contacts is largely to do with the customers themselves and their habits and how they have adjusted to the Finnish culture and their ability in Finnish.' (SY391)*

5   Culture shock: Challenging the integrity of cultural identity

Ferraro (1994) argues that culture shock is a 'psychologically disorienting experience.' Craig (1979) aptly lists some of the stress symptoms of culture shock as anxiety, frustration, disequilibrium, and disorientation, being displayed for example in fits of unreasonable anger over minor frustrations, helplessness, excessive fatigue, excessive fear, absent-mindedness, physical aches and pains, etc. As for the comments in the three surveys on which this research is based, those statements in which stress of the multi-ethnic customer contacts is only seen as a negative factor, are typical examples of the culture shock experience the way it is understood in the theoretical frameworks concerning culture shock discussed earlier on in this research, and as quoted by Ferraro (1994) above. In some cases the stress of the multi-ethnic customer contacts affects the person's inner state of mind and self image quite negatively for a long time, as is evident from the strong turn of phrase in the following comment: *'The stress does not get dealt with and lingers on in my own head. I feel bad and think 'how horrible', and keep wrestling with the feeling of failure, thinking that this is stupid.'(SX353)* The extreme reaction is to opt out of the customer contacts as much as possible: *'Due to the negative things associated with them, I am not involved in face-to-face contacts with customers.'(2DV173)*

5.1 The initial effect of culture shock: disintegration of cultural identity

Disintegration and confusion of the perceived identity is part of the culture-shock-induced experience. The very strong expressions used by the Finnish civil servants indicating a negative state of mind in answer to the question concerning the respondents' feelings and emotional state after their multi-ethnic customer contacts point to many of the classic culture shock symptoms. The personnel in the Nationality unit in the Directorate of Immigration described these kinds of sentiments with the following phrases: *Anxious (1DJ31,) agitated (1DJ26,) helpless (Q50/1DJ34), restless (1DJ32), tense (1DJ33,) feeling awful (1DJ35,) feelings of uncertainty 1DJ36), mentally 'breathless' (1DJ37), physical symptoms of tiredness (1DJ28), need to calm oneself down physically (1DJ29), flushed cheeks (1DJ30), mental overdrive (1DJ38), relieved (1DJ27).*

The following quotes describe similar sentiments in the Second Survey of the Directorate of Immigration: *'Tired and frustrated feeling.'(2DR159) 'Confused state of mind, often furious.'(2DR160) 'Luckily its over!' 2DR161) 'Despair!'(ST265) 'Feeling of being upset, irritation, sometimes bemused, bewilderment.'(2DQ155)*

The personnel in the Social Insurance Institution also record similar reactions to do with culture shock: *'Often I am left with a 'breathless' feeling, the sense of hurry lingers on. With Finnish customers I do not get this feeling on a normal day which is not too busy.'(SR178) 'Quite worn out, 'I've given it my all' feeling, more tired than what I generally feel after Finnish customers.'(SR179)*

Part of the uneasiness in connection with culture shock experience is to do with self-monitoring behaviour (Snyder 1974, 1979), in which all people engage, but with varying intensity, depending on the personality and also on cultural variations. Self-monitoring behaviour is the degree to which individuals attempt to control the images and impressions others form of them during social interaction. High self-monitoring individuals are sensitive to the behaviour and presentation of others around them and use these cues as guidelines for their own behaviour. The general Finnish mentality can be described as being fairly high self-monitoring. In connection with the working role in a government office this feature easily becomes even more highlighted, as there are particular parameters, such as regulations and policies to be followed, and a certain etiquette and mode of speech to be followed. When the multi-ethnic clientele does not reciprocate these expectations, the self-monitoring behaviour may first begin to work on overdrive, before becoming impossible to operate, as the familiar clues are replaced by confusing signals from the other party to the social interaction. Thus, one facet of being in the stage of culture shock is a threat to one's identity due to a limited view and awareness of the intercultural communication situation, both psychologically and communication-wise.

Culture shock may not only call into question one's own identity and integrity in the above-mentioned manner, but also that of the culturally other in the intercultural communication context. This may express itself in possible misinterpretation of the customers' behaviour, resulting in negative value judgments. Several comments in the three surveys can be interpreted exhibiting

culture shock reactions in this manner. The integrity of one's own identity is shielded and protected by projecting the integrity issue onto the customer. These comments below reveal frustration due to cultural differences. However, the cause of stress is projected to the customers: *'Often clear pretentiousness in evidence.'(2DB10) 'People from some countries get agitated very easily and use inappropriate language.'(2DZ239) 'Persistently contradictory attitude, unwillingness to listen.'(2DJ68)*

Other comments talk about the demanding nature and high stressfulness of communication in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. *'(Multi-ethnic) customer contacts are the most stressful thing in my work.'*(2DA6) Yet these respondents do not pinpoint the difficulty as being intercultural misunderstanding, even though this may be the case. The following comments show the need for quick intervention and analysis of the difficulties experienced in multi-ethnic customer contacts in order to prevent the prolonged effects of the negative reactions: *'If I do not have any time to mull things over a bit between the customers, difficult situations with the client keep on replaying over and over in my mind like a broken record that gets stuck on playing the same track repeatedly.'(2DG48) 'After a particularly difficult customer contact the uneasy feeling may continue to haunt me for days.'(2DA5)*

Most people without prior intercultural contacts need some kind of assistance, such as intercultural training and targeted information to go through the initial stage of culture shock in order for a deeper intercultural understanding to develop. If this does not happen, their cultural adaptation process is thwarted and they are easily left in the initial stages, in the state of prolonged culture shock, repeatedly experiencing the negative reactions due to misunderstandings in cultural ways of communication. This can then lead to entrenched positions of resistance to cultural adaptation and to overly emphasized ethnocentrism.

At times the civil servants are faced with difficult situations in the customers' life histories, causing strong psychological reactions: *'People from the former Yugoslavia, who sometimes recount shocking events, cause severe anxiety in me.'*(2DP148) Learning to cope with information concerning situations that go beyond their own life experience is part of the professional competence of persons working in customer contacts in such fields where these kinds of issues emerge. One needs adequate and at times professional support in this respect.

The results of this research show that the Finnish civil servants' culture shock reactions are often quite pronounced, as expressed in their comments quoted above. The quantitative results of the three surveys upon which this research is based also show similar results. The fairly high stressfulness percentages obtained by many of the factors at work in the multi-ethnic customer contact situations that were reported in discussing the quantitative data of this research clearly point in the same direction. More that half of the respondents felt varying levels of stress in eight out of the ten tested factors in connection with telephone contacts, and in six out of the ten factors in connection with face-to-face contacts. Thus both the qualitative and the quantitative results indicate that many of the Finnish civil servants undergo a

profound culture shock in their dealings with the multi-ethnic clientele. This process can be interpreted as a threat to the integrity of one's identity, when the professional competence, logical reasoning, emotional equilibrium and physical well-being of the person is called to question through the many symptoms of what is classically called culture shock.

5.2   The long-range effects: integrity reconstructed and interculturalised

The fact that the Finnish civil servants seem to experience quite strong culture shock reactions may on the one hand partly indicate a limited intercultural awareness and adjustment. However, experiencing negative thoughts and feelings in connection with intercultural contact situations does not mean that a person is not willing, or able, to go through a cultural adaptation process in one's contacts with the cultural 'other'. On the contrary, these types of culture shock reactions can be the prototypical symptoms of actually going through a deep-level cultural adaptation process. Later research on culture shock has also recognized this fact.

Based on all the above research results, and particularly in line with Weaver's (1993) and Kealey's (1995) findings, the Finnish civil servants' deep experiences of culture shock, as evidenced in their comments, suggests that they indeed are well poised on the learning curve of reshaping the integrity of their culturally bound professional identity, and developing an intercultural professional identity.

It is clear from the comments in the three surveys that often the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts are quite different from the ones they have with their Finnish clientele. This means that the civil servants have had to develop intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity in order to serve the ethnically non-Finnish clientele equally well, as required by the law. The comments in the three surveys show that this is seen as a positive experience. Developing both intercultural competence and language abilities are seen as greatly enhancing their professional competence as civil servants. The more demanding nature of these customer contacts, in comparison to the ones with the Finnish clientele, forces the civil servants to work at these contacts harder, enhancing their professional development. In the course of these duties, many of the Finnish civil servants have worked though the initial culture shock phase, where the integrity of their professional and personal identity seems to be called into question.

The following comments propound the positive value of the cultural adaptation process that takes place in the multi-ethnic customer contacts in developing the civil servants' intercultural professionalism on the cognitive and operational levels: '*Customer contacts with foreigners are enriching to my work, instructive in many ways.*'(SP137) '*Challenging and interesting situations; one is forced to do one's best in order to succeed.*' (O31/SP128)'*Helps to maintain my ability in foreign languages. Also, with every situation new insights are gained that can be utilised with another person of the same nationality at some later discussion in*

connection with the customer contacts.'(2DO112)' Equality in interaction with everyone.'(2DO129) Customer *oriented approach. (SP133) 'Helping people. 'Mutual desire to understand each other.'(SP143) 'Greatly enrich the job description.'(O35/SP132)* Perhaps one of the most insightful comments was the simple observation that often it is not a question of major adjustments, where one makes a big point of showing that one is trying to accommodate the other. Instead, often one can get on the right path for creating intercultural understanding in an unobtrusive manner, with small gestures: *'For the situation to go smoothly, often all it calls for is some small concession, such as one extra greeting, which a Finnish civil servant would not normally give to a Finnish customer.'(1DE12)*

Having gone through the culture shock experience, the consequent cultural reshaping of one's professional identity does not stop only on the cognitive and operational levels, but is also expressed on the affective level, giving the civil servants a sense of enjoyment and personal achievement in their role of service with the multi-ethnic clientele, showing that they have been able to successfully reshape their professional identity and integrity as a whole. The comments dealing with the emotional effects of cultural adaptations made in the multi-ethnic customer contacts mainly talk about positive feelings. It is indeed rewarding to realise that having made the needed cultural adaptation, one has succeeded well in a challenging intercultural communication situation in a foreign language: *'It feels good to notice that one has managed quite well in a demanding situation in a foreign language.' (SP122) 'Often I am quite pleased with the situation and the challenge it brings.'(SR197) 'I enjoy customer contacts and there should be more of them.(2DO112) 'The best thing (about multi-ethnic customer contacts) is that one sees real, physical people instead of just dealing with papers and customer numbers.' (2DO122)* Other expressions used in this connection are: *rewarding (T15/2DN99), interesting (SP128), enriching (SP137), bringing variation and cheer and the multiplicity of situations (SP131), brings nice additional spice (2DO123), meeting people from different cultures (SP138), sense of fascination (SR196).*

With some the feelings are less positive. Even with the best of efforts in trying to make the cultural adaptations, difficulties sometimes become so great that communication either becomes unclear or breaks down altogether, leaving the civil servant with the following feelings: *'Sense of helplessness after an unsuccessful customer contact.'(1DJ184) 'One may be left with a feeling of uncertainty as to whether the understanding was mutual. With Finnish customers on the whole, one does not have this problem.'(SR189) Intense excitement, either positive or negative, depending on what has happened during the contact.'(1DJ41)* Mingled with the negative feelings expressed in these comments is a desire for mutual understanding and regret that the communication did not go well, without laying the blame on anyone or making any value judgments.

Some of the comments can be interpreted as indicating that the cultural adaptation within the multi-ethnic customer contacts has spread its effects even wider than the professional identity of the respondents. These comments display how the civil servants' personal identities have also been touched. This is expressed in general appreciation of mutual understanding between peoples, appreciation of different cultural ways of looking at things, seeing other people

first and foremost as human beings, rather than representatives of certain cultures, or government officers with a certain status, valuing equality between people and simply appreciating people. These comments talk about the changes in the professional identity spilling over to the private identity, giving the person a sense of enhanced humanity: *'Things become more concrete and human, I enjoy communicating with immigrants.'(2DO119) 'It is a privilege to able to encounter (ethnic non-Finns). In private life these chances are very rare.' (SP139) 'It is vastly enriching, even though occasionally also stressful, to be able to work with people coming from many different cultures.'(SO117)*

6 Cultural learning vista

The theories on culture shock and acculturation look at the intercultural communication situation from different angles. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive, even if they may look at the same issue from contradictory points of view. Cultural learning takes place on different levels. On one level it is about developing intercultural competencies to be able to interact socially in a successful manner with people of culturally diverse backgrounds, but on the deeper level it is about developing an identity orientation with open horizons towards the immigrants as newcomers to one's society, evidenced in genuinely changed attitudes and actions. The acquisition of intercultural skills is thus integrated with the person learning them.

Sippola and Hammar-Suutari (2006:17-18) address the intercultural competence of the Finnish workforce through example studies on human resources management and customer service.[69] The aim of their study was to find out how emerging cultural diversity affects the preparedness of the Finnish organizations and the competencies of their members to promote equality. Sippola and Hammar-Suutari (2006) report that the findings of the study show that the broader view of understanding intercultural competence as proposed by Banks (1994) is not internalised by the service providers: rather, they seek to improve their competencies needed in intercultural work mostly by *seeking some new technical tools such as better language skills* (italics added) (cf. reactive learning with single loop interventions; (Wooten and James 2004, Cornelius 2002) to assist them in their work with a more culturally diverse clientele. In other words, the skills and cognitive dimensions of intercultural competence are more easily recognized, but the other two (attitudes and action) have not been taken into consideration to the same extent. The definition of an interculturally competent person as described by e.g. Taylor (1994a), Bennett (1993) and Gudykunst and Kim (1984) was only partly supported (Sippola and Hammar-Suutari 2006:18-19).

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[69] Hammar-Suutari's empirical data is collected from the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, as is part of the data in this research.

The results of this research partly point in the same direction, particularly expressed by the central role occupied by language skills in the Social Insurance Institution's replies. Language difficulties were listed as one of the main causes of stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, and developing one's language skills was the main feature mentioned in answer to the question of what suggestions for improving the efficiency of the multi-ethnic customer contacts the person would have.

On the other hand, as the analysis of the research data in this chapter shows, many of the Finnish civil servants who took part in this research in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts do undergo fairly extensive intercultural sensitisation that also reaches the level of attitudes and actions. Sippola and Hammar-Suutari (2006) say that the definition of an interculturally competent person, as described by some of the central interculturalists involved in this field, is only partly supported by their data.

The above statement does not reflect on the *process* of cultural adaptation, it is acknowledging an accomplished state. Another question that would need to be explored is also the question concerning the reasons why the persons are at a less-than-desired level of intercultural effectiveness or intercultural sensitivity. Is it a personal factor, or are there some additional, external, larger societal factors at work here? Sippola and Hammar-Suutari (2006) acknowledge and agree with the statements of some other researchers that sometimes the societal values and institutional limitations are a constraining factor to one's desire to diversify one's approach in order to provide better service to the culturally diverse clientele: In Finland, the strong emphasis on equality and democracy in the public service sector creates a pressure to treat every client similarly. This does not always necessary mean that non-ethnic Finns thus get an equal opportunity to have their matter taken care of in the best possible way, as there may be a need for some additional support to overcome communication problems. Similarity does not always spell equality measured as a just manner of handling things. This situation, combined with the fact that the public sector work is strictly governed from the top (laws, regulations), makes it challenging to accomplish changes in service procedures as suggested earlier by Pitkänen (2006), Pitkänen and Kouki (2002) and Matinheikki-Kokko (1997a).

These limitations are also acknowledged by some of the Finnish civil servants involved in this research through their work experience within the above mentioned framework. However, as individuals they have also learned to work through these constraints.

In line with Berry's (2002) thinking, the comments in the three surveys show evidence of culture shock as a growth-oriented positive learning experience, with resulting increases in intercultural sensitivity and as development towards multicultural identity. The way the Finnish civil servants most commonly talk about this learning process is to describe it as stress concerning the various factors involved in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. This fits in with the concepts of acculturation stress as propounded by Stringham (1990) and Berry (2002), for example. Especially with concerns as to

whether the customers have understood what has been going on in the communication situation, the central theme in the commenting by the Finnish civil servants is how the uncertainties of the intercultural communication situation cause them to strive even harder for successful social interaction in order to decrease the anxiety experienced in them. In fact, throughout the Finnish civil servants' comments, one of the most often repeated phrases is *'I try'*, as exemplified by the following quotes: *'I try and try to make the customer understand.' (SW345) I try not to get upset'. (SW313) 'I try not to make my own negative reactions too obviously evident to the customer.' (SK79)* Comments like these talk about the aspect of cultural learning in a similar vein to the anxiety uncertainty management theory propounded by Gudykunst (1995).

6.1 Developing intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity

The three surveys show that in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, the Finnish civil servants develop an understanding that the issues causing stress in them are not necessarily integrity issues but rather intercultural issues, and that this realisation is part and parcel of the cultural adaptation process in intercultural contact situations. This move away from threat to identity enables the civil servants to learn to cope with the accompanying stress and increase their intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. In the following comment the respondent is explicitly wondering whether this is an integrity issue (i.e. is the customer telling the truth), or is there something to be learned in the situation concerning a cultural difference in communication: *'In the interviews with political asylum seekers I have had difficulties in understanding those applicants whose responses even to the simplest of questions are very long and winding. Sometimes during the interviews I get the feeling of being unsure whether the applicant is trying to evade the questions in this manner, or is it just a culturally conditioned way of speaking (especially with people coming from the countries belonging to former Soviet Union.'(2DG43)*

The next two comments look at how the civil servants as individuals deal with the stress with the realisation that the customers' reactions are not directed against their person: *'I try to remain calm and keep cool and think that this not anything personal.'(2DG52)* This kind of comment clearly indicates a move away from the integrity issues to the arena of cultural learning, even though this process is still seen as being stressful, as shown in another comment addressing this same issue: *'After a situation where one has become a target of verbal abuse by the customer, one does not feel too good, even though one knows that it should not be taken too personally. My feeling is that the customers do not usually accuse the particular civil servant (me) but are generally peeved by the whole system.'(2DG51)* The above persons have moved away from the initial stage of culture shock, where due to a lack of proper understanding the intercultural conflict is often interpreted as a personal attack against one's integrity. This kind of cultural leaning enables one to search for alternative explanations to the situation beyond oneself or beyond the individual qualities, such as the integrity of the other party.

Cultural learning is also expressed by the following comment, where the civil servant's own role is seen in the larger context to which the customer's behaviour is directed and the situation is seen in a positive light as a challenge, with success as a desired reward: *'One cannot always influence the customer's situation, i.e. how the application is processed or the contents of the decision. However, the customer directs his feelings and reactions to the closest staff member regardless of what that staff member's role may be in his case. However, the customers' emotional reactions are more a challenge, rather than a problem in the work. It is challenges that I look for in my work. When I manage to get an upset customer into a good mood with good service and by just being myself, I experience a great sense of victory.'(SH52)*

The challenge of a more demanding communication situation and exposure to people from various cultural backgrounds offered by the multi-ethnic customer contact is also seen as positive enjoyment: *'(Multi-ethnic customer contacts) are often more challenging, so when one has managed to sort things out successfully, it gives a good feeling both to the civil servant and to the customer. Of course they are sometimes a bit stressful too.'(SO118)*

The respondents also recognise that the negative effects of stress experienced in one multi-ethnic customer contact are quite easily carried over to the next customer contacts, again displaying an attitude that is aware of the effects of the ongoing cultural adaptation process: *'Unfortunately there is no time (to deal with the stress), so on a bad day it may get transferred to the next customer.'(SX361)*

There are comments in the three surveys which show that the persons have already grown past the initial cultural adaptation stage and do not experience stress in multi-ethnic customer contacts anymore: Rather, a neutral attitude is adapted: *'Taking a neutral approach, I do not take things personally. However, I also try to defend my own position in an appropriate manner.'(2DAB263)*

The comments also display a deeper cultural adaptation and growth in the process of gaining intercultural competence. The ethnically non-Finnish customers' culturally-bound communication style is understood and accepted; it does not affect these respondents negatively, neither is it valued negatively: *'Personally I do not feel the multi-ethnic customer contacts to be stressful, even though the same customer calls weekly. I stay calm and want to treat the customer well.'(DX215)*

A critical look at one's own behaviour and the recognition for the need to gain new competencies in the multi-ethnic customer contacts are definitely signs of being on the cultural learning curve: *'It is good to observe one's own working methods. I need more instructions; I am the one who benefits the most from practicing the right choice of words and simulating difficult situations beforehand, it makes my daily work easier!'(DAD282)*

Some comments suggest that a useful strategy for cultural learning is to increase diversity in the workplace, displaying an attitude of openness to the culturally 'other, which is a prerequisite for in-depth cultural learning: *'KELA could hire some persons, who are able to speak either Somali or Russian and who understand cultural differences and would be better able to tell the customers, why it is that KELA needs certain things from the customers.'(SY382)* Others are still a bit

reticent to the idea, yet are considering the option: *'In one sense it would be good if our office had staff members representing various cultural backgrounds. I'm of two minds about it, whether it would be a good thing or not. I hear this system works well in Sweden.'(SY383)*

One basic prerequisite of cultural learning is the recognition that one needs to learn new things. This quote talks about the need for assistance in the skills level of cultural learning: *'What is needed is training and guidelines in how to deal with multi-ethnic customer contacts. For example, on how people of different nationalities carry on a conversation. Training in speech communication in general.'(2DAD283)* Cultural learning on the levels of attitudes and actions is also demonstrated: *'Civil servants should understand multiculturalism. First and foremost it is about personal attitude. The main thing is to be polite, to treat a customer in a way you would like to be treated yourself in a similar situation.'(2DAD289)*

6.2   Focusing on the multi-ethnic clientele with empathy

Cultural learning is only possible inasmuch as the person's familiar frames of reference and worldview have truly been challenged to undergo some change (Grove and Thorbjörn 1993). The comments from the three surveys show that cultural learning at this level is taking place among the Finnish civil servants. One way it shows itself is shifting the focus from oneself to the customer: Empathy and understanding are shown as the whole complexity of human life presents itself through the customers' cases: *'It is stressful to make a legally correct, yet humane decision in a case that is quite difficult from the human point of view'. (2DJ82)* *'The customer may plead for humane treatment and at those times I feel that we just 'coldly' have to refer to the law and regulations. In other words we have to subdue the customer. That feels really bad sometimes.'(SM104)* Encounters like this cause the civil servants to look at the office's administration system in a critical way: *'Often a customer has a justifiable need for information concerning his application, but I cannot say to him that he should start preparing himself for a negative decision. At other times the poorly argued administrative policies and interpretations cause me stress.'(2DJ74)*

The role of the civil servant vis-à-vis the customer is also discussed from the point of view of a power relationship: *'Sometimes it fees a bit awkward to be in the role of a civil servant.'(SM103)* *'Stress is caused by the fact that to some customers the KELA person is all-powerful, i.e. he can make all things work out if would only bother to make the effort. Also the false assumption that all the information concerning the customer is available in electronic form to the civil servant. This gives the customers the wrong impression that the only reason they are asked to bring some papers to the office is for the sake of bureaucracy.'(SM105)*

Sometimes the work role places certain constraints that hinder the person from openly taking the customers' point of view: *'Not being able to say that I totally agree with the customer. Having to act as the go-between and made responsible for the administrative inadequacies.'(2DL90)* Even though the civil servant may not personally feel stress about his /her role in the customer contact, empathy is shown to the customers' possible misgivings concerning the power relationship

between themselves and the civil servants: *'I have not experienced stress in connection with the power relationship between the civil servant and the customer, but a totally different matter is the stress that the customers may experience in relation to this.'(SM108)*

Taking the customers' point of view is also expressed in the comments that stress customer satisfaction and ensuring that the customers perceive the civil working with integrity: *'When one can help the customer in a real way and by doing that see that he is satisfied.'(2DO117) 'Good communication with the customers is that one gives a helpful, understanding and knowledgeable picture of the staff and the office as a whole.'(1DK53)*

It is also understood that due to intercultural communication clashes the customers have not understood what has been said and need to contact the office more frequently than the Finnish customers: *'The customer is left with an uncertain feeling and therefore just to be sure he calls again the next day at the very latest.'(SS256)*

Adaptive changes do not happen without some level of accompanying stress. The stress expressed in those comments that focus on the customers, is either vicariously experienced by the civil servants on behalf of the customers, or together with them. This is an indication of empathy, which is a mark of wider cultural understanding taking shape: *'To the foreigner it is a question of life-sized matters. The worry can be vast and ability to take care of one's matters in a foreign country may be limited. I understand their stress and frustration really well. I get even more stressed when I think what the negative decisions I have to make cause in people's lives.'(2DAA254)*

Many of the comments show that the Finnish civil servants are extremely concerned about being properly understood by the multi-ethnic clientele. In fact, this is the overriding theme in most of the comments in connection with all of the stress factors. In a sense, this is self-evident, something to be expected due to the nature of the task of customer service they are commenting on. Moreover, they are bound by law to give each customer an equal opportunity to get the correct and needed information. This general sentiment in the three surveys for which this research is based is exemplified by the following comment: *'The uncertainty of whether the customer understood correctly or not and whether one has been able to explain things clearly enough causes stress, because one always wants to give the correct advice to the customers.'(2DC21)*

It is significant that three things are clearly emphasized the most in the comments. They are:

1. The ethnically non-Finnish customers' point of view
2. The need for mutual understanding
3. The civil servants' attempts at cultural adaptation.

Statements concerning these three factors form the majority of comments in all of the three surveys upon which this survey is based. This is an indication that in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, the Finnish civil servants in the Directorate of Immigration and in the Social Insurance Institution do undergo adaptive changes that affect their working methods, in order to accommodate people of differing ethnic backgrounds. In the course of this, they are also taking a reflective look at their own culture and their views on cultural

differences. I will discuss the different ways this is expressed in more detail under the subheading: Towards mutual adaptation, critique and self-reflection.

6.3   Coping with stress in a difficult customer contact

As to the difficult customer contact itself, several comments express the view that it is important to remain calm oneself, even if the customer is upset. The following quote expresses this sentiment: *'I try to be over-calm, I take deep breaths and count to ten.'(1DL60) The* following methods were also quoted for keeping one's cool in a difficult customer contact situation: *'trying to take things calmly' (2DAB259), 'not taking negative feed-back personally' (SW313), not becoming provoked (SW335), calming oneself down physically with breathing exercises (1DL60), distancing oneself from the case momentarily (1DL61).* The distancing can be done by making a point of going to ask something about the case from another staff member, giving oneself time to calm down, or simply taking a breather, which is possible in a telephone contact: *'I say to the customer: 'One moment please', put the receiver on the table and catch my breath before I pick up the receiver again and continue with the discussion.'(IDL62)* Perking oneself up psychologically is one method employed: *'I try to sound as if I am in a good mood.'(1DL63)*

How the pent-up stress gets dealt with afterwards is another matter. Some people seem to be able to analyse the difficulties faced in the multi-ethnic customer contact situation on their own: *'I go over the situation in my head once more and try to analyse, why it is that the situation felt awkward or difficult for me and whether I possibly could have acted in some other way so that the situation would not have been so stressful. I try to learn from it for the next time.'(2DAC276)* Sometimes this kind of self-help takes other forms apart from the above type mental reflection on the cognitive level. The emotional stress is released in various ways: *'Walking briskly in the corridor,' 'I fill my cheeks with air and take a long sigh of 'phew' if need be. Taking a break for a few minutes,' 'Letting my thoughts 'rest'. (2DAC274-277)* At times the unburdening of the stress is done outside of working hours: *'Such extremely stressful situations, which are left prying on my mind even outside the working hours, I clear out of my mind through various activities, such as exercise and cleaning, which take my thoughts elsewhere.'(2DQAC280)* However, only very few respondents reported these kind of self-help methods, with the vast majority of the Finnish civil servants under study in this research recording the need for someone else's assistance in dealing with the stress of the multi-ethnic customer contacts. The fact remains that the stress of the multi-ethnic customer contacts needs to be dealt with in one way or another, otherwise it can stunt the process of cultural adaptation.

6.4   Peer support in cultural learning

In response to the question: How do you unload afterwards your stress from the multi-ethnic customer contacts, it is clear that most of the Finnish civil servants in the Directorate of Immigration and in the Social Insurance

Institution utilise their colleagues for releasing the stress and going over the difficulties experienced in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. This is expressed in such statements as: *'there are good 'listeners' in the office. (SX352) 'I kind of use my colleagues to filter my emotions.'(2DAC267)* Further comments reveal that some go over the difficulty with another staff member immediately after the customer contact if it is possible, while others deal with it some time later at an opportune moment. Some preferr to go over the stressful incident openly with a group of colleagues during coffee breaks for example, while others indicated a preference for sharing the incidence with one colleague only, some respondents defining the desired person even further as a 'close' colleague. The way this emotional unburdening is done is expressed by following terms: *'grumbling, letting one's annoyance out, ranting and raving, complaining, deploring, bemoaning, laughing, sighing, crying, using humour'*.

In trying to understand what really happened in the customer conduct, what went wrong and what the root of the problem was, the expertise of the more experienced staff members can be utilised to analyse the situation deeper, also on the cognitive level and not only as a means of 'letting off some steam' by unburdening their immediate emotions on the colleagues. The following comment is one example of many in a similar vein: *'I discuss the matter with the colleague with whom I handle the case (if there is someone else involved in the case besides myself), or alternatively have a debrief with another close colleague who is more experienced than I.'(2DAC275)*

Peer support is utilised as away of coping constructively with the culture shock type of stress experienced in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, making it work towards cultural adaptation. It puts the experience into the right perspective, allowing the people to cope with immediate stress and, apart from gaining the needed sympathy, it also allows for cognitive cultural learning from the more experienced colleagues.

This way of building professional competence is also about strengthening the group identity of the persons involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts. In this way it relates to the issue of integrity: By sharing their stress reactions and by analysing the situations that caused the stress in he multi-ethnic customer contacts together with their colleagues, the Finnish civil servants are able to address those issues that they consider to be affecting their professional and personal integrity in a negative way. Consequently, by drawing on the experience of others, they are able to reconstruct their professional identity towards a more multicultural way of conceptualisation and behaviour in intercultural communication situations with the ethnically non-Finnish customers.

The above scenario describes a learning situation with the assistance of the peer group consisting of one's colleagues. Also Taylor (1998, 1994b) seems to possibly allude to support and peer groups as important components in aiding the process of learning through crisis (as quoted by Salakka 2006:75), even though he does not specify the contextual prerequisites.

Breakwell (1986) however does have a more detailed account of the role of support networks in situations where an individual feels that one's identity is threatened, placing great importance on such networks in this context. In them

persons can share information and experiences. Such spontaneously formed groups operate on the participants' own terms and lessen the threat faced by the group member's identity structure. Sharing one's experiences and feelings in a safe environment lessens the felt threat and acts as a type of catharsis. In the other group members' more enlightened awareness the threat is explicable in a new way and the person gets instructions for dealing with the threat. These kinds of support networks operate in the border area between the threatened individuals' personal identity change and the community's social change. When the social position is redefined, its' effects on the identity change. The group offers a network of support structures, which strengthen the person's emotional capacities. In doing so, they make room for new achievements and commitment, as well as invaluable information concerning how to alter one's personal goals and working strategies. This affects an identity change that is directed towards continuity, uniqueness and self-respect (Breakwell 1986:132-135).

Ward et al. quote Adelman (1988) also discussing the benefits of co-national support systems in the form of information and emotional support in cross-cultural transition and adaptation, emphasizing the significance of 'comparable others' (original quotes), those who are undergoing similar experiences, who may offer knowledge-based resources and share experiences about coping with a new environment, as well as an arena for releasing frustration about the new circumstances and encouragement of an emotional catharsis. They also quote Church (1982) having presented similar views in saying that 'sub-cultural enclaves have a protective function of enhancing psychological security, self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Although the significant effects of social support have long been accepted in the stress and coping tradition in predicting positive psychological adjustment (Fontaine 1986, Adelman 1988), physical health (Schwarzer, Jerusalem and Hahn 1994) as well as mental health (Biegel, Naparstek and Khan 1980, Lin, Tazuma and Masuda 1979), the assessment of social support has not been treated much in the acculturation literature. One such treatment is the 40-item measuring instrument called Index of Social Support (ISS) developed by Yang and Clum (1995) in the context of Asian students in the USA. However, their analysis did not touch on the differential influences of quantity vs. quality measures of social support. Another social support scale, based on research with international students and business people in Singapore has been developed by Ong (2000). His scale, which stresses the availability of social support in various areas, identifies two distinct factors, socio-emotional and instrumental support in the psychometric analyses. The correlates and sources of social support, the stress-reducing influences of the structural versus functional components of such support and the relevance of the perceived availability versus the actual use of social support need to be looked at more systematically in future research (Ward et al. 2003:89).

The Finnish civil servants' behaviour in this context support Beakwell's (1986) and Ong's (2000) ideas. In both offices under study in this research, other colleagues also involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts form a spontaneous

support network giving an individual the kind of valuable information concerning the orientation of one's professional identity and working strategies that Breakwell (1986) talks about, and the kind of socio-emotional support and its availability that Ong's (2000) psychometric analysis measures. Collegial support is used by the Finnish civil servants as the main means of reducing the psychological stress experienced in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. This collegial support network not only offers emotional support but also assists a person to get new understanding. Concerning the reasons for the emotional upset, it helps one to cope and share information on successful intercultural communication strategies. Its constant availability guarantees a ready and tailored access to such support in times of need. An individual is also able to gain various benefits of such support, when it takes communal form in the coffee break discussions, for example, which are frequently utilized for debriefing the customer contact situations, as attested by the comments in the surveys. Thus the collegial peer support network can have an important role in developing intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity in an informal learning context, enhancing the intercultural effectiveness of the individual civil servants considerably.

Social support systems can also impede culture learning and willingness to engage with host society, and Adelman (1988) warns against a 'contagion effect' (original quotes), whereby 'highly interdependent, stressed and threatened individuals who remain insulated, may be prevented from learning functional problem-solving skills, and that continual commiseration among those experiencing stress may place the group members at risk by fostering a 'sinking ship' (original quotes) (Ward et al. 2003:86). Also according to Breakwell (1986), even though support networks can give a person a new understanding concerning one's position and new tools to work with, it can also mean that the freedom of choice in how to react is narrowed down. Yet one may not even wish for it in a threatening situation, where preserving one's self-esteem is seen to be the most pressing concern, worth sacrificing a measure of one's independence for.

The relationship between social interaction with one's own cultural group and intercultural adaptation can thus unfold in either a harmful or a helpful direction, depending on the nature of individual supporters and their group's dynamics (Ward et al. 2003:87). This conclusion can also be drawn for the host culture adaptees' cultural learning and intercultural adaptation process. Apart from the apparent positive effects already discussed above, the possibility remains that peer group members with a limited attainment in, and understanding of, cultural adaptation are not able to assist a person to reach a deeper level of cultural learning, but instead hold a person back at the same level where they are at themselves, repeating the cycle of stress and frustration typical of a prolonged culture shock. This in turn can lead to negative attitudes with a consequent unwillingness to adapt culturally and thus to a missed opportunity for developing intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity.

6.5   Hindrances to cultural learning

There are indications of differing attitudes towards cultural learning amongst the Finnish civil servants who took part in the three surveys. As for the distribution between the types of comments indicating stress as being either an accompanying reaction to ongoing cultural adaptation process, or a sign of being left at the initial stages of cultural adaptation and displaying certain hindrances and resistance to cultural learning, the scales weigh heavily in favour of cultural adaptation.

One major issue that slows down or hinders the process of cultural learning amongst the Finnish civil servants in the few instances recorded in this research is the felt lack of validation of their experiences as the host culture adaptee. Another is their limited awareness concerning the process of cultural adaptation and intercultural matters in general.

Throughout the three surveys, some of the Finnish civil servants express the feeling that their experiences in the multi-ethnic customer contacts are not validated. Let us now look at some of the validation issues which are felt to have an adverse effect on the desire for cultural adaptation on the part of the Finnish civil servants.

The host culture members experience just as strong a culture shock as the other party when things are done contrary to what they hold to be proper. The following comment is a prototypical example of a culture-shock reaction to a difference in communication style. The Finnish way of dealing with government officials does not generally speaking include using the civil servant's first name. Violation of this principle, or even the use of the more informal way of address by the second person singular pronoun instead of the more polite and formal second person plural is considered to be bad form: *'It is a special feature of certain nationalities that they address a stranger like a civil servant with the informal second person singular pronoun 'sinä' or by the first name. That is really unpleasant (pushy). (2DR156)*

Seeing the customer's behaviour as 'pushy' can be a cultural misinterpretation and needs to be recognised as such, if that is the case. Apart from gaining the cultural knowledge concerning why customers from certain cultures often instinctively want to address the civil servants with their first name, the culture shock experience itself needs to be validated. There needs to be understanding that such misinterpretations and the accompanying strong reactions are often part and parcel of the cultural adaptation process for both parties, and that they are not to be equated with attitudes. Validation of the culture shock experience allows a person to move away from seeing the intercultural conflict situation as an unpleasant experience, as expressed by the above quote, and take it as a cultural learning issue.

Intercultural communication clashes can cause just as great a stress to the host culture members than they do to the customers. However, due to their role as a civil servant they are not able to express freely the frustration or other negative feelings, which are part and parcel of the culture shock experience. The

multi-ethnic clientele, on the other hand, can engage in this process more openly, even in the course of the customer contacts: '*(Multi-ethnic customer contacts cause) equal stress for both, but in principle the civil servant does not have the right to show it as clearly as the customer!'(2DAA255)* The civil servants, on the other hand, have to try and keep their cool and express emotional upheaval only after the customer contact, as is evidenced by the earlier discussion on how the stress is handled mainly through peer support.

One thing that causes Finnish civil servants continual stress in their multi-ethnic customer contacts is the fact that customers of foreign extraction often have a felt need to contact the government office concerning their particular case more often than a Finnish customer would: '*Tired and frustrated feeling, when one has tried to explain something to a customer, who called about the same thing for the tenth time already.'(2DR159)*

6.5.1 "We, too, feel hurt": mutual stress and responsibility in adapting

Some comments express the view that responsibility for the success of the multi-ethnic customer contacts is seen to fall mainly on the civil servants' shoulders. The customers are not always aware of how their own cultures affect the way they behave with the Finnish civil servants, who are then left with the task of maintaining the communication in the midst of an intercultural conflict situation*: 'I wish that in the public forum and in the immigrant population's own forums THEY too would be told how some of them behave really rudely towards us. We, too, feel hurt by it. Sometimes the customers in their frustration blindly accuse the civil servants of racism, even though the staff members in question actually have children who are ethnically half Finnish and half African or Asian. That is totally crazy!'(2DAD291)*

The following comment expresses the feeling that the responsibility seems to be laid rather one-sidedly only on the civil servants' shoulder. Of course they as members of the host culture and in their particular role as the civil servants do have the responsibility of helping to integrate the 'newcomers', so in this sense they do have the greater responsibility of the two in this matter. This quote however, indicates the expectation of a more fair division of this responsibility: '*Concepts concerning what constitutes a family, how to deal with the authorities, gender relationships and things like that are sometimes problematic and the issues need to be recognised by both parties. Sometimes it feels that only I as a civil servant have the responsibility to understand the differences of the ethnic non-Finns and that this responsibility is not equally extended to both parties in the multi-ethnic customer contacts.'(2DF41)* Some of the things that cause stress in this connection are expressed by the following phrases: '*Laying guilt on the civil servant, gender discrimination (directed at the civil servants), men taking care of the affairs on behalf of their wives, ordering around by the customers.'(2DJ69) 'Do not listen to my advice, contradict me, the customer venting his frustration on me.'(2DP150)*

At times the customers' lack of adaptation is perceived as a negative attitude, which in turn affects the civil servants' reactions: '*Sometimes the person does not even believe the civil servant, but wants to get things done in his own way and*

gets several people to try and persuade us of his point of view.' The person's attitude and behaviour is superior and hostile.'(SC22) 'A strong contempt for the Finns and Westerners shines through, and they do not hide it.'(2DR156) 'Occasionally the customer's superior and nasty attitude.'(SQ169)

In the process of cultural learning, integrity issues are also linked with attitudes towards cultural learning. If one party perceives that the other is questioning their integrity and or attacking their integrity, they may be less willing to adapt culturally to accommodate the other. In answer to the question: 'Who experiences more stress, the civil servant or the customer?' The following reply displays the feeling of unfairness with a felt bias against the civil servants: *'This is an unfair question! In my opinion the Finnish civil servants definitely strive to serve the customers in such a way that it would not cause them stress, because of course we understand, that they are in a country that is foreign to them and already for that reason may feel it difficult to take care of their affairs. However, I feel I cannot take an overly empathetic view of the poor foreigners, because so many of them behave in such bad manner in the customer contacts. In this respect I think selfishly about the civil servant's point of view. Therefore, I answer that the difficulties in communicating with the customers stress the civil servant more.'(2DAA257)*

For the sake of fairness, the Finnish customers' ability to cause stress on the account of their improper behaviour and attitude is also mentioned by some respondents. *'Finns are able to behave at least as badly as foreigners and with them it can not be a question of cultural differences.'(2DT165) 'Often the new Finnish husbands (the older ones) who have married a young foreign girl are the most disgusting in their use of language.'(2DT167) 'The Finnish spouses are worse than the foreigners.'(2DT168)*

One has to bear in mind that in connection with those respondents who have only recently come into this line of work, comments displaying signs of being in the throes of culture shock and only in the initial stages of cultural adaptation are to be expected. As time goes by and they gain more experience, this kind of reaction may subside and give way to interculturally more adjusted way of dealing with the multi-ethnic customer contacts, as expressed in the quote: *Of course, various kinds of situations in the customer service cause all kinds of reactions in me. However, I do not feel stress because of them anymore, neither do I take the incidents personally anymore. I do my best and that has to be enough.'(SM80)* When one looks at the distribution of working years within KELA amongst the respondents, with almost half of them having only 1–3 years working experience in the multi-ethnic customer contacts with their present employer, it is significant that the number of comments indicating cultural maladaptation and being left at the initial stages of cultural adaptation is marginal in comparison to the majority of comments in the three surveys indicating more advanced levels of cultural adaptation.

6.5.2 Inflexible view on cultural adaptation as a one-way process

It needs to be reiterated that comments in the surveys portraying cultural inflexibility or unwillingness for cultural adaptation are marginal. However, the

feeling of the onus on the understanding being placed more on the civil servants' shoulders and the felt lack of validation of their experiences is much more widely expressed. The following comment expresses a strong attitude of: *'When in Rome, do as the Romans do'*, implying that the cultural adaptation process should be the concern of the newcomers only: *'I have a lot to say concerning this matter. The customers seem to try and take care of their things here in the same manner than they do in their home countries, and I am greatly surprised why they do not understand that one has to behave in a different manner in Finland. After all, the customer is now in Finland and he must at least understand that Finland is different from his home country and that the rules of his home country do not necessarily apply here. As a matter of fact, this is the fact that causes me most stress in the customer contacts with non-ethnic Finns. And once again I greatly wonder why it should be our job to try and understand all these people coming from different cultures, who have come, or are wanting to come, to Finland. Why don't they adjust their behaviour to our way of doing things? How could we even begin to have the capabilities to try and adjust our behaviour always according to the culture of every customer's home country?'(2DC40)*

Another respondent voiced a similar opinion in a more succinct manner, adding the need for the newcomers to learn the language of the new country of residence: *'Success in multi-ethnic customer contacts is largely to do with the customers themselves and their habits and how they have adjusted to the Finnish culture and their ability in Finnish.'(SY391)*

These views express only half of the picture as I see it. The newcomers' cultural adaptation will be greatly helped and enhanced, if the host culture adaptees assist them in this process. While doing so, the host culture adaptees simultaneously get an opportunity for mutual cultural learning. At times this cultural change of one's own identity and behaviour, while integrating newcomers to one's own culture in the course of one's job, may get started in a subtle manner, almost as a side product, which gradually draws one in, rather than as a concentrated, conscious effort.

6.5.3   Inability to discuss the 'real issues'

The comments in the three surveys also show that lack of intercultural awareness and competence can express itself as psychological stress, resulting in fear and hesitation about taking up the matters they feel are the 'real' issues behind the conflict. Thus an opportunity for mutual critique and deeper mutual cultural adaptation is lost.

There are different opinions as to what are the 'real' issues that are difficult to talk about. They can be ethical issues, such as bringing up issues concerning fairness: *'I think I am quite tolerant and I understand that there are cultural differences, but I still may get irritated during a customer contact by some things that I consider to be unfair. However, I don't think that I have ever let it show on the outside, not to mention that I would have given my honest opinion about it to the customer.'(SJ73)* Also, issues of credibility are mentioned in the comments below as two things that are difficult to handle openly with the customers. Sometimes

these issues can be unconsciously intertwined with misunderstandings due to cultural differences in communication: *'(Difficult to handle) possible cheating or lying. How can one know that there is an attempt at cheating, and how to try and be diplomatic if one notices that such things are going on, so that one does not totally ruin the interactive contact with the customer.'(2DP139)* *'How to keep calm when the customer is clearly lying. (For ex. Mother/father died already the fourth time)'* *(2DX210)*

At other times the 'real' issue is the parameters of the Finnish administrative systems, exemplifying Young's (1996) demands that context and communicative task ought to be taken into account more to give adequate intercultural tools to fit particular types of situations. Confidentiality is mentioned in two different ways as one such contextual issue in the comments: *'The most tiresome thing about the customer contacts is the confidentiality of some matters, which makes it sometimes difficult to know which things can be told to the customer. This causes frustration in the customer, when one is unable to give him an exhaustive answer, as one can not tell him all that one otherwise could.'(2DJ66)*

Language problems coupled with an 'unofficial' way of handling them by the customer can also prevent the civil servant from talking about the real issue in order to safeguard confidentiality, which is a central concept in the Finnish administrative system*: 'Quite often, if the customer does not know any of the languages commonly used in Finland (Finnish, Swedish, English), he brings along a friend to interpret. Seldom is there an official interpreter involved. This can be problematic for confidentiality.'(SF44)*

One thing the Finnish civil servants feel very keenly is that bringing up anything that is negative from the customers' point of view is particularly challenging, for fear of unwarranted negative feedback. These kinds of issues can be some inconsistency detected in the customer's account of certain facts, an impeding negative decision on the customer's case, or the customers possibly reacting negatively to the differences of Finnish administrative system compared to what they are used to with their own countries' authorities: *'(Difficult) having to tell negative things to the customers, when one easily gets accused of being a racist.'(SQ168)* The Finnish civil servants often realise that these are sensitive and important matters to the customers too, causing them to overreact easily, yet the desire to avoid negative feed back, such as being accusedof racisim, hinders them at times from taking up some issues with the clientele they otherwise would. Acts or attitudes of real racism, either on an individual or an institutional level, are of course different matters altogether, and always need to be taken seriously.

7 Communication vista

The area of communication generated the largest number of comments out of the three areas covered, expressing an overriding, constant and pressing concern as to whether the clientele has really understood what the civil servants

have said. In fact, in all of the three survey reports, this was the main concern of the Finnish civil servants expressed in countless comments of the following nature: *'Fear concerning things like: Did I get through to the customer? Did I understand correctly? Uncertainty concerning whether the customer understands.'(SR183)* These comments point to the fact also expressed in many comments that the possibility of a misunderstanding is much greater in multi-ethnic customer contacts than it is with the Finnish customers. These sentiments echo the observations made by Smith and Bond (1998:238) and Chen (1995). They all state that the less common ground the interactans share, the more prominent is the constant activity of grounding in the form of 'on-line affirmation' of the kind described by the above quote for example. The grounding process is engaged in to make sure all parties have reached the same point of understanding in their communicative exchange.

Apart from the very strong expression 'fear' used in connection with the language concerns, expressions such as *'worried feeling, feeling of helplessness, uncertainty and stress'* are repeatedly employed in the comments. This reflects the reality of the multi-ethnic customer contacts of the Finnish civil servants: stress experienced in them is understandably largely centred around the task at hand, i.e. effective communication with the customer, with the integrity issues and cultural learning issues coming up as a consequence of the intercultural communication situation. The respondents realise the different nature of the multi-ethnic customer contact situation in comparison to the one carried out with a customer who is an ethnic Finn with an understanding of the Finnish administrative system and the Finnish communication style:

'Yes, the feeling is different after a multi-ethnic customer contact. A phone call in a foreign language gets the adrenaline going and afterwards one is left with the feeling: I wonder if everything went ok and the matter was understood by the customer.'(2DR157)

7.1 Limited language ability

Language abilities were one of the main concerns expressed in connection with the comments concerning communication. The civil servants stress the poor language ability, either that of their own or their customers', thus recognizing the importance of good ability to communicate in a language shared by both parties. In case of limited language abilities, for example where the partners in the speech exchange speak different mother tongues, speech accommodation is called for, i.e. shifting of one's speech patterns, such as accent, dialect, discourse style, choice and tempo of wording etc. towards those of one's counterpart in the interactive situation. The question is who will accommodate whom, so that they can communicate effectively? This negotiation can be a socially delicate task for both participants, and may also be interpreted in differing manner, either negatively or positively, by other host-culture members present in the situation (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977, Bond 1985, Bond and Cheung 1984).

In their multi-ethnic customer contacts the Finnish civil servants have the responsibility to ensure understanding to the best of their abilities, making

them motivated to engage in speech accommodation, coupled with grounding talk and behaviour which is evidenced by the many comments to that effect, exemplified by the following quote: '*In a telephone contact, speech and use of language need to be on an exceptionally demanding level, as one can not check from the expressions whether one gets understood, and that makes one feel a bit tense.*'(SR203) These interpretability strategies (Coupland et al. 1988) have the aim of making their speech easier to understand, but at the same time it means that they must adopt a greater 'adressee focus' (Gallois et al. 1988) than is normal, which shifts attention from the task at hand to the communication process itself. This means that there may actually be less redundancy of content in these vulnerable intercultural exchanges than in the less demanding intracultural conversations (Li 1994), if one is not careful to ensure this aspect also.

Apart from the concern of making themselves understood as much as possible, the other major concern is to be assured that the customers really have understood. In this connection, second language users at times face an issue of impression management, in particular in situations where they regard themselves as being of lower status in the relationship (Li 1994), such as a customer facing the government bureaucracy. This may lead to inaccurate communication if language uncertainties produced by persons considered to be of higher status go unchallenged, because the person is reluctant to appear incompetent by asking for clarifications. In such an intercultural exchange, there is in fact less grounding behaviour by the customers to clarify the communication, even though it would be much needed to ensure effective communication, a fact which is mentioned in the civil servants' comments in this research: '*Sometimes the customer just keeps nodding his head, even though one can see that he did not understand, for example, if he can not himself answer any questions concerning the things that were just discussed with him, or ask questions on how he should proceed with the matter.*'(SQ164)

All of these considerations mean that the cross-cultural encounter may be equally demanding for the native language speaker as it is for the second language speaker, though for different reasons. Both must pay more attention than normal to the vehicle of communication, with the attendant danger that negative stereotypes of one another's group will be confirmed (Smith and Bond 1998:249).

As already noted, in the joint analysis of the DOI and KELA responses to the multiple choice questions in the surveys, the civil servants' ability in foreign languages received the largest sum total of various levels of stress in connection with the telephone contacts, the second highest stress score in the face-to-face contacts and the highest scores of stressfulness for both modes of customer contact in connection with the 'Every time stressful' option. One respondent spoke for others in expressing this opinion: '*Many people working in the customer service are in a total panic when a customer does not speak Finnish or Swedish. The customer only gets frustrated when he cannot make himself understood or if he himself does not understand what is going on.*'(SU311)

If one does not have to use a foreign language in the course of one's daily duties, but only occasionally, the stress of not being able to communicate in

one's own mother tongue can be felt acutely: '*Very seldom do I use any other language besides Finnish. Therefore, the surprise of it is always a bit stressful, when one is not prepared for the situation and is not oriented to speaking a foreign language right then. I get the feeling of " What on earth shall I say, how shall I say it, what should I say next!'(E4/2DE35)* Stress is also felt about the service not being on an adequate level because of limited language abilities: '*The stressful feeling that one does not master the language well enough. One can not find the right words and service to the customer is not as good as could be.'(2DI61)*

Particularly in dealings with a native speaker of some foreign language, the civil servants are quite worried about how correct their use of that language is: '*Using Swedish is stressful every time. Generally however I stress a lot more about speaking with a customer whose mother tongue is Swedish than what I do for example with a Swedish speaking Vietnamese customer. The reason, at least in my case, is that with the native speaker I keep wondering all the time whether I speak grammatically correct Swedish or not, while with the latter mentioned customers the grammar does not matter to me, as long as the matter gets understood.'(SE31)*

For the KELA personnel involved in the research, Swedish causes the greatest level of stress. Twenty-two persons out of the total of fifty-eight said that using Swedish in customer contacts causes them stress, with nine of them feeling it every time, two persons often and seven persons occasionally. '*No stress with English, but when an 85 year old economist, Mr. Gustafsson introduces himself in Swedish, I break out in awful sweat and my heart starts pounding.'(SE36)* Four people did not specify the level of stress they feel, except for simply noting that: '*Swedish is stressful!' (for ex. SE28)* English caused stress for twenty-five respondents out the total of fifty-eight, which numerically is slightly more than the respective figure for stress caused by Swedish. However, the level of stress in connection with English is lower; sixteen persons, more than half of those who felt the stress, recorded feeling stressed about it only occasionally, four person often and no-one felt it every time. As with Swedish, a couple of respondents did not specify the level of stress in connection with the English language, except for naming it as a cause of stress in their customer contacts with ethnic non-Finns.

Likewise with the DOI respondents, Swedish causes a more intense stress than English. Only a few persons commented that English causes stress occasionally, while most respondents stated that they get by with English quite well and only have stress when having to use some other foreign language, in which they only have limited ability.

For the KELA staff involved in this research, the stress in customer contacts caused by the civil servants' limited language ability does not necessarily correlate with the number of years the person has worked for KELA. The results show that a person with over 20 years working experience may still feel as much stress because of it as someone who only has a few years work experience in multi-ethnic customer contacts with KELA. The reverse is also true. Those who replied that they did not feel any stress due to their ability in foreign languages included both those who only had a very short work experience with KELA, as well as those who had a long work history with this

institution. One explaining factor could be educational background. Those with less education have had less chance to develop adequate language ability.

The special terminology of KELA and DOI adds to the language problems: *'Official matters and terms, such as requests for additional information, are really difficult to explain in an understandable manner, if the other party's language ability is poor. One has to try and find an easier expression or an alternative way of explaining it.'(2DH56)* Language difficulties can result in a cycle of mutual stress: *'The fact that the customer does not speak Finnish very well, mostly causes greatest stress to the customer. He may then get upset and become aggressive. This in turn causes stress to me.' (2DH61)* In the final question of the survey, concerning measures needed for improving the professional competence of the civil servants in their multi-ethnic customer contacts, particularly the KELA respondents requested tailored and targeted language courses arranged by the employer.

Only one comment in the three surveys mentions the role of the interpreter, even though interpreters are utilised, particularly in the KELA context and in the asylum interviews within the Directorate of Immigration.[70] *'If there is an incompetent interpreter in the interview, or if there are problems with 'understanding in general in other types of situations.'(2DP141)*

The customers' language ability ranked lower all in all, being the fifth most stressful factor in connection with the telephone contacts and the fourth most stressful factor in connection with the face-to-face contacts. However, in connection with the option 'Occasionally stressful' this factor came out as the most stressful one in both modes of customer contact, and the customers' poor language ability affecting the effectiveness of the communication received quite a number of comments: *'Sometimes situations arise where the customer speaks and understands Finnish quite well in his own opinion, yet it is obvious that he clearly does not understand what the civil servant is trying to tell him.'(2DI56)* The inability to speak Finnish despite a long residence in the country is also wondered at: *'I am also quite surprised that many of the middle-aged Somali women who have lived in Finland for a long time already, do not speak any Finnish.'(SU272)*

Due to the poor language ability the customers sometimes bring a linguistically more capable child to speak on their behalf. This is stressful to the Finnish civil servants. The use of one's own child as an interpreter may be resorted to because there is a lack of availability of professional interpreters, or because the customer thinks that the child can manage well with the language and does not want to go through the trouble of booking an official interpreter: *'Sometimes in face-to-face customer contacts a child may act as an interpreter for his parent. Yet, how do I explain to a child about the principles of granting certain social benefits so that he can in turn explain them properly to his parents.'(SG45)*

The customer's limited language ability is also empathised with and the speech mode accommodated accordingly to ensure understanding: *'I have not noticed that the customers' poor ability in Finnish is a cause of stress for me, but for the*

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[70]   One explanation is that the surveys did not include a question concerning the use of interpreters. This area was deliberately left outside the scope of this research, as the intention was to concentrate on the Finnish civil servants.

customers themselves it most certainly is so. In a situation like that I usually try to repeat in between the customer's utterances the things he has said in a way that I have understood him to mean, I sort of recap the things he has said. I feel that in this way I work together with the customer in order for us to reach a mutual agreement concerning the contents of what he is saying.'(2DI59)

7.2   Cultural differences in verbal and non-verbal communication style

In addition to cultural interpretation of emotions already looked at in connection with integrity issues, there are various other ways in which the communication styles between the Finnish civil servants and those of their multi-ethnic clientele can differ, causing stress. The phrase 'communication style' in this context includes both the actual linguistic communication, i.e. the culturally bound verbal and non-verbal communication, as well the wider institutional context of how communication is expected to be handled with the authorities.

The dissatisfaction felt in the situations when communication does not proceed well is expressed by such phrases as *'frustrated, confused state of mind,* *'uncertain feeling, doubt, tiresome.'* The one concern, which comes out repeatedly in the comments throughout the different parts of the surveys is being unsure about how the communication situation actually went.

The Finnish way of communicating with the administrative authorities is described as a 'matter-of-fact' style, with one person talking at a time while the other one listens, and interlocking speech, i.e. talking at the same with the other person is interpreted as interrupting. A clash with this preferred, normative style of communication with an ensuing intercultural misunderstanding can be read into this quote, where the customer's negotiation about possible options, or perhaps an attempt at persuading the civil servant towards a particular course of action is interpreted as answering back to, and interrupting the civil servant: *'It is really annoying when someone calls in order to ask advice, such as 'how does one apply for a permit to'… or, 'what should I do in this situation', yet they do not listen to my advice but instead begin to contradict me.'(2DJ71)*

Clashes in non-verbal communication can also be misconstrued as having certain motives which may not be intended by the customer, with the misunderstanding caused by the civil servants feeling confused when their own way of communicating does not seem to work and there are problems with communication: *'Direct contact is more stressful in the sense that one can not distance oneself from a (difficult) situation as easily, but it may get prolonged even for quite a long while - for example a long silence, during which the customer does not say anything, but just keeps staring at the civil servant in an effort to try to get the civil servant confused, or to make the civil servant give up a negative attitude and change it to be more favourable towards the customer.'(2DY232)*

The Finnish civil servants also express being aware of cultural differences in communication. They try to keep track of how it influences a particular customer and acknowledge that accommodating a more time-demanding style can take quite a lot of mental effort: *'The Finnish style of communication is to state things directly, and preferably just once. In many other cultures, however, people only come to*

the main fact after many twists and turns in the story and the same thing is repeated several times. In the midst of a busy customer contact session this is nerve-racking, even though one knows that this way of talking is part of the customer's cultural way of expression.'(2DF42a) It is also realised that culture affects how free people are able to reveal whether they have understood or not what is going on in the communication situation: *'Vietnamese – the over-friendliness connected to their culture: smiling – saying thank you – even though they do not understand.' (SU284)*

The comments also give evidence of the Finnish civil servants having developed sensitivity towards specific cultural ways of communication. They have learned to interpret the styles of speech by the customers that are different from the Finnish way of communicating with government officials, and know when they are expected to show a different code of politeness than that which they use with the Finnish customers. *'One has to learn to 'read' different messages from the customer's behaviour according to his cultural background. One must remember that the tone of voice and mode of speech differs between cultures, and behaviour can vary a lot too. In some cultures it is customary to discuss matters in a more 'aggressive' manner, while yet in other cultures one has to be almost overly polite according to Finnish standards. The civil servant needs to be aware of the communicational differences between various countries.'(SJ76)*

7.3   Preference for face-to-face contacts

Clear preference for face-to-face contacts, instead of relying on telephone contacts to sort the matter out, is one difference in communication styles that causes stress to the Finnish civil servants: *'Often it is thought that by bothering to come to the office in person one can help the application to be handled faster.'(2DL87)* Also the way the face-to-face contacts are handled by customers representing collective-style cultures, in contrast to the individualistic approach adopted in Finland, is seen as disturbing and stressful at times, when several persons may accompany the customer to the office for moral support: *'In the face-to-face contacts the foreign customer is seldom alone. When he is accompanied by a large crowd, the customer service situation gets more difficult.'(SL84)*

7.4   Accommodative communication

In connection with making sure that the customers understand what is being said, the comments included the following phrases: 'speaking as simply as possible, repeat and recap what is being said by the customer, using an informal style, extra clear pronunciation, slow tempo of speech, using alternative expressions, listening, checking for understanding after each detail and more customer time, keeping on trying to take care of the matter.' The following quote by a KELA staff member captures the customer-oriented approach behind the adaptive mode of speech: *'Clear way of speaking, does not use 'KELA language'. Gives a friendly impression, serves calmly by letting the customer understand that one has not interrupted anything he wants to say.'(SS230)*

Organisational-level promotion of the use of languages other than the two official language of Finland to give the information to the customers in written form, as well the use of illustrations, when language fails, are ways in which to accommodate the language barrier: *'The staff who take care of international matters need different kinds of materials to assist them in their work with multi-ethnic customers; lists of professional terminology and leaflets with diagrams as illustrations in the English language concerning maternity benefits, parental benefits and paternity benefits for example. I personally have found drawing such illustrations a great help with ethnically non-Finnish customers.'(SY387)*

Apart from adapting linguistically (both verbal and non-verbal behaviour), the Finnish civil servants also try other ways to show by their behaviour in the multi-ethnic customer contacts that they have the customers' interest at heart. Empathy in general is seen to work well: *'I let the customer understand, that I am aware of his situation. A smile goes a long way in direct contacts with customers.'(2DY226)* The next quote shows how one attempts to build a relationship of trust in face-to-face contracts: *'I listen, look the customer in the eye and try to make it known to him that I care about his 'complaint' and promise to forward his message to the appropriate instances.'(2DAB260)* In the telephone contacts, a similar commitment to the customer is expressed by this comment: *'(If difficulties on the phone), I ask the customer to come to the office to get personal service, or agreeing with the customer that I will call him after the matter is being sorted out or we agree that someone else, who is better able to speak on the phone, will call about the matter.'(SS232)*

At times in the multi-ethnic customer contacts the civil servants are faced with upset customers. The reasons for this can be various, such as justified anger at unfair treatment or intercultural communication clashes due to lack of cultural awareness of either or both parties for example. As to the methods for calming down upset customers, the respondents recorded using the such strategies as expressing sympathy towards the customer's case, non-judgmental attitude, perseverance, creating a reassuring atmosphere and an unhurried feeling, using calming gestures and trying to read the customers' non-verbal clues, patient way of handling things, being friendly and practical, listening and humour.

One strategy of calming an upset customer is to stay calm oneself and direct the situation away from the emotional outburst into talking about the facts of the matter: *'I try to calm the situation down by talking and remaining calm myself. I talk clearly and ask some simple questions concerning some of the details of the customer's case. I try and create a mutual feeling that we understand one another.'(SW314)*

It is also realised that to alleviate the tension it is important to connect with the customer as a person: *'I try to create a calm atmosphere and form a contact with the person and try to create an unhurried feeling.'(SW330)* This can mean including positive emotions into the situation: *'On the other hand, one can also smile and laugh with the customers; it relaxes the atmosphere.'(2DAB258)*

The comments also state that if the customer has a negative attitude to start with, over the phone it is more difficult to create a pleasant atmosphere, which is conductive for carrying out a good discussion, since one does not see

the customer. In face-to-face contacts it seems to be easier, when one can have a great influence on the atmosphere with gestures and expressions.

According to the respondents, over the phone one often gets the feeling of: *'I wonder if this thing became clear to the customer or not,'(SK81)* as one has to feel around the situation based on voice only. In direct customer contacts the matter gets taken care of in more depth, and the immediate feedback from the customer can be seen right away. In both modes of customer contacts, however, the civil servants try to ensure that the upset customer is satisfied in the end, as expressed by this reply: *'I strive to serve the customer so that he leaves in a good mood.'(SR200)*

7.5 Conscious reflection on the link between language and culture

The confusion caused by intercultural clashes in the communication situation can also open the possibility of reflecting and reshaping one's thinking about culture's effect on communication. The person in the following comment, which has already been quoted in full in connection with the integrity issue, is reflecting on the feelings of uncertainty concerning her interpretations of the customer's style of communication, realizing that it could be a matter of cultural difference at work, to which she has to be open: *'…I have had difficulties in understanding those applicants whose responses even to the simplest of questions are very long and winding … is (the applicant) trying to evade the questions…(or) is his way of answering them a culturally conditioned way of speaking?'(2DG43)*

The respondent below reflects in a holistic way on how the multi-ethnic customer contacts affect Finnish civil servants. Often one needs to work at the multi-ethnic customer contacts really hard with intercultural issues and language issues in order to iron out the cause of possible confusion. The end part of this response is also a comment on the whole process; it shows how a successful negotiation of the initial intercultural confusion by expending the extra energy of working out the differences gives the person a really positive experience of having gained much in professional competence. This is moving from the state of confusion into a successful reshaping of professional identity in action: *'Multi-ethnic customer contacts often demand much more energy, as things need wider investigation and explanation. In addition, using a foreign language brings an added complication also to myself. Often the feeling of success is also much greater in them.'(2DQ154)*

8 Towards mutual adaptation, critique and self-reflection

So far the discussion in this chapter has focused on the *contents* of cultural adaptation by looking at the three vistas of cultural adaptation of the Finnish civil servants in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. The different components

within 'Integrity issues', 'Cultural learning' and 'Communication concerns' have been discussed.

I now turn to the *means* by which I interpret the process of cultural adaptation taking place. I draw here on Young (1996), whose two central concepts in this respect are mutual adaptation and mutual critique. To these, I add mutual self-reflection. This can also be seen as belonging to the two first-mentioned spheres, but mutual adaptation and critique can also take place without the self-reflective part. To me, it adds the in-depth character to the process by enabling one to bring into the discussion the identity perspective, in the form of identity change, in a more definite manner. This is in line with the way I conceptualise and define the process of developing into critical pragmatic intercultural professional having two components, intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. As for the means of obtaining this developmental goal, I see that mutual adaptation and critique touch more on the intercultural effectiveness as the communicative aspect in this process, expressed in skills and behaviour. Mutual self-reflection on the other hand has more to do with intercultural sensitivity, expressed as new interculturally sensitised awareness and attitudes.

However, before we can truly talk about such holistic understanding of the intercultural relations in the context of intercultural theory, where the practical intercultural communication situations can be approached and analysed, more knowledge about host culture adaptation is needed. This research has concentrated solely on this aspect. The other party's point of view that of the non-Finnish clientele, has deliberately been left out. It only shows up as the Finnish civil servants' interpretations concerning them. Taking the surveys from amongst the Finnish civil servants only, and not amongst their clientele as well was a methodological choice, as the researcher wanted to take a closer look at one of the two parties in the social interaction. The next step could be to run a similar sample survey amongst the ethnically non-Finnish clientele of the Immigration Department of Finland and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, asking how they perceive their customer contacts with these two government departments. Comparing the results would facilitate mutual adaptation and critique.

In looking at the evidence of cultural adaptation and critique only in the host culture members' experiences, a vast majority of the comments talk about the Finnish civil servants' need to adapt culturally in order to serve their multi-ethnic clientele efficiently. They cover a wide range of aspects, including general appreciation of multiculturalism, an understanding of the need for an organisational level adaptation, personal examples of intercultural adjustments in both thinking and in working methods, how does the cultural adaptation process and success or failure in it feels, and how does it affect one's professional and private identity.

Thus cultural adaptation is one of the central concerns for the respondents in the three surveys on which this research is based. This goes contrary to Kim's (2001 claim that host culture members only go through marginal adaptation.

The results of this research show that at least with such groups of host culture members who, due to the nature of their work, have more contact with the immigrant population than the average Finn and have both the need and the opportunity to develop intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity, exert extensive effort to adapt culturally where it is needed.

The Finnish civil servants in the Directorate of Immigration and in the Social Insurance Institution are tackling the issue of cultural adaptation in earnest. This is a prerequisite to becoming critical pragmatic professionals who are able to facilitate the kind of mutual adaptation and critique that can have wider societal ramifications for positive intercultural relations beyond their immediate professional contexts. I see this process with the ensuing end result in much the same manner as Ting-Toomey (1999) talks about mindful intercultural communicators being willing to experiment with new paradigms of experiencing, communicating and confirming. They are willing to admit their ethnocentrism and reframe their mindsets through ethnorelativist thinking. They are willing to 'struggle *with*' rather than 'struggle *against*' (author's italics and quotes) dissimilar others Ting-Toomey (1999:161).

The above conceptualisation by Ting-Toomey[71] fits in with my adaptive use of Bennett's (e.g. 1986 and 1993) model, as I depict the process of becoming a critical pragmatic intercultural professional through an overlap of back-and-forth opposing pull factors of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. This process finds expression through a struggle that parallels Lie's (2003) similarly overlapping globalizing/localizing identities. These are created in the process of creating intercultural space through mutual adaptation and critique, together with self-reflection. In like manner to Ting-Toomey's (1996) idea of willingness to experiment with new paradigms while at the same time recognizing one's own cultural conditioning, my conceptualisation of the process of 'interculturalisation' describes the means for gradually resolving the issue of 'struggle against' into a strategy of 'struggle with'. This is far more constructive and fruitful, as far as developing mindfulful intercultural competence as intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity is concerned.

Let us see next to what extent the Finnish civil servants take a critical reflective look at themselves, at their clientele and at the context they operate in. Let us also see whether mutual adaptation and mutual critique is evident in the comments.

8.1   Adaptation for mutual understanding

Finnish civil servants show recognition and understanding of the fact that the customers need to go through drastic adaptation processes as they are settling into life in Finland. The multi-ethnic customer contacts with the Finnish authorities are often situations in which the cultural adaptation processes of the two parties begin to take shape and in which they are tried, tested and

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[71]   Ibid

developed. They are a kind of intercultural training ground, where different expectations may clash with a varying degree of awareness in both parties concerning the cultural undercurrents at work in the situation. Thus they can at times be quite sensitive and even volatile situations. The following comments all stress a desire to reach mutual understanding and wanting to serve the customer as well: *'The customer is always taken as an individual. I want to get to the bottom of things and clarify all matters so that in the end neither party has any things that are still unclear. With each customer, one has to find a common language or way to communicate.'(SJ77a) 'Obtaining mutual understanding is the main goal.'(SS239) 'A customer contact needs to be brought to conclusion in such a manner that the customer is happy at least with something!'(1DC4) 'The immigrants often understand when one explains to them that in Finland this matter goes in this way, which may be different from the way they are used to in their own country.'(SH55)*

Being able to put the customers' non-Finnish communicative behaviour into the right cultural perspective enables the civil servants to accommodate it with a positive attitude: *'It all depends in what kind of spirit the matter is handled. Perhaps with the foreigners who call the office one takes the attitude that it is a more natural part of their culture to employ more dramatic means even though the trouble is usually no greater than the one that makes a Finnish customer to call us.' (2DS164)*

It is realised that experiences with the authorities in the customers' countries of origin can also affect the way the customers behave towards the civil servants in Finland: *'People coming from the region of former Yugoslavia, for example, may have had bad experiences in dealing with the authorities, which may make them aggressive at first.'(SU298)*

The reactions of customers coming from communal cultures to the Finnish society's individualism expressed in administrative procedures are empathised with: *'In some cultures it is customary that the man takes care of the family's affairs and manages the finances. Problems are sometimes caused by the Finnish system, which values an independent person who takes care his or her own affairs. Asking for a letter of Attorney or other form of authorisation for taking care of someone else's affairs on their behalf sometimes causes wonderment and even irritation in the non-Finnish customers.'(SJ77b)*

The following comment reflects on the clash between the communal and individualistic values from both parties' perspectives, seeing how some of the basic tenets of the Finnish administrative system can be seen to be anti-service oriented by the customer: *'It is quite awkward when men take care of the whole family's affairs and the wife, who does not know any other language apart from her own, does not even come to the office with the husband. Yet, one is not supposed to give the wife's information to the husband and for some reason it seems to be impossible for them to make arrangements for the wife to come to the office to take care of the affair in person. This matter of confidentiality and protected information is problematic; on one hand it is part of the Finnish system, but on the other hand the customer feels he is getting poor service and considers KELA to be bureaucratic, since the information can not be given to the man, who speaks Finnish or English and the matter could be sorted out easily while the man is there at the office.'(SL85)*

8.2 Critique directed at both parties

Some comments level criticism at both parties equally, recognising that not arriving at a mutual understanding can cause an emotional upheaval in both parties. *'Neither party understands the other, and both the customer and the civil servant get upset.'(2DX201)*

This quote stresses the importance of both parties taking responsibility for the smooth running of the customer contacts*: 'I believe that it is up to the person himself. If one has good language skills and experience, the social interaction with an ethnically non-Finnish customer can be a positive experience. Professional and language skills give confidence and self-assurance.'(V13/SU312) 'All customers should get equal treatment, but the customer should also realise that he cannot dictate how decisions are made in our office.'(K4/2DK86)*

The Finnish civil servants also critique the ethnically non-Finnish customers for lack of intercultural understanding, lack of cultural adaptation and for having a negative attitude towards the civil servants in the following manner*: 'The customer applies his own cultural rules without understanding that they are not our rules. A superior attitude, animosity, and unfair accusations.'(2DX208)*

8.3 Self critique and critique of the Finnish system

A number of comments recognise that the Finnish civil servants' own actions, attitudes and the Finnish administrative system as a whole can have an effect on how the customers react and interpret the service they get in the government offices. In the answers to the survey question 'What do you consider to be poor customer service?' the gist of several replies contained the thought that it was the attitude that customers were considered to be a bother: *'You are not interested either in the customer's case or his emotional state. You just want to get rid of the customer as fast as possible. You feel the customer contacts to be stressful. The feeling that "Oh no, is he calling again, didn't he just call last week? I don't have the strength to listen to his moaning.' (2DX196)* The above comment recognises that at times the stress of the multi-ethnic customer contacts is quite high, affecting the civil servants' motivation to serve the customer. The negative feeling can also be sensed by the customer: *'When the customer gets the impression that he is disturbing and the civil servant wants to get rid of him as soon as possible.'(2DX197)*

Critique is directed at the rigidity of the Finnish administrative language: *'In my opinion some staff members and even whole units in our office use such winding expressions and complicated, unintelligible sentences in these requests that even some of the Finnish population would not be able to supply the office with the required papers! I am totally against this.'(2DW189)*

In the following comments the Finnish civil servants tell that they understand the cultural adaptation their ethnically non-Finnish customers have to make in trying to understand the way things are run in their office. These comments show that the civil servants realise the integration aspect of their work and try to help the customers make the needed cultural adjustments. In doing this type of work, they are at the same time themselves adapting

culturally. They are not only taking care of the customer's case in a way they would with a Finnish customer, but often they are adapting their verbal and non-verbal communication to accommodate the customers' cultural backgrounds, trying to cope with the visible cultural differences and/or cultural conflicts: *'In our office separate persons are handling the benefit matters and insurance matters. Even this matter, among many others, is sometimes difficult to understand or accept for the non-Finnish customers.'(SI57) 'To a foreigner the whole system, police, social services, KELA etc. are all unfamiliar things, and they do not necessarily know why we require certain information, etc.'(SU306)* At times cultural differences between administrative systems can be interpreted as misuse of power by the customers, and some of the comments talk about the civil servants realising that in those cases it is not enough to take care of the customer's case in a routine manner but that the process of the decision making needs to be explained to the customer in more detail. This is also one part of the informal integration task that the civil servants perform in their multi-ethnic customer contacts*: 'When one explains properly, e.g. why it is that getting a decision in the customer's case still takes a while etc., the customer understands that he is treated as person, not just as a customer number in the office, and consequently knows that it is not a question of misusing one's power.'(2DK84)*

Training in intercultural communication has on occasion made one reflect on whether one has been culturally sensitive enough*: 'There have not been any major cultural collisions, but during lectures on intercultural communication I have gotten this unsure feeling that I may have said something or behaved in a way that may have been misunderstood.'(2DF44)*

The desire to serve the customers well is a topmost concern in the following comment*: 'Stress is not always caused by the customer, but by the fact that one is not always able to serve the customer as well as one would like to.'(2DA1)*

8.4   Recognising the need for organisational level adaptation

The respondents levelled some critique at the way customer service was organised and valued in general in their respective workplaces. It was recognised that some issues dealing with customer service need to be tackled on the organisational level in order for the multi-ethnic customer contacts to run smoothly. It is not just a question of individual civil servants developing their intercultural competencies. The organisation as a whole needs to take active measures in this respect.

The following things are mentioned by the respondents in connection with this issue: implementing a more service minded attitude in general amongst the personnel, including the executive and managerial level staff, promoting transparency, recognising the customer's right to speak with the person who is making a decision in his case, as at the same time one can ask for clarification on certain matters from the customer and ask them to get them sent in as soon as possible in order to shorten the handling time of the application. 'Positive discrimination' in the form of special service counters was also suggested, as well as increased use of interpreters and more written materials in various

languages. The following summarises these views: *'I would like to see more service-mindedness in our office. We should put more resources into customer service and we should value it more and not think about it as a hindrance or as the necessary evil of our work.'(DAF298)*

Several respondents stressed the importance of customer service being handled only by persons with an interest and ability in that line of work, as well as proper training in intercultural customer contact work. Also those people with a long work history with customer contacts were recommended to have training in intercultural communication: *'We should train people who are taught the basics of customer service, a bit like traffic rules of the trade and their language ability should be updated if need be. Then the best people should be chosen for telephone service and face-to-face customer contacts to take care of the customer service properly. The fact of the matter is that any staff member who does not like customer contacts is bound to reveal this attitude at some point to some customer. It will become apparent in one way or another and this is not very good to our public image.'(2DAF302)* It is another question to determine how to measure who are the best people for working in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. Indeed, what kind of competencies would be crucial for successful management of such customer contacts? This research answers that question by looking at what goes into the qualities of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional.

It was also noted that in the telephone contacts the customers are in direct contact with the particular government office and through these contacts they form an opinion concerning that office. Hence it is important to handle them correctly. An opinion was also expressed that customer contacts should be taken away from persons who have no ability in handling difficulties that may arise with a person coming from a different culture.

9 Expressing Adaptation orientation according to the DMIS

Next I will look at how the Adaptation orientation, according to the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity developed by Bennett (1986, 1993, 2002, 2004, 2005), finds expression in some of the Finnish civil servants' comments. In Bennett's model the experience of adaptation is one of consciously shifting perspective and intentionally altering behaviour. This is the first one of the three ethnorelativist orientations on a scale of six orientations, with the first three being ethnocentric in nature. According to Bennett (2004), adaptation is likely to become the predominant orientation when there is a need to actually interact socially in an effective manner with people from other cultures. The Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts are a context with such a need. Both parties have a strong felt need to understand and to be understood in order for the customers' concerns to be handled properly. The civil servants need to be able to deal with the customers' cases according to all the rules and regulations dictating the decision-making relating to the matters being handled in each customer contact. They also need to ensure that they

represent their office well in all respects towards the clientele, even when language and cultural differences at times cause additional complications and stress in the situation.

This acute need for mutual understanding, as well as anxiety and fear that adequate understanding was not reached by either party is expressed in the Finnish civil servants comments over and over in various contexts. Likewise the customers have an equally strong need to ensure that what they said was understood so that they can have their case handled properly. The more pressing their affairs with these two government departments are, the more they have the need to make their point of view understood.

Under the following subheadings, I look at how the various aspects of the Adaptation orientation, according to the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, are expressed in the Finnish civil servants' comments. Some of the comments appearing in this section have already been quoted in the section concerning cultural learning, as they address both the process and attainment of gaining intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity, of which the last-mentioned is examined here.

9.1   Adaptation orientation as empathy

With the acceptance of another culture's organization of reality, adaptation can proceed by allowing one to reorganize experience in a way more like that of the other culture. This is intercultural empathy (Bennett 2004, original italics). The ability to empathize with another worldview in turn allows modified behaviour to flow naturally from that experience. It is this natural flow of behaviour that keeps code shifting from being fake or inauthentic.

The Finnish civil servants' comments display the kind of empathy described by Bennett (2004) in connection with the Adaptation Orientation. It is shown as an empathetic understanding of the customers' life situation vis-à-vis the Finnish administrative system's demands: '(*The multi-ethnic customer contact is) more stressful to the customer. The civil servant should always remember that to the customer it is a matter of his personal case, which is hugely important to him, a matter of life and death, while to the civil servant it is a question of one customer contact among a multitude of them.' (2DAA253)*

The respondents also show empathy towards the cultural adaptation processes that customers have to go through, having moved to a foreign country and having to learn how to cope with the different administrative system in their new country of abode and having to communicate in a foreign language: '*Perhaps it is more stressful to the one who is in the 'weaker position' so to speak, i.e. in a foreign country, possibly using a foreign language, not understanding the system, even though the other party may be a person who is new in the job who still has his own 'weaknesses' concerning how to perform his tasks.'(2DAA252)* The last part of the following comment, which already has been quoted in full earlier on in the research for the contents of its first part, also shows empathy for the customers as it reflects on how the civil servant's role as a decision maker in executing the legislation and administrative policies in a particular case can

adversely affect the customer in question. It also shows that difficult decisions concerning the customers cases can affect the civil servants' person on the affective level: '…I understand their stress and frustration really well. I get even more stressed when I think what the negative decisions I have to make cause in people's lives.'(2DAA254)

The realization that the foreigner is often in a weaker position communication-wise makes them sympathetic towards the customers and willing to adapt their own style to accommodate the customers and to ensure mutual understanding: 'I have not noticed that the customers' poor ability in Finnish is a cause of stress for me, but for the customers themselves it most certainly is so. In a situation like that I usually try to repeat in between the customer's utterances the things he has said in a way that I have understood him to mean, I sort of recap the things he has said. I feel that in this way I work together with the customer in order for us to reach a mutual agreement concerning the contents of what the customer is saying.' (2DI59) 'Expressing sympathy towards the customer's case helps.' (2DAB262)

9.2 Adaptation as cognitive frame shifting

Bennett (2004) notes that a cognitive frame shifting, which is a conscious shift of perspective into an alternative cultural worldview, signifies DMIS Adaptation orientation, thus creating access to a facsimile of the alternative cultural experience. The conscious re-framing of data allows experience to be intentionally formed in various cultural contexts. This kind of frame shifting is in evidence in the comments by the Finnish civil servants from the Directorate of Immigration and the Social Insurance Institution: 'The best thing about the multi-ethnic customer contacts is getting acquainted with the way things are looked at in different parts of the world.'(2DO115) They also talk about how this new understanding should be applied to their working methods: 'I have learned to understands and accept the fact that in other cultures things are done differently from the way they are run in the 'West', and that these differences need to be taken into account while processing the permits.'(2DO114)

This cognitive frame shifting can go beyond the personal level, and the whole Finnish society is looked at from a new perspective. This comment combined the personal-level gain and the larger societal-level gain cultural and linguistic plurality in the following manner: 'One learns to get along with people from different cultures and even understand them to a certain extent. Finland is no longer the safe bird's nest and foreigners are also needed here.'(SSP138)

Some of the comments of the Finnish civil servants displaying the Adaptation orientation deal with this issue in connection with particular nationalities. Cultural differences in communication and in other areas of culture, such as gender issues, are empathized but they do not stress the person in the customer contact situation: 'It can be that, for example, Somali men do not like it that a woman is asking them to bring some papers to the office and that a woman is telling him whether he gets money or not. However, I myself do not feel stressed because of it.'(SM107)

9.3   Adaptation as behavioural code shifting

Another level of adaptation is behavioural code shifting, which is acting in culturally appropriate ways based on an intuitive feel for the alternative worldview. It includes intentional perspective taking, an active attempt to increase one's repertoire of cultural behaviour and cognitive empathy. The most effective code shifting occurs in conjunction with conscious frame shifting. The comments below exemplify these kinds of conscious behavioural changes taking place in the Finnish civil servants' contacts with their multi-ethnic customers. They also talk about their repeated and diverse efforts in trying to overcome the intercultural communication obstacles.

Adaptive communication is expressed in numerous quotes that explicitly talk about *trying* to make sure that the cultural communication gap is closed and understanding achieved by the ethnically non-Finnish customers. They are expressed by such phrases as: *'I try to speak as clearly as possible, with simple words and using alternative expressions, if that is possible.' (SW317) '…repeating the core factors calmly.'(SW319) 'I listen and try to give an answer to what I hear. I explain the thing step by step through illustrations, I calm the person down, I even draw if need be.'(SW336)* Adaptive communication is also practiced in connection with written communication with the ethnically non-Finnish customers: *'I always try to write the requests for further information in a clear and simple language both for the Finnish and the foreign customers.'(2DW189)*

The behavioural code shifting that is seen to be necessary is also connected with an empathetic attitude towards the customer, which again is a mark of the Adaptation attitude at work: *'Sometimes I notice how the customer is really afraid. However, the situation can be eased up with a less official style of speech and with friendly chatter. I try to alleviate the customer's nervousness by explaining things in the most understandable way possible.'(2DK83)*

In the following comment, the Adaptation orientation is evident on several levels, as empathy, cognitive and operational frame shifting. It talks about how an empathetic attitude towards the customer as a person, rather that just a case to be handled, can help the civil servant to get a more holistic picture of the situation and consequently will assist one in making a better quality decision. It also talks about making a conscious effort at trying to understand the other party's perspective and experience: *'To hear the person behind the application and possibly be able to grasp the other party's point of view, or experience, concerning his case. This often clarifies the matter, or enforces the picture in my mind concerning the kind of decision that one should make on the case. A much better picture of the situation is formed.'(2DO121)*

9.4   Adaptation as worldview structure with a self-reflective attitude

One mark of the Adaptation orientation is that cultural category boundaries become more flexible and permeable, and experience is consciously linked to a particular cultural context. This allows for self-reflective consciousness, where

one is able to look at one's own culture in an objective and critical way when comparing it with other cultures.

The Finnish civil servants' self-reflective ways of looking at their own culture and behaviour in their multi-ethnic customer contacts show that they have developed intercultural sensitivity and understanding concerning the reasons why a particular miscommunication with the customers may have occurred.

The following comment reflects on the difficulties faced by the customers who are facing the fairly mono-cultural Finnish society with false expectations: *'The customer assumes that the Finnish civil servant knows that there are other ways of thinking and doing things, but this is not the case. The Finnish civil servant, who usually is over 40 years of age, has often 'met' a representative of another culture only on TV or on a holiday trip to Southern Europe.' (2DAA256)*

The Finnish style of communication is reflected on as having been the cause of an intercultural misunderstanding, and accommodating the ethnically non-Finnish customer's different communication style is seen as an important way of getting round this misunderstanding: *'The customer may also misjudge that I have not understood him if I don't comment on what he says in any way. It would be important that I should remember to clearly let the customer know that I did understand what he meant and to remember to tell what the next steps are with the application.'(2DF42b)* This is an attitude displaying Adaptation orientation. This civil servant is aware of there being a cultural mismatch in communication, and realises that the customer may not be equally aware of it, but be unconsciously expecting his or her own culture's communication rules be in operation. Hence, the better intercultural awareness is interpreted as a responsibility to accommodate the less aware party. The civil servants' role in the customer contact is also, of course, an issue to be considered in this connection. It is an integral part of their work to ensure that correct information is given and received.

This comment reflects on the mutual confusion in the multi-ethnic customer contacts in one area of communication and then explicitly recognises having attained a certain level of intercultural understanding: *'A couple of times during the telephone hour there has been a 'nagging' customer, (I mean one who keeps on starting his story from the beginning several times over) and one gets the feeling that the answers given to him are not good enough, or that they are not understood by him, even though the problem may have been that I have not understood to state to the customer enough times that indeed I have understood what was said. These have been Asian customers and now, with an increased understanding about intercultural communication issues, I have realised that this is how I maybe should have acted.'(2DF43a)* This kind of conscious self-reflection is again a mark of Adaptation orientation.

9.5 Adaptation on the affective level

On the affective level the Adaptation orientation is expressed by stressing intentional action (mindfulness, consciousness) regarding cultural issues and by placing high value on exercising intercultural competence. Both of these

sentiments are expressed in the comments of the Finnish civil servants. They talk about valuing positively the contact with people form other cultures: *'Telephone hour is neat!'(1DI24)* *'I enjoy customer contacts, and there should be more of them. I have represented my office at various official forums, such as seminars and fairs that deal with migration matters and enjoy meeting our customers there.'(1DJ41)* *'They bring colour, change and life to an otherwise often very monotonous workday.'(Q18/2DO125)*. The multi-ethnic customer contacts are also valued as giving the opportunity to become more conscious of intercultural issues, and this knew knowledge is valued positively as professional and personal development: *'I feel that I am developing and learning things.'* *'They bring joy to my work, widen my horizons, teach me things.'(2DO108)*

9.6 Adaptation orientation in connection with exercise of power

Bennett[72] describes Adaptation orientation as being accompanied by an ability to recognize and respond to power in cultural context. Even though power relationships were looked at as a one topic in the surveys upon which this research is based, it was not commented on much in the surveys.

However, there are comments in this research, which can be interpreted as displaying the Adaptation orientation to the exercise of power, such as: *'One must get rid of the all-powerful civil service attitude.'(R13/2DW187)* Other comments have also been already quoted in connection with Cultural learning issues by challenging the Finnish frames of reference and showing empathy for the clientele's point of view.

9.7 Summary of the comments on Adaptation orientation

Witin the DMIS criteria, the comments quoted in the above subsections by the Finnish civil servants fall under the Adaptive orientation, which is a conscious ethnorelativist orientation. This gives evidence that in gaining intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, part of the respondents have undergone a fair amount of cultural adaptation. This manifests itself as cognitive frame shifting, behavioural code shifting and as affective changes, affecting both the professional and personal identities and values of the individual civil servants A more detailed look at the institutional implications is beyond the scope of this research. However, some comments by the civil servants clearly recognise the linkage between the individual civil servants' intercultural orientation and that of the institution they represent, as expressed by the attitude of the executive and managerial level.

At the same time, the comments of the civil servants quoted elsewhere in this research also bear witness to negotiation between the ethnocentric and ethnorelativist viewpoints. On the one hand it can be a sign of not being as far along on the continuum of developing intercultural sensitivity, but on the other

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[72]   Ibid

hand, the way I interpret the DMIS, it also speaks to the general nature of the process of developing intercultural sensitivity regardless of the stage reached. I will return to this theme later.

10 The Finnish civil servants' communication orientations

Next I will look at an example of the Finnish civil servants' communication competencies grid vis-à-vis their multi-ethnic clientele. Communication is a relevant aspect through which to approach the wider concept of acculturation orientations[73] because of its central importance in the context of this research. The goal in the customer contact is to try to ensure that communication takes place in such a manner that the matter at hand is taken care of as well as possible, and mutual understanding is reached. This must be reached, even though the two parties have different, culturally and linguistically conditioned communication styles and language differences.

One way to describe the Finnish civil servants' communication orientations is to map them out in a four-way grid, adapted from the bi-dimensional model of host community acculturation orientation created by Bourhis et al. (1997). The four communication orientations describe the relationship between making allowances for the customer's culturally conditioned communication style and maintaining the Finnish communication style.

It needs to be stated clearly that the Finnish civil servants who took part in the surveys that form the basis of this research were not specifically asked to give their opinion concerning whether the civil servants should, or should not, make allowances for the communication styles of their ethically non-Finnish customers. Rather, the orientations on the four-way grid were arrived at by studying the contents of the comments in the KELA and DOI surveys and seeing how they fit the YES – NO options within Dimensions 1 and 2.

Furthermore, this research does not carry out a detailed distribution of the Finnish civil servants' comments within this grid in order to draw conclusions on their attitudes towards the multi-ethnic clientele. The grid adapted from Bourhis et al. (1997) is simply utilised to demonstrate the *variety* of communication orientations taking place in their multi-ethnic customer contacts. Sometimes all four orientations can be present consecutively in one single customer contact, either unconsciously or as a conscious choice. The purpose for showing the movement between the options within this grid is to demonstrate the cultural adaptation process in the communication context. Making the realities of various options within the intercultural communication situation visible in this manner can have useful implications particularly for intercultural training purposes.

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[73]   As adapted from Berry, 1997

Dimension 1:
Civil servants may adapt to the communication styles
of their non-Finnish customer

Dimension 2:

		YES	NO
Civil servants should maintain their Finnish communication style	YES	Adaptive Communication	Assimilating Communication
	NO	Differentiating Communication	Unresolved Communication

FIGURE 23. Finnish civil servants communication orientation with multi-ethnic clientele

10.1   Adaptive communication

As attested to by the comments of the Finnish civil servants quoted throughout this research, many of them point to an orientation I have called Adaptive Communication. By being willing to make allowances for the communication styles of the ethnically non-Finnish customers, they are adapting their own communication to accommodate the multi-ethnic clientele's communication styles. At the same time they are also adapting the ethnically non-Finnish clientele to the Finnish way of communication by maintaining the Finnish communication style in explaining to the customers how things are done and talked about in Finland. On the one hand, they recognise the need of the customers to integrate into the Finnish system, yet on the other hand they also realise the need to adjust their own communication to accommodate them in the process. In this sense, the ethos of this orientation is accommodative integration.

Those Finnish civil servants, who employ the Adaptive orientation in their contacts with the multi-ethnic clientele, utilize the two-dimensional model of acculturation. This model, based largely on the work of Berry (1990, 1997) recognizes that the two dominant aspects of acculturation, preservation of one's heritage culture and adaptation to the host society, are conceptually distinct and can vary independently (Liebkind 2001). In a similar way, the communication styles of the Finnish civil servants employing the adaptive communication orientation with their multi-ethnic clientele are able to vary independently. They can accommodate and adapt to the non-Finnish communication styles of their customers without considering that it threatens or takes anything away from their Finnish communication style. These two differerent communication styles have a separate function and motivation and hence are not at odds with each other. They are used in a back-and-forth fashion in creating the necessary intercultural space for the communication to proceed successfully. The accommodating speech is utilized to reach towards

the multi-ethnic clientele, i.e. meeting the customer halfway, and making the Finnish communication style visible is utilized to bring the customer towards the host culture.

Research (Nguyen, Messé, and Stollak 1999) has pointed out that the distinction between the constructs of ethnic identity and acculturation is unclear and these two concepts are often used interchangeably. Acculturation can be considered to be a broad construct, encompassing a wide range of behaviours, attitudes, and values that change with contact between cultures. Ethnic identity is then that aspect of acculturation that focuses on the subjective sense of belonging to a group or culture (Phinney 1990).

The comments quoted in this research show that some of the Finnish civil servants who have had regular contact with ethnically non-Finnish customers, and who in the process have learned intercultural sensitivity with the accompanying change in a range of behaviours, attitudes and values, have undergone a fairly extensive process, as it is defined above by Phinney (1990). It can be said of them that they have learned to utilize the strategy of an interculturally competent critical professional. As stated by Liebkind (2001), this intercultural professional identity can be independent from the person's identity in other contexts, such as a person's professional identity in his contacts with ethnically Finnish clients, or his private, personal identity outside the work context. However, the comments quoted in this research show that ramifications of the changes in the professional identity due to cultural adaptation may also have a wider effect on the person's identity in other contexts, displayed in opinions, attitudes, feelings and behaviours that point to deep appreciation and acceptance of the cultural 'other' beyond the necessary professional intercultural context.

10.2 Assimilating communication

Assimilating communication is an orientation where the Finnish civil servants do not adjust their Finnish communication style to make allowance for their multi-ethnic clientele. From this it follows that these customers are also expected to comply with the Finnish communication style. In light of the total of 767 comments of the Finnish civil servants recorded in the surveys upon which this research is based, assimilation orientation in respect to how to communicate with their multi-ethnic customers is not really in evidence. There is only one single comment explicitly promoting assimilation orientation. To recap, this respondent was of the opinion that the cultural adaptation in the multi-ethnic customer communication should be solely the customers' responsibility: *'Why don't they adjust their behaviour into our way of doing things? How could we even begin to have the capabilities to try and adjust our behaviour always according to the culture of every customer's home country!'(2DF40)* The ethos of this orientation is basically non-accommodating. Yet at the same time it recognises realistically that given the situation, it is not possible for the Finnish civil servants to gain in-depth knowledge concerning the wide range of culturally conditioned communication

styles represented by the ethnically non-Finnish clientele. Hence a different type of intercultural communication competence is needed that allows one to deal with the multiplicity of cultural backgrounds.

10.3 Differentiating communication

Differentiating communicative orientation is an expression of positive discrimination or positively segregating communication. There were some comments in the surveys suggesting this approach in answer to the question of what kind of developments the civil servants would like to see taking place in their respective offices to help them serve the multi-ethnic customers better. Particularly the comments from the Social Insurance Institution (KELA) have suggestions along these lines. They include personnel resources, such as specially trained staff, to be assigned to the multi-ethnic customer contacts, employing staff representing those ethnic backgrounds frequenting the offices the most, increased use of interpreters, special service counters and specially tailored written materials to accommodate the special needs of the multi-ethnic clientele: *'More staff, so that customers who need to use a foreign language in their dealings with KELA could have a separate service counter, with staff members who have knowledge concerning various KELA benefits and who are able to speak various languages.'(SY377) 'Increased use of interpreters. Making appointments beforehand (to come and meet with a staff member who is able to serve this particular customer's needs.)'(SY378) 'Instructions and decisions in simplified language are needed.'(SY386)* The ethos behind this orientation is support in the form of maximum accommodation.

10.4 Unresolved communication

Unresolved communication is mainly, but not exclusively, a conflict orientation, which implies either a partial breakdown in communication, or total non-communication. Regarding the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts looked at in this research, this is not an orientation intentionally arrived at, (apart from two comments in the whole research data signifying that the person has chosen a partial non-communication with the customers, wanting to avoid face-to-face contacts.) One of these comments was very general in nature: *'Due to the negative factors associated with them, I am not involved in face-to-face contacts with customers.'(2DV173)* The other comment expressed fear for personal safety: *'I want to avoid face-to-face customer contacts. They frighten me. I wait for the day that someone might attack some staff member in the street.' (2DV174)*

Kealey (1995:42) found in his study that ambivalence or apprehension or fear about the future in connection with going on an overseas assignment were found to be negative indicators with respect to overseas adaptation. Likewise, with the host culture members, fear can prevent cultural adaptation effectively by hindering one from being in personal contact with people who have a different culture and language from oneself. One arena for handling fear issues is in connection with intercultural training.

The comments quoted in other contexts of this research also show that with experience and training, one learns to deal with communication difficulties in connection with the multi-ethnic clientele. From this perspective, unresolved communication can be considered a transient feature which is part of the intercultural learning process in the Finnish civil servants' customer contacts with ethnically non-Finnish customers. On the other hand, it is also a recurring feature, for even if the civil servant has developed intercultural competence to deal with communication problems arising from intercultural misunderstandings and is able and willing to continue with the communication, for various reasons the ethnically non-Finnish customer in a particular situation may not desire, or be able to do so, resulting in unresolved communication. Some comments express the feeling that the efforts to keep the communication going are made only by the civil servants, while the customers deliberately do not want to co-operate. This interpretation can be a cultural misinterpretation, showing that the respondents are still in the middle of cultural adaptation process and not able to 'read' the customers correctly. This misunderstanding works also the other way. The ethnically non-Finnish customers may also be misinterpreting the Finnish communication style, or insisting on their way of communication without being conscious of it being different from the Finnish one.

Some comments see the customers' behaviour and attitude as being the main cause of the communication breakdown. This sentiment is expressed in phrases such as *'does not listen to anything I tell him' (2DJ70), 'calculated "I do not understand" statements' (SQ165), 'strong emotional outbursts of any kind: sadness, anxiety, hatred and aggression, as well as expressing oneself in a crying, upset, accusing manner or with a raised voice, using threats, name calling, slandering' (2DX207), 'venting his frustration on me.'(2DP150)*

In some cases the communication breakdown does not show itself as an open conflict, but in a more subtle way. The civil servant realises that there has been no real communication, as the customer has not understood what has been said. However, due to cultural reasons the customer is not able, or willing, to express this state of affairs: *'Smiling – saying thank you – even though they do not understand.'(SU284)*

There are also other kinds of situations where the breakdown in communication, or a hindrance to communication, occurs without an open conflict between the two parties*: 'In connection with the asylum interviews the applicant's anxiety and crying is stressful; it hinders communication. Another hindrance to communication is when the applicants are unable to take the initiative in telling about their problems in their home country.'(2DX214)*

Occasionally the civil servant feels that the only solution is to terminate the customer contact. In connection with the integrity issues, there was a partial quote concerning the Iranians' persistent way of carrying on discussing their case for the longest time. The quote finishes with the remark: *'Often the only way to get rid of them is to coldly state that I do not think I have anything new to add to this topic so I will end the call now.'(2DZ243)*

At times the civil servant needs to use drastic measures to end the customer contact:

'In a face-to-face situation, if a customer behaves inappropriately, I call the office attendant to come and remove him from the premises. However, if the difficulty is to do with the difficult nature of the case, I try to explain it to the customer till he understands, or direct him to another staff member who has more knowledge concerning the case.'(2DAB264) This was the only comment in all of the surveys mentioning physical removal of the customer from the office premises, indicating that is quite rare, and even in this case it was made clear that different avenues of communication are attempted first.

11 Conclusions

Four central conclusions can be drawn concerning the nature and role of the stress experienced by the Finnish civil servants in their multi-ethnic customer contacts.

First of all, this research has shown that the host culture members are not only passive adaptees in the intercultural social interaction, but active adapters at the same time. Certain level of stress often accompanies this adaptation process. "To a great degree, culture and religion are what they are in order to deal with stress." (Hooker 2003:1966) One way to expound the above quote is to state that familiarity of one's own culture lessens the experience of stress or is marked by the absence of stress. One can relax in the sure and certain knowledge of how things are, or how they at least ought to be. Any perceived deviation, or the introduction of a new, thus far unfamiliar and strange way of being, doing, thinking or believing can cause the stress levels to increase. Meanwhile the successful incorporation of the new material as being part and parcel of the familiar cultural setting is manifested in the decreased level of stress, or by the noticeable absence of stress in connection with the relevant factors affected by this new material.

The notion of stress as the central theme in cross cultural adaptation is also arrived at through personal observation: Repeatedly and continually over the years, the words 'stress' and 'stressful' have cropped up as the central theme in the discussions with the Finnish civil servants in connection with the intercultural training sessions conducted by the researcher.

> CONCLUSION 1. Stress is a central theme in the intercultural adaptation process. While on the one hand it points to cultural maladaptation, it is also a mark of ongoing cultural adaptation, indicating that a measure of ensuing identity change is taking place.

To rephrase, high stress figures need to be looked at from two points of view: On the one hand they can be a sign of resistance to identity change and cultural adaptation, with a marked absence of intercultural sensitivity. On the other

hand they point to an ongoing intercultural sensitisation and identity change as an essential part of the intercultural learning process.

In applying the IAM model in their study of perceived discrimination, acculturation attitudes and stress among young ethnic repatriates in Finland, Israel and Germany, Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2003) found that the quality of intergroup relations may be manifested not only in the amount of intergroup discrimination (Bourhis et al. 1997), but also more subtly in immigrants' experiences of psychological distress.[74]

By extension, the above findings of the study by Jasinskaja-Lahti et al.[75] can also be appliedt to the host culture representatives. However, as far as this research is concerned, the level of psychological stress experienced by the civil servants in their social interaction with the multi-ethnic clientele is interpreted to be more a transient feature associated with culture shock and cultural adaptation. It is a feature of the process of learning to communicate with the ethnically non-Finnish clientele, rather than signifying poor intergroup relations between the Finnish civil servants and their multi-ethnic customers in general. The overall prevalence of the Adaptive communication with the multi-ethnic clientele, evidenced in the abundance of comments promoting it, as well as the almost total lack of Assimilation orientation, attest to attitudes and behaviour displaying intercultural adaptation to difference.

> CONCLUSION 2. In order for a deeper cultural adaptation to take place, the host culture adaptees need to be allowed to validate their feelings and experiences of stress in connection with intercultural social interaction.

This research examines the nexus between cultural adaptation as a process and the ensuing attitudes that are formed as a result. If the adaptive stress of the host culture members is not duly validated and the consequent intercultural transformation process does not take place, there is a chance that their cultural adaptation process may be stunted and warped and thus Kim's (2001) notion of limited adaptation becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The transient adaptive stress will indeed gradually form into negative attitudes. Hence the host culture members need to be given a chance to analyse and understand the feelings and experiences linked to the process of gaining intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. Proper validation of the cultural adaptation process in the host culture population can have a role in developing better intercultural communication competence and in creating a positive attitude towards people whose culture and language are different from one's own. Awareness concerning the nexus between the goal and process in cultural adaptation can help in keeping separate the concepts of cultural adaptation

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[74]   Their study also found assimilationist orientation in Finland in connection with the repatriates from Russia (Ingrians).

[75]   Ibid

processes and attitudes and further a deeper understanding concerning their interrelatedness.

Giving the host culture representatives forums where they can express their legitimate experiences and feelings and validate their intercultural experiences can have long ranging wider societal ramifications of a positive nature. This allows for genuine cultural adaptation and development of intercultural sensitivity, making the host culture members better equipped to negotiate a workable and effective intercultural communication environment, without feeling that either party has given up their integrity as a person. This in turn can be a positive step towards prevention of over-emphasized ethnocentrism and racism.

> CONCLUSION 3. Finnish civil servants partly estimate their intercultural awareness to be higher than it is in reality and intercultural misunderstandings are often misinterpreted as being caused by some other factor. Limited intercultural awareness does not, however, equate with a particular acculturation orientation, as defined by social scientists.

As already discussed in connection with the quantitative results of the surveys upon which this research is based, intercultural issues were not placed high on the stressfulness scale, with 10 % reporting feeling intense stress due to this factor (feeling the stress either often or every time) and 51 % reporting feeling it occasionally in the telephone contacts and 37 % in the face-to-face contacts with the multi-ethnic clientele. However, comments pertaining to intercultural issues came up in connection with all the other factors in large numbers, indicating that the level of intercultural awareness was lower than the civil servants themselves thought. Overestimating one's intercultural awareness is a common occurrence, which is backed up by other research. While developing the tool for measuring the intercultural sensitivity, Hammer, Mitchell, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) found that there was a significant difference between the perceived and actual cultural sensitivity among their respondents. In their subjective self-estimations, people thought they were culturally more sensitive than they actually were.

It is to be noted, however, that being 'interculturally limited' does not equate with resistance to intercultural learning or negative attitude towards people who are culturally different. Due to limited intercultural awareness and understanding, in a social interaction of intercultural nature, a person may unintentionally offend the other party and misinterpret the other party's behaviour even though he has a positive attitude towards the immigrant population. The prevalence of the adaptive communication evident in the Finnish civil servants' comments indicate a positive acculturation orientation[76] towards the multi-ethnic clientele.

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[76] As these orientations are defined by Berry (1997)

The training suggestions in the application section of this research need to aim at increasing the awareness of the underlying intercultural undercurrents in the customer service situation in order to develop further intercultural sensitivity. The central role of language affecting the intercultural misunderstandings also needs to be acknowledged.

> CONCLUSION 4. The effect of the host culture members' behaviour on the newcomers' adaptation can not be understood fully, unless the effects of the intercultural contacts on the host culture members themselves are properly understood first.

Kim (2001) rightly acknowledges the need for more detailed research on how the host environment affects the strangers' cultural adaptation. Greater research attention is needed concerning the three conditions of the receiving environment: host receptivity, host conformity pressure and ethnic group strength. Further research can ascertain the complex ways in which the forces of the host environment and the ethnic group adjusting to it work simultaneously on the individual stranger's communication behaviours and intercultural transformation (Kim 2001:209- 210). As already noted in this research, the lack of such transformation also says something about the nature of the process of developing this relationship.

This research looks at the host environment in the limited context of customer contacts with the 'strangers', to use Kim's[77] terminology. It shows that the kind of communication behaviour and intercultural transformation, or lack of it, by the 'strangers' in that context, expressed through the concept of adaptive stress, is also mirrored in the host culture representative.

The importance of taking the dual perspective of host culture and guest culture alike is also taken up by McLaren (1998). She states that acculturation is required reciprocally by both parties in the course of intercultural social interaction and that the process of getting to know unfamiliar people and customs and achieving greater cognitive flexibility through intercultural social interaction will be most successful when both the host and guest recognize their limitations, adopt a positive attitude, and celebrate their differences.[78]

Sippola and Hammar-Suutari (2006) also discuss this two-way influence in discussing the topic of intercultural competence and customer service. Generally in circumstances where both parties have a shared cultural background, both the customer(s) and especially the person serving them know their own roles and behave in an appropriate manner. The matter at hand, rather than position, is the main point in the social interaction: "The situation changes however, if the understanding of the other party is not self-evident, as in a situation where the parties are from different cultural backgrounds. There are several factors that can

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[77]   Ibid
[78]   Source; A book review by Yunxia Zhu, of UNITEC, Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand, published in Business Communication Quarterly, 65:4, December 2002.

influence encounters with customers who are ethnically non-Finnish, such as prejudices, previous experiences, nature of the encounter, uncertainty, available resources, etc. (Hammar-Suutari 2005; Salo-Lee 1996). Different conventions and official/professional/business cultures also affect the way in which the service provider is perceived, how well they are trusted and how customers behave towards them" (e.g. Peltola 2005, Liebkind 1998).

The above discussion states the major issues that are at stake in the multi-ethnic customer contacts of the Finnish civil servants. In addition to that, the expectations of the Finnish civil servants and their multi-ethnic clientele concerning the level of cultural adaptation expected from each other are often different. Likewise, the cultural awareness of the two parties in the customer encounter can vary, with either party being more interculturally aware and competent, or both parties being equally aware, or unaware, of the ways their behaviour in the situation is culturally conditioned. For both parties, the communicative context is such that there is a strong need to be understood and to understand the other party in order to get the customer's case sorted out efficiently. This in itself brings an added element of stress to this particular context of intercultural social interaction. All of these aspects need to be studied from both parties' point of view for a fuller understanding of what is going on in the two way process of intercultural adaptation.

CHAPTER 6.   THE REALITY OF CONTRASTING PULL IN CREATING INTERCULTURAL SPACES

The Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts are looked at next through two major concepts: that of globlizing/localizing identities within Lie's (2003) integrative communication theory and through a novel view of Bennett's[79] Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which I have developed. The way I have re-interpreted this model and fitted it into the theory is executed within the ethos of the intercultural philosophy propounded by Robert Young (1996). This kind of interpretive, people centred perspective involves an intersubjective, critical approach. This implies that objectivity simply does not exist.

The term 'critical' means to be involved, taking a position, being normative and adding values to the analytical situation. Interpretive research is never neutral. Interpretation is always biased and bounded and being 'critical' and being 'objective' do not mix. In every participatory research situation, the researcher is an insider. The researcher works as a subject involved in the intersubjective construction that is under study. This creates a complicated situation in which to be critical. In this context, keeping one's distance from the analytical situation does not mean losing one's involvement. It means taking a step back and reviewing, monitoring, and evaluating the whole analytical situation (Lie 2003:3).

1   Localizing counteraction: adapting the customers

I have adapted and rephrased Lie's (2003) central question of localising and globalizing trends of communication meeting in the arena of media to fit the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts. I examine how the Finnish civil

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[79]   Ibid

servants in their local, culturally bound communication setting deal with the communication content of the ethnically non-Finnish clientele and how they counteract the 'foreign' communication style? However, it also needs to be noted that one does not always necessarily *need* to counteract the globalizing influence (Lie 2003:78).

One way the Finnish civil servants counteract the different communication culture of the multi-ethnic clientele is through various adaptation measures directed at the customers. These are employed to help integrate this section of the clientele into the Finnish administrative and communicative system. These measures fit Lie's (2003) concept of localizing tendency. At times the attempts at adapting and integrating the customers into the Finnish system can be done by explicit explanations in the course of the customer contact situation. At other times the localizing tendency is expressed by one's very behaviour; through the way the Finnish civil servant acts and speaks he shows that this is the way things are handled and talked about in Finland. Especially in connection with emotions on the part of the clientele the Finnish administrative culture of handling things in a neutral manner is upheld. The need for the immigrants to adjust to the Finnish way of life is also expressed on the level of attitude: There are also a couple of comments, albeit very few, where the Finnish way of communicating is seen as superior and that of the customer's as irrational, and where adaptation is something that is demanded of the ethnically non-Finnish customers only and not from the Finnish civil servants.

2 Globalizing tendencies: accommodating the customers

In addition to the localizing tendencies, Finnish civil servants also exhibit globalizing tendencies in the form of their many efforts to adjust their own behaviour to that of their multi-ethnic clientele on the levels of skills and cognition as well as attitudes and actions. There are countless comments to this effect in the three surveys, which are already quoted in more detail in connection with the discussion concerning cultural learning and communication issues.

3 Overlap of globalizing/localizing identities

The Finnish civil servants' dealings with their multi-ethnic customers have a multifaceted nature as interactive social situations. Apart from the main task at hand, which is taking care of the customers' business, there are additional, overlapping and opposing processes going on simultaneously in the communication situation. On the one hand the multi-ethnic customer contacts are situations where the civil servants are trying to adapt and integrate the clientele into the Finnish way of doing things, of which a culturally appropriate communication style is one visible sign. On the other hand, dealing with ethnically

non-Finnish clients in practice often also forces the civil servants to adapt their own behaviour and working methods to some degree in order for the customer's matter to get handled. This in turn opens a possibility for a process where a person's identity, both professionally and even beyond, may be reshaped. Issues dealing with the integrity, intercultural learning and communication overlap with each other in this process. Thus the multi-ethnic customer contact can be seen as a process of mutual intercultural learning, where various factors at different levels are pulling at opposing directions at the same time.

The experience of having to negotiate back and forth between the globalizing and localizing identities can be experienced as a stress-producing culture shock crisis threatening one's professional integrity, which is evident in the Finnish civil servants' comments. Strong culture shock reactions are a sign that intercultural issues are being worked out at a deep level and it usually augurs well for intercultural effectiveness once the cultural adaptation process has been completed (Kealey 1990). This research shows that the respondents are at varying stages in this learning process. Some are still at the initial stages, with the pull of the local at the fore, while others are already learning to take a more critical stance and have learned to understand the overlapping and dialectical back-and-forth movement of give and take, which is critical to intercultural learning. A successful and constructive way of handling this process is evidenced in some respondents as an increased intercultural professional and intercultural identity, displaying the qualities of the kind of critical pragmatic professional that Young (1996) has in mind.

4   A dialectic view of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism

Let us now turn to cultural adaptation from the point of view of developing intercultural sensitivity as part of the intercultural identity formation. A fruitful starting point is Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) conceptual dichotomy of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. Even though in the original DMIS scheme these two are logical opposites, I propose that the real nature of the process of acquiring intercultural sensitivity is better captured if the relationship between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativsm is looked at as a dialectic back-and-forth movement, with a certain amount of overlap. This is logically possible, if these two concepts are looked at from the process point of view, not as completed states of orientation systems towards people who differ culturally from oneself, with a permanent and definite line of demarcation in between them.

In a sense, the process view looks at what happens in the in-between spaces when moving along the continuum of intercultural sensitisation, starting from denial and continuing on through defence, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation and finishing with integrating orientation.   I look at how the formation of these orientation systems actually takes place and suggest that

intercultural sensitivity does not necessarily increase in an unbroken, continuously forward going direct line. There can be a certain amount of going back and forth between two adjacent orientations until each sub-orientation is totally resolved, and a person is ready to move wholly to the next one. This is in a similar vein to Lie's (2003) concept of the overlap and two-way movement between the globalizing and localizing pull in the creation of intercultural spaces.

I also suggest that the different DMIS orientations all have particular inbuilt tendencies at how the alternate pull towards opposite directions of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism is exerted on the levels of worldview, cognition, affection and action. With each in-between space, the pull to one direction is more prominent on certain levels, while the pull to the other direction is also simultaneously present, albeit in a less prominent manner. This ensuing effect is that each in-between space presents a particular, identifiable type of overlap and back-and-forth movement between the two opposing pulls between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, which is different from the one in the other in-between-spaces, as one moves along the continuum of increasing intercultural sensitivity. The process of moving from defence to denial orientation involves a different profile of opposing pull effects and overlap than the one beween denial and minimisation, and the same holds true with each in-between-space. I will discuss these in more detail in the following subsection.

4.1   The dynamics of ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull

My reinterpretation of Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) two basic concepts in a more fluid, open and less fixed manner does not question his basic assumptions about the incompatibility of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism as total explanatory systems. It only offers a novel, dialectic perspective on the interpretation as to how the process of moving from one DMIS orientation to the next can be viewed in a broader perspective by examining the possibilities within the model for conflicting pull between the two at every step, with intercultural awareness taken as a starting point. Thus this interpretation looks at the concept pair of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism in the same manner as Ting-Toomey (1999) when she says that mindful intercultural communicators are willing to experiment with new paradigms of experiencing, communicating and confirming. They are willing to admit their ethnocentrism and reframe their mindsets through ethnorelativist thinking. They are willing to "struggle *with* rather than struggle *against*" (Ting-Toomey's italics and quotes), as already mentioned earlier on. It is this similar idea of gradual resolving of the 'struggle against' to 'struggle with' I want to depict with my interpretation of the DMIS. The diagram on the next page describes this dialectical view.

The denial orientation as the starting point can be seen as a state of intercultural naivety, where one is not even aware of there being such distinctions which are described by the terms ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, in line with the basic assumption of the monistic ontology, upon which this orientation is based.
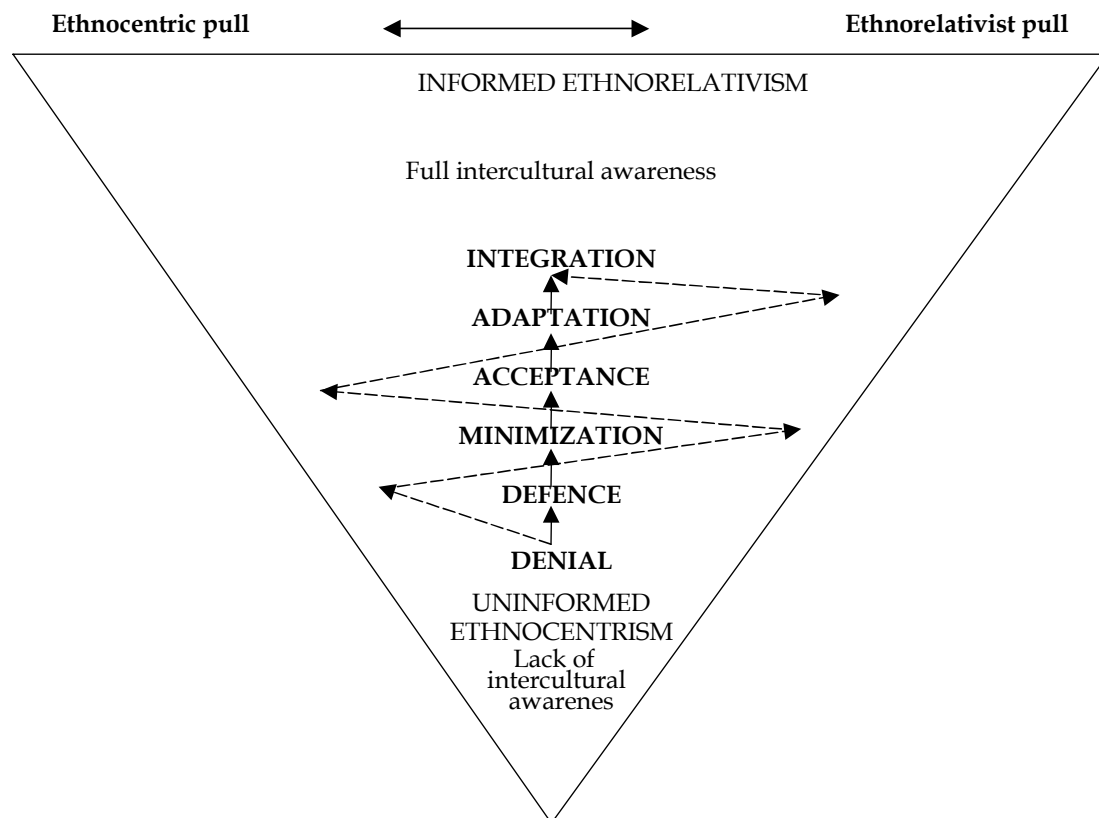
FIGURE 24. A dialectic view of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity: Creating intercultural space between the ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull

Denial can express itself as disinterest, or isolation, in homogenous groups, where there is a failure to generate either the opportunity or the motivation to construct relevant categories for noticing and interpreting cultural differences, resulting in indifference towards cultural others. Alternatively, denial can be expressed as avoidance, which is intentional separation in order to protect one's worldview from change. Extreme attitude of this type dehumanises different cultural behaviour as deficiency in personality or intelligence. The worldview structure allows for no categories, or only very broad categories for constructing extremely simple cultural difference. On the level of cognition, there is an inability to perceive or construe data from differing cultural contexts. Thus this orientation can be described as total lack of intercultural awareness, or a very limited and warped intercultural awareness at best (Bennett 2005).

With each subsequent orientation, as the intercultural awareness becomes more developed, there is a certain pull towards either an ethnocentric or an ethnorelativst orientation. The first shift in the frame of reference from denial to defence has an ethnocentric pull. This is to be expected, as the exposure to other cultures and the beginning stages of intercultural awareness threaten the basic monistic ontology of the starting point of denial orientation at all levels, making one defend one's worldview structure and the cognitive, affective and

behavioural expressions it produces. The strong ethnocentrism expresses itself as a strong resistance to cultural adaptation on the surface level of behaviour and skills, as well as on the deeper level of awareness and attitudes.

The next shift from denial to minimisation orientation swings to the opposite direction, with an ethnorelativist pull on the affective and behavioural levels. The assumed communality makes one to be insistently nice to representatives of other cultures on one's own cultural terms, and to actively support some universal principles, with a mentality of 'Deep down we all want same things.' Thus the change of mentality from the threat expressed in the defence orientation is one of 'if you can't beat them, join them' (Bennett 2005). However, when faced with the evidence of cultural differences, the assumption of similarity is invoked in this orientation to avoid the difficult work of recognizing one's own cultural patterns, understanding others and eventually making the necessary adaptations. Thus the ethnorelativist conceptualisation does not reach the deeper cognitive levels, as the worldview remains rooted in the ethnocentric frame of reference. Intercultural awareness in this orientation reaches only the observable surface level of human existence.

The way I see the opposing pull of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism working out at this stage is that only one of the two areas intrinsic to the process of cultural adaptation as I conceptualise them, is affected. This is only a surface level strategy, where one feels one can afford to, or that it is expedient, to demonstrate ethnorelativist behaviour, and one has developed the appropriate outward skills for expressing it. Yet, the second half of the process of cultural adaptation as I conceptualise it, remains untouched. Thus the tendency for the ethnorelativist pull at the minimization phase does not reach the identity issues.

In the next phase, with the acceptance orientation the pendulum between the opposing pull of ethnorelativism and ethocentrism swings the other way, surprisingly enough, despite a name that may suggest otherwise. At this stage the likelihood is for an ethnocentric pull on the cognitive level. In the acceptance orientation, cultural differences are experienced in context. It is accepted that cultures, including one's own, offer alternative viable solutions to the organization of human existence. The possibility for the ethnocentric pull is presented by the fact that within this orientation, acceptance of cultural relativity does not mean agreement or preference for alternative values, nor that all cultures are seen as equally valuable, but rather acceptance of the distinctive reality of the other culture's worldview as expressed in either their behaviour or values, which are different from one's own. This creates a chance for over-evaluating one's own culture at the expense of other cultures in general, or vis-à-vis a particular culture, as on the level of cognition, this orientation allows for analysing culture-specific frameworks (Bennett 2005). The awakening of the self-reflective consciousness associated with this orientation also means that one can actually experience the ethnocentric pull at a deeper and more conscious level than in the minimisation orientation. The tendency for this orientation on the institutional level is to 'talk the talk' without 'walking the

walk'. It describes the underlying pull towards the ethnocentric orientation. The intercultural awareness level is on the level of cognition and there is a definite shift in the frame of reference to conceptualise the difference between what is an ethnocentric and ethnorelativist orientation.

Hence I postulate that on the level of acceptance orientation, the ethnocentric pull takes place on a wider and more informed basis, and at a deeper level than the respective pull towards ethnorelativism within the minimisation orientation. At this phase the ethnocentric pull takes the form of resistance to cultural adaptation at the level of intercultural sensitivity, as I conceptualise it, i.e. in the areas of conscious awareness and attitude formation touching on a person's identity in an in-depth manner. One is now aware of the existence of culturally bound identities, and the stronger pull of the two is the ethnocentric one, to hold on to one's own cultural identity and values, while contact with, and awareness of the different cultures brings experiences that also present the ethnorelativist pull for one to contend with.

To summarise the difference between the two pull factors within the minimization and acceptance orientations: the ethnorelativist pull within the minimisation orientation mainly exerts its influence on the surface-level cultural adaptation, through the two components of skills and behaviour as part of intercultural effectiveness, while the ethnocentric pull within the acceptance orientation touches both the areas of intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. However, the main pull towards ethnocentrism takes place at the last-mentioned area, touching the deep level processes dealing with possibilities of identity change.

In line with the predicted back and forth movement, the next the shift in the frame of reference from acceptance to adaptation orientation is accompanied by a definite ethnorelativist pull both at the surface level of intercultural communication competency, and on the deeper level of intercultural sensitivity as I conceptualise them. As cognitive frame shifting, this orientation is accompanied by the conscious shift of perspective into an alternative cultural worldview, thus creating access to a facsimile of the alternative cultural experience and the show of cognitive empathy (Bennett 2005).

On the level of behavioural code shifting this orientation means acting in culturally appropriate ways based on an intuitive feel for the alternative worldview. As far as worldview is concerned, in this orientation cultural category boundaries become more flexible and permeable, and experience is consciously linked to a particular cultural context (self-reflexive consciousness). On the level of cognition there is a conscious re-framing of data, which allows experience to be intentionally formed in various cultural contexts. On the level of affect, there is stress on intentional action (mindfulness, consciousness) regarding cultural issues and high value is placed on exercising intercultural competence. On the behavioural level, there is intentional perspective taking, empathy, and an active attempt to increase one's repertoire of cultural behaviour (Bennett 2005). The intercultural awareness in the cognitive level is such that t one is able to make a conscious choice between the ethnocentric and

ethnorelativist orientations. The shift in the frame of reference from one to the other is a well-informed act of volition with practical consequences at all levels. Bennett's (1986, 1993, 2005) description of adaptation as the application of acceptance describes this mentality well.

The final shift from adaptation to integration orientation is accompanied by a swing of the pendulum towards a full awareness concerning the various issues that go into ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. This orientation describes a person who is not defined in terms of any one culture – typically a person who is bicultural or multicultural. People who exhibit this orientation experience themselves as 'in process', and they generally have a wide repertoire of cultural perspectives and behaviours to draw on. Depending on the circumstances, integration orientation can have either a positive, enriching effect, or a negative effect on a person's identity. The positive integration orientation is called constructive marginality. This is a multicultural identity, combined with a tendency to facilitate constructive contact between cultures – for oneself and for others. In a negative instance, integration orientations expresses itself as encapsulated marginality. This is an identity that is not primarily based in any one culture, combined with feelings of anomie and confusion (Bennett 2005).

Thus the starting point and end point, denial and integration orientations, are on the same vertical line, right in the middle in between the ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull effects. The difference is that one starts with a total intercultural unawareness and ends with a developed intercultural awareness, able to make informed choices and construct one's identity the way it suits a person best among the cultural circumstances that one moves in, being able to 'take the best of both worlds'. It is resolved and informed ethnorelativism, while denial is uninformed ethnocentrism. The encapsulated marginality can be seen as unresolved ethnorelativism.

4.2   Fitting the model into related perspectives on cultural adaptation

My way of adapting Bennett's (1986, 1993, 2004) model has parallelisms with other interculturalists. Ting-Toomey (1999: 158-159) also discusses the overlap of differential degrees and various gradations of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism in summarising Lukens' (1978) continuum of communicative distances and interaction. At one end of that continuum, there is simultaneous high ethnocentrism and low ethnorelativism which gradually turns to be the other way round at the opposite end of the continuum, as expressed in the figure presented here:

Distance of Disparagement	Distance of Avoidance	Distance of Indifference	Interaction Understanding	Interaction Respect	Interaction Identity Support

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        ↓              ↓              ↓              ↓              ↓              ↓
 ◄----- X ----------- X ----------- X ----------- X ----------- X ----------- X -----►
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High Ethnocentrism Low Ethnorelativism	High Ethnorelativsm Low Ethnocentrism
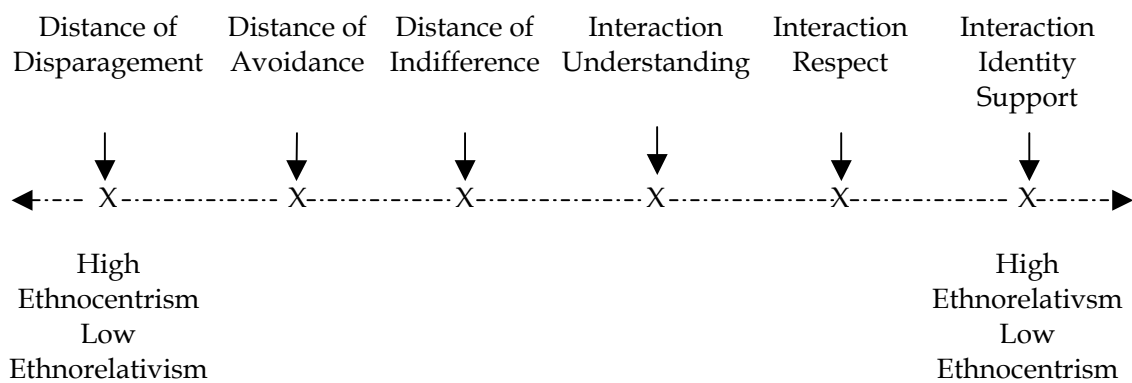
FIGURE 25. Degrees of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism via communication. Adapted from Ting-Toomey 1999:59.

This model, with its six communicative orientations divided into two opposing main categories of distance and interaction and the gradual move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism closely parallels Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) model of developing intercultural sensitivity. I agree with Ting-Toomey's (1999) view that all humans possess at all times some degree of ethnocentric tendency due to their needs for identity security, in-group inclusion and predictability. The degree of ethnocentric tendency in a person can range from a basic need for valued social identity to a defensive need for power. People can also hold ethnocentric views on different aspects of their culture, such as language, literature, food, music, etc. while not being ethnocentric about some other aspects of it. Also, under different circumstances, groups may switch between high ethnocentrism and low ethnocentrism, for example depending on the existence of perceived threats by outsiders, for example (Ting-Toomey 1999:158).

Bennett's (1986, 1993) model presents the ethnocentric and ethnorelativist orientations and the six sub orientations as achieved states, and does not address the process of how one moves from one orientation to the other, and how the gradual decrease of ethnocentrism resulting in a corresponding increase and final takeover by ethnorelativism takes place. In a similar continuum model to Bennett's (1986, 1993), while discussing identity contact and intergroup encounters, Ting-Toomey (1999) acknowledges that in the continuum from high ethnocentrism and low ethnorelativism to high ethnorelativism and low ethnocentrism, there is a certain degree of intertwining and overlap of the two at all points, as the above figure depicts.

In my adaptive use of Bennett's concepts I address the nature of the process concerning cultural adaptation, offering a view of how this overlap and gradation between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism is possibly played out at various points on that continuum. In line with Lie's (2003) thinking of globalizing/localizing identities, I see it taking place as continual back-and-forth ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull at the levels of skills, behaviour,

awareness and attitudes, with an ensuing stress. The deeper this pull reaches to one's identity, the more intense is the process of working through the relevant issues of concern, and the more severe the ensuing stress experienced in connection with it. This is inherently a stress producing process. However, resolving the cultural adaptation issues at deeper level also brings about an interculturally more rewarding out come as a holistic change of identity.

Growth of some units always occurs at the expense of others (Crowe 1991, Weinberg 1987). "The adaptive journey follows a pattern that juxtaposes novelty and confirmation, attachment and detachment, progression and regression, integration and disintegration, construction and destruction" (Kim 2001:56-57). My conceptualisation of the back-and-forth ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull share the above views on the nature of the cultural adaptation process, which again are modelled on earlier thinkers.

Stress is said to be at its greatest in the beginning of the cultural adaptation process, when the spiral swings at its widest between the drawing back and leap forward motions in the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, and diminishes over time, depicted by a spiral of gradually diminishing dimensions (Kim 2001:59).

My model, as presented in Figure 24, suggests that the ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull, and the ensuing stress, is more intense the more areas are affected by the pull and the deeper the pull reaches into issues touching one's identity. Moving along the continuum of orientations beginning from denial and ending up with integration, as proposed by Bennett (e.g. 1968, 1993), does not have to take place simultaneously on all levels or in all environments. One may, for example, be in a denial stage with one issue while being at the defence stage with another issue and at an acceptance stage with yet a third issue. In this sense, different amount of stress may be experienced in different areas of cultural adaptation at any one time. Similarly, I see that Kim's (2001) model, in addition to depicting the cultural adaptation process on the whole, can also be used to depict one, or various selected areas of cultural adaptation. As Kim herself states: "The process is continuous as long as there are new environmental challenges." (2001:57) In this sense Kim's (2001) ideas are close to those presented in my adaptive use of Bennett's (e.g. 1986 and 1993) model.

5   Becoming the critical pragmatic intercultural professional

Lie's (2003) concept pair of globalizing/localizing identities and Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) two main orientations of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, with the six sub-orientations describing the gradual development of intercultural sensitivity, are both analyses concerning how identities are changed and reshaped in the context of intercultural contact. Both of them consider the processes of adopting, rejecting, adjusting, and reshaping cultural elements to fit the 'in-between direction', as Lie (2003) calls it, where identities are shaped and reshaped. In this research, I utilize the above scheme of creating intercucltural space to

examine how the surface-level intercultural competence components of skills and behaviour are formed in intercultural contact situations. For Bennett (e.g. 1986, 1993), it is a question of developing intercultural sensitivity. I interpret this scheme in a novel way by looking at the host culture members' deep-level cultural adaptation process as intercultural sensitisation, expressed in growing intercultural awareness and intercultural attitudes. It is a descriptive look at the in-between spaces of processing the above components of intercultural competence.

Next I combine the analytical frameworks presented so far in order to portray the path of becoming a critical pragmatic intercultural professional. To reiterate, the foundation upon which intercultural understanding and co-operation can be built, is that there must be room not only for tolerance but also for critique, including critique of other cultures. The points where this overlapping back and forth movement of mutual critique and adaptation take place are oftentimes points of conflict and crisis. However, at the same time they are also opportunities for deeper cultural learning. Again, to reiterate my earlier discussion on this topic, the role of a strong culture shock experience as a predictor of cross cultural effectiveness has already been attested to by Kealey's (1990) research on the Canadian technical advisors overseas, which involved over 1,400[80] persons in 16 countries of overseas assignment. Such an extensive research data adds to the validity and credence of his conclusions. From this we can draw the conclusion that when all the issues are resolved with full recognition and validation of the opposing pull factors possibly present in them, the ensuing development in intercultural sensitivity is presumably also more firmly grounded. Consequently, the process of intercultural learning becomes less conflict-oriented and less stressful, flowing with more ease and naturalness in all its aspects, on the operational, affective and cognitive levels. Young (1996) epitomises this in the concept of critical pragmatic intercultural professional, with the ability to negotiate hybrid sets of rules and new, shared definition of situation, roles, associated norms and of the expression of self. Figure 26. depicts this process:

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[80]   This figure also includes the family members and the national counterparts interviewed in the research project to get a host culture view of the effectiveness of the advisors.

Globalizing/Localizing
opposing tendencies, overlap & back and forth

Ethnocentric pull   **Ethnorelativst pull**

Critical pragmatic intercultural professional
INTEGRATION

**Mutual
adaptation**

ADAPTATION
critique

ACCEPTANCE
self-reflection

MINIMIZATION

DEFENCE

DENIAL

**Monocultural
professional
competence
and
identity**
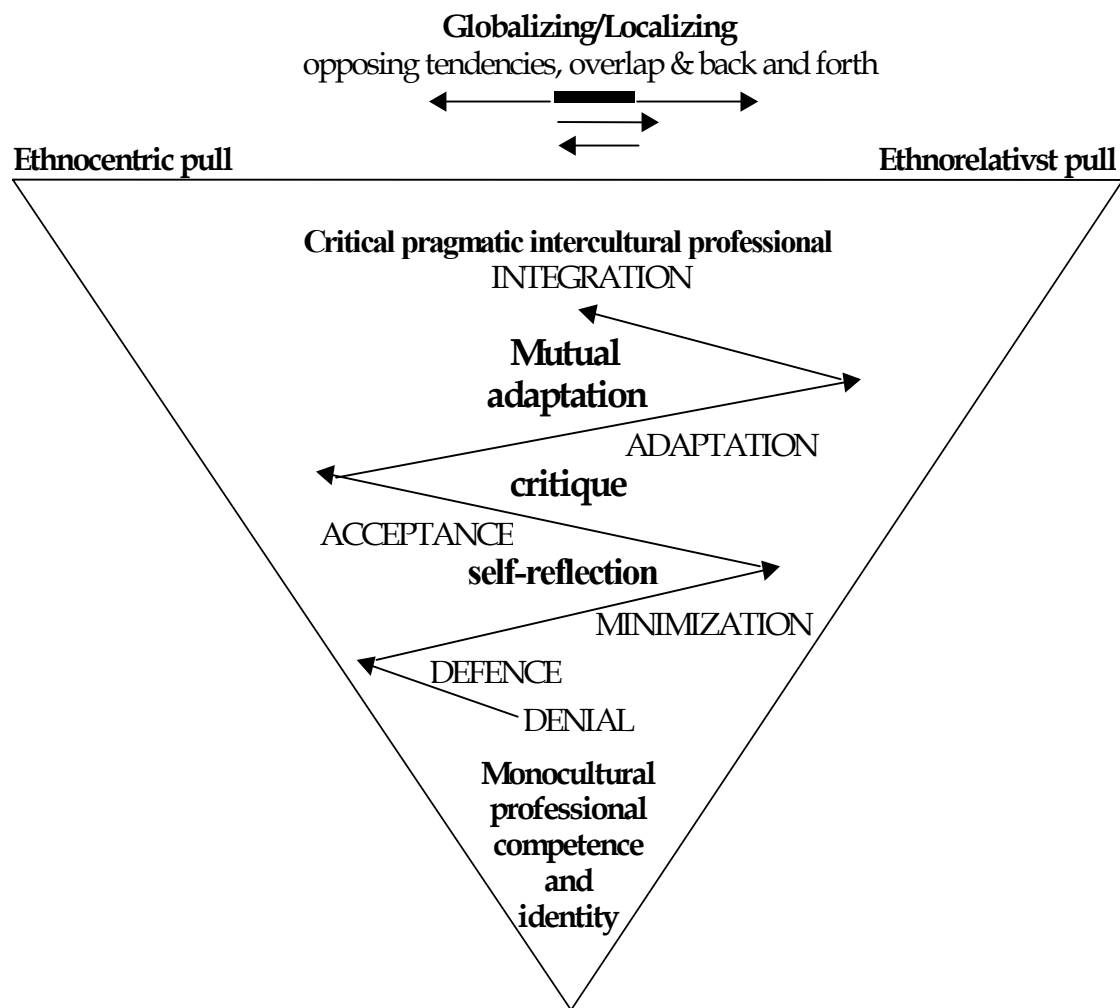
FIGURE 26. Becoming a critical pragmatic intercultural professional professional through the process of creating intercultural space.

5.1 Placing the scheme within the wider context of intercultural theories

How does this scheme fit into the overall scheme of intercultural adaptation theories that have dominated the literature since the 1950's? An overview of the theoretical developments in this field was already discussed in an earlier chapter of this research. However, let us return to it at this juncture through a summary of Anderson's (1994) comprehensive review, where he divides these developments into four types. The first one is the recuperation model, based on the concept of culture shock (Oberg 1960), elaborated on by the concepts of psychological crisis and identity diffusion (Garza-Guerrero 1974). The second type is the learning model with emphasis on the need to obtain the necessary knowledge (social routines) and skills (communication) to function in a new set of socio-cultural situations (e.g. Taylor 1994b). The third type is the journey

model, charting the process of moving from ignorance of the foreign culture to understanding and acceptance (Bennett 1986, 1993, Kim 2001). The fourth is the equilibrium model, (Grove and Torbjörn 1985) which sees "cross-cultural adaptation as a dynamic process of tension reduction produced when manifested cultural differences disrupt the person's internal balance. The disturbed person then modifies cognitive schemes, behaviour, or the relationship with the new culture until a readjustment to subjective harmony has been achieved" (Smith and Bond 2002:268). Cross-cultural adaptation can also be seen as "a commonplace process of learning to live with change and difference" (Anderson 1994:299). In thinking like this, cultural adaptation gets linked to the literature on general adjustment and constitutes just one type of 'transition experience' (Bennett J. 1977). Adler's (1975,1987) ideas fit within the transition scheme, but he argues that the cross-cultural experience does not shatter ego integrity, but instead leads to a higher level of maturity, being simulated by the confrontation between different cultural systems. He says that the dynamics of the cross-cultural experience at the personal level represent the process of positive disintegration. In the encounter with another culture, the individual gains new experiential knowledge by coming to understand the roots of his or her own ethnocentrism and by gaining new perspectives and outlooks on the nature of culture. Throughout the transitional experience the individual is presented with differences and complexity. When differences cannot be ignored, they become distorted. This distortion gives rise to emotions that each person must come to understand experientially. In so doing, learning, self-awareness and personal growth takes place (Adler 1975:22).

"Cross-cultural adaptation is cyclical, continuous, and interactive" (Anderson 1994:307). What sustains the cultural learner is a willingness to open oneself up to new cultural influences, willingness to face obstacles head on by the use of instrumental strategies and a resolve not to run away (Anderson 1994:313). These motivations require time and peer support (Smith et al. 1963).

In describing the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts as an example of the host culture adaptees' cultural adaptation process, I have taken an integrated approach which looks at the issue from all of the four theoretical perspectives listed above. I start with the mono-cultural intercultural identity undergoing a culture shock experience, but see it as a two-pronged utensil for the purpose of cultural adaptation. On the one hand, often culture shock is first experienced as negative disintegration of one's integrity in the form of identity diffusion in the tradition of the classical culture shock approach, as attested to by the Finnish civil servants' comments concerning the integrity of their professional identity. On the other hand I agree with Adler (1975), as quoted above, concerning cross-cultural experience being a positive disintegration.

The change of focus from negative disintegration to reintegration of one's identity into an interculturally sensitised and competent identity takes place through the learning of new skills and acquiring new attitudes. It also requires a simultaneous unlearning and undoing of some of the old ones respectively.

The scheme developed in this research partially fits into the second type of intercultural theorising. In addition to that, it at the same time intertwines the second type of theorising with the first type by viewing culture shock as having a mediating role in the onset of the intercultural reintegration process. This development process is greatly aided by an experiential way of gaining new knowledge, in the sense Adler uses the term, with peer support giving it valuable assistance. For describing the contents of the learning process, i.e. what is being learned, I have utilized the third type of intercultural theorising through Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) 'journey' type of approach.

When considering how the skills learning cum interpersonal identity development process itself takes place, I have first of all utilized Lie's concepts of globalizing and localizing, coupled with a new interpretation of the overlapping pull between ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pulls, much in the same vein Ting-Toomey (1999) talks about overlap and gradations between these two. I also see this idea in the scheme not being dissimilar to what Anderson (1994) says about the cross-cultural adaptation being cyclical and interactive.

Self-reflection, mutual critique and mutual adaptation are the practical tools employed in the areas of mental activity, communication behaviour and relationship formation that are utilized in this movement, overlapping and back-and forth in nature, or cyclical to use Anderson's[81] terminology. I see these three concepts in the scheme addressing the same concerns as the equilibrium model, where the person modifies cognitive schemes, i.e. behaviour or the relationship to the new culture in a dynamic process of reducing the tension disrupting the internal balance.

The end result in the scheme is the critical pragmatic intercultural professional. By fitting the object of the exercise into the scheme of things I am integrating the traditions of cultural adaptation and acculturation theories into one analytical framework. Traditionally models of cross-cultural adaptation focus more on the process of adjustment over time, while models of acculturation focus more upon the contents, or outcomes of that complex process as achieved states.

I see the four different types of research approaches all addressing different facets of the same thing. Hence they do not individually present the whole picture. They all fall short on certain aspects (Anderson 1994). In this research, I have taken a holistic view. I examine how the cultural adaptation process gets started, what kind of things happen in it, how they happen, what methods are utilized in making them happen and how they affect the persons concerned. I look at this total picture from the points of view of content and process of intercultural adaptation. The content is subdivided into two main areas. The first one deals with skills and behaviour, and the second one with awareness and attitudes.

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[81] Ibid

5.2 Summarising the host culture adaptees' cultural adaptation scheme

The following list summarises the basic components of the scheme of becoming a critical pragmatic intercultural professional. It poses six basic questions to which this research provides some answers. Under each question and answer pair of the scheme it is stated how they fit into the overall framework of intercultural theorising from the past decades:

Relating the scheme's basic questions to the existing types of cultural adaptation theories:

1. How does cultural adaptation get started?
   Culture shock as initial negative identity disintegration experience and unlearning
   - Traditional culture shock theories

2. How does cultural adaptation take place?
   Culture shock as a means for consequent positive, in-depth experiential learning and development of intercultural effectiveness (intercultural communication) and intercultural sensitivity
   - Integrating culture shock theories and learning-model type theories

3. What is learned and developed?
   Understanding concerning the effects of the culture(s) of socialization on both parties in the intercultural contact situations in the areas of worldview structures, cognitive, affective and behavioural schemes, on both individual and organisational levels
   - Journey-type theories

4. What is the mode of learning?
   Continuous, overlapping back and forth dialectical movement between globalizing/localizing and ethnocentric/ethnorelativist pull
   - Integrating adaptations of the journey type and Learning-model type theories in the context of an integrated communication theory

5. What are the tools employed for gaining intercultural effectiveness and sensitivity?
   Reflection, critique and mutual adaptation in the areas of mental activity, communication behaviour and human relationships
   - Equilibrium theories

6. What is the outcome?
   From mono-cultural professional identity and to critical pragmatic intercultural professional
   - Integrating intercultural adaptation and acculturation theories

6 A dialectic perspective of the multi-ethnic customer contacts

Research (Lie 2003 and Young 1996) suggests that the back and forth movement, as part and parcel of the crisis experience is an essential part of the

process of developing intercultural sensitivity. The experiences of the Finnish civil servants within their multi-ethnic customer contacts, as attested to by their comments quoted in this research, show evidence of this two-way movement being an integral part of the intercultural experience. On the level of communication, Finnish civil servants are pulled between the need to adapt to the customers on the one hand and to adapt the customers to the Finnish system on the other hand. They also undergo a processes of cultural learning, which at the beginning is evidenced in issues dealing with the integrity of their societal framework and their professional and personal identity.

Lie's (2003) concept pair of globalizating/localizing identities describes this process on the level of communication issues, while the concept pair of pull between ethnocentric and ethnorelativist tendencies, adapted from Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) framework of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity describes the same process in connection with the intertwining issues of cultural learning and integrity.

Figure 27. depicts this framework. It lists the integrity issues through the lenses of an ethnocentric pull. It then examines how these issues, when looked at from the point of view of cultural learning, are seen as an ethnorelativist pull. They are viewed as challenges for developing intercultural sensitivity and for moving from a mono-cultural professional identity to an intercultural professional identity. In a parallel manner, when the situation is looked at on the operational level, such as linguistic communication, both verbal and nonverbal, with a strongly expressed need to ensure correct understanding, there is a similar contradictory pull towards two opposing directions. They are the pull to remain a mono-cultural communicator, or to develop intercultural communication competence.

The diagram presented here depicts the processes described above. It is to be noted that professional intercultural identity expressed in mindful intercultural competence is not to be equated with multicultural personal identity. The first mentioned is the intercultural communication competence concerning the relevant professional sphere, expressed in intercultural meta-communication dialogue with persons from another culture in a professional context. The communication has good chances of being successfully carried out with persons from varying cultural background with differing communication styles. This ability is based on deep-level intercultural sensitisation concerning the relationship between culture, language, communication and identity. Multicultural identity is a more holistic concept and describes a person who is able to move comfortably between two or more cultures in various areas of one's life, or to smoothly combine parts of them to make a meaningful whole by taking the best of both worlds.

COMMUNICATION		INTEGRITY	CULTURAL LEARNING
Globalizing	**Localizing**	**Ethnocentric pull**	**Ethnorelativist pull**
Desire to learn other languages better	Using the required official languages of Finland only	Societal concerns • Equal treatment • Gender issues • Individualism	Gaining knowledge and understanding about other cultures Developing empathy for the customers' point of view
Adapting to customers to reach mutual understanding • Accommodating the non-Finnish communication styles (verbal, non-verbal) • Taking initiative in resolving cross-cultural communication clashes	Adapting the customers to the Finnish communication style • Clarity, Sincerity, Brevity • Neutral • Unemotional • Preference for telephone contacts	Administrative concerns • Work ethics • Professional competence • Civil servant's role	Developing professional intercultural identity
Developing intercultural communication	Mono-cultural communicator	Personal integrity concerns within mono-cultural identity • Civil servants • Customers	Developing multicultural identity

FIGURE 27. The main concerns with conflicting tendencies and pull in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts

7 The Finnish civil servants' intercultural competence revisited

The Finnish civil servants' intercultural competence has been discussed in this research as the qualities of the critical pragmatic intercultural professional manifested in mindful communication, and as globalizing/localizing perspective of *'in-between our/their culture'*. The questions I want to raise are:

1. What are the general and contextualised components of intercultural competence of the Finnish civil servants for effectiveness in multi-ethnic customer contacts?
2. How do the contents of these two ways of looking at the Finnish civil servants' intercultural match with each other?
3. What are the components of host culture members' intercultural competence, when looked at as a globalizing/localizing perspective?

How do they compare with those components of intercultural communication, which are listed to be part of the immigrant perspective, the inclusive 'we all here' perspective and the inclusive 'we all here and there' perspective respectively?

I will start with the last question. The host culture members' intercultural competence could be included in all the above three perspectives, in a sense being a conglomeration of them all. This indicates that the host culture members' acquisition of intercultural competence is basically no different from the one that is experienced by people who go to live overseas and face one single new host culture there, or from those people who work in multicultural teams in multinational contexts.

I want to emphasise that the type of all-inclusiveness described above brings out the fact that host culture members' intercultural competence seems to call for a wide range of competencies as social interaction skills and internal processes within the individuals' identities, as host culture members may be involved as counterparts in all of the diverse intercultural encounters within the above-mentioned four perspectives.

In certain professional contexts, such as the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts, where the host culture members are in an extensive and continuous contact with the immigrant population, give them an opportunity to undergo an extensive cultural adaptation process.

Due to the limited contact sphere and lack of support for wider cultural familiarisation with the multi-ethnic clientele, this communicative context can, and often does, demand extensive intercultural communicative skills in order for the customer contacts to be carried out in a way that mutual understanding is reached amicably, and as much as possible, in a non-stressful manner for both parties. When the sole context of intercultural contact is very narrow, such as customer contact situations, acquiring the intercultural competence can also be more demanding than in a situation where a person is immersed in a different culture in its totality. In this type of situation, a person has the opportunity to utilise the newly gained cultural learning and cultural adaptation in one cultural context to another context, both in public and private spheres. A civil servant, whose only contacts with the particular groups of ethnic non-Finns are restricted to the customer contact situation, does not have this advantage.

The results of this research concerning the crucial components of the host culture adaptees' *general* intercultural competence clearly support the findings of earlier research concerning what things are considered to be of central importance for intercultural competence. However, the limited context in which the host culture members have to work means that certain factors rise to a particular importance, requiring a *contextualized* intercultural competence. The context influences both the development of the required intercultural competencies, as well as the content of these competencies.

I will first examine those intercultural competence requirements for the host culture members that are more general in nature and show through the

Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts that the host culture adaptees' intercultural competencies in principle are no different from those of any other cultural adjuster. The requirements of their intercultural competence are quite similar with that of any other newcomer, sojourner or immigrant adapting to a new cultural environment. What is also important to note in this context is that for a truly meaningful, mindful and successful intercultural social interaction to take place, the host culture adaptees' intercultural competence needs to be as extensive and deep reaching as that of the cultural adapters' to the host culture. The requirements for handling multi-ethnic customer contacts in the context of Finnish government authorities fit in well with some of those components of intercultural competencies which have been widely accepted as being of central importance and expounded by prominent interculturalists of today (e.g. Kealey 1995, Touraine 2000, Gudykunst and Hammer 1988, Ward 2003, Salo-Lee 2006, Ting-Toomey 1999, Stahl 2001). After that I will turn to the contextualized intercultural competence required of the Finnish civil servants within their multi-ethnic customer contacts. However, the general and contextualized host culture members' intercultural competencies are by no means mutually exclusive. They are rather intertwined and overlapping, as will be evident from the way I tie in the generally accepted intercultural competencies into the concept conglomeration of critically pragmatic interculturalism within the particular contexts of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts.

7.1   The general intercultural competencies for customer service

Research into intercultural competence has identified two different types of criteria, i.e. organisation-level competencies and individual competencies. The individual attributes approach to intercultural competence, based on a humanistic philosophical position that mutual knowledge of one another's ways of thinking creates intercultural understanding and ultimately allows practical co-operation, has been criticized for being just soft-hearted idealism. A contrary viewpoint to this is expressed by the following quote:

"Perhaps the criticism would be best directed at a more naïve version, which pretends that harder structural factors, such as well planned projects, matter little. The more mature version – which maintains that as long as these other factors are more or less right, the attributes of the individual parties become critically determinant – remains a valuable insight" (Kealey1995:80).

I apply some of the generally accepted components of intercultural competence into the context of host culture adaptees for the purpose of pointing out that in principle they are no different, neither in qualitatively or quantitatively, from the intercultural competence required of persons entering new cultures. I approach the intercultural competence of the Finnish civil servants with the above insight. The roles and styles of work of multilateral employees, developmental NGO workers and international business collaborators nowadays are ever more demanding due to the nature of the task.

The personal qualifications and skills they are likely to require in the future are also getting more diverse (Kealey 1995:117). The comments of the Finnish civil servants in this research concerning their multi-ethnic customer contacts confirm these notions.

There are two significant parallelisms between the situations of the one-site, developmentally relevant North-South collaborators in Kealey's (1990, 1995) studies and that of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts, which has prompted me to utilise his conceptualisation in describing their professional competence. First of all, for both groups, the focus is the intercultural effectiveness in the professional context. Secondly, owing to the first-mentioned fact, the intercultural contact only needs to be actualised in certain limited contexts, with a limited number of people and with a limited number of topics. There is no obvious necessity for an all-encompassing cultural adaptation. Yet, the above limitations actually mean that these kinds of intercultural contacts can be particularly demanding, calling for a contextualised intercultural competence. This calls for a deep-level adaptation effort, often including a profound culture shock phase and stress, for a greater professional success and interculturally sensitised identity to materialise from the multi-ethnic customer contacts. Kealey's (1995) results indicate that it is worth investing in the kind of intercultural training that includes awareness concerning the process of developing intercultural sensitivity.

I start with three generally recognized intercultural competencies recognized by earlier intercultural research, (e.g. Gudykunst and Hammer 1988, Kealey 1995, Ting-Toomey 1999, Touraine2000, Stahl 2001, Ward 2003, Salo-Lee 2006), which I likewise see as being of crucial importance in the particular context of Finnish civil servants' relationships with the ethnically non-Finnish clientele. They are:

1 Enabling organisation
2 Dialogical meta-communication
3 Flexibility

I first look at how the right handling of organisational factors can empower the individual factors to a fuller intercultural potential and then explore two individual level qualities that could be seen as being critically determinant in the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts. I will also tie each component into those within the concept of critical pragmatic intercultural professional as the focal point of this research.

7.2   Enabling organisation: 'Possibilities for increased effectiveness'

Enabling organisation as a concept first of all has particular relevance to developing the intercultural effectiveness in the context of the Finnish authorities' social interactions with the immigration population in the increasingly multicultural environment of today. Seen in this light, it fits within the critical thinking and action for organisational change and development promoted with the concept of critical pragmatic intercultural professional. The

term 'enabling organisation' is a combination of parts of Kealey's (1995) two terms of project organization approach and enabling environment approach. Kealey has coined them for the mega-context of bilateral/multilateral collaborative projects as joint ventures with the ultimate goal of knowledge transfer, where these two factors are seen as making these types of North-South co-operative efforts more effective. Literature on joint ventures shows a failure rate, which is surprisingly high, perhaps as much as one half of them being aborted at some point before completion (Konopacki 1992, Kealey 1995:70). The most successful joint ventures … "have understood from the outset that the development of a trusting relationship across barriers of language, culture, education, and world view requires generous investment of time and attention" (Vlachoutsicos 1993, Kealey 1995:71).

Even though Kealey's (1995:81,83) discussion on the components of intercultural competence reflect larger global and national contexts of economic, political, and social factors affecting the social interaction between organizational bodies, the basic principles can be applied to other contexts. In this research, from the components listed by Kealey (1995:82) in connection with the project organisation approach, two principles are applicable to the more limited context of the multi-ethnic customer contacts in two Finnish governmental organisations. The first principle is the organizational learning and the second one is the kind of capacity building in which institutional weaknesses are identified all across the board and key concern areas upgraded.

In maintaining an enabling environment, sustainable skills-building efforts depend greatly on a congenial environment, on the policy adapted on the regulatory context, and on the 'social scaffolding' (author's quotes). The last mentioned term describes the cultural norms and social realities affecting the co-operation and sustainability of the project. Social scaffolding also includes the general climate and the ability of the administrative system to garner support and acceptance for the initiatives of change agents. In the context of either furthering or hindering the development of the intercultural communication competence of the civil servants, I interpret the social scaffolding in this context to be the administrative scaffolding, as the norms and realities of the work-place that affect the operation and sustainability of the intercultural competencies (Kealey 1995:83).

Often the agents trying to affect changes in this context are the grass-roots level personnel involved in customer contacts. This is also evidenced from the empirical data of this research. The sentiments expressed by some respondents in the surveys reveal that they feel they have been left alone in this task due to lack of instructions, with the result that they individually take the responsibility of figuring out workable methods of communication. For the host culture members' intercultural competence in the context of civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts, institutional support in the forms described above adds to the degree of empowerment considerably. It brings the competence to the level of the institutionally critical intercultural approach in the scheme of mindful intercultural competence displayed by a critical pragmatic intercultural professional.

To compensate for the limited sphere of intercultural contact with the multi-ethnic clientele outside the working context, the civil servants need organisational support to carry out this task efficiently and competently. It should be done in a mutually satisfactory manner for the individual civil servants, the office represented by them and for the customer concerned, as they also have expressed through their comments quoted in this research.

The role of the administrative arrangements was to a certain extent gauged in this research by the multiple choice question concerning how do the internal work processes affect the stress level felt in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. In the combined results of the DOI and KELA, this factor came out being the third most stressful (68 %) out of the ten factors in the questionnaire in connection with the telephone contacts. In face-to-face contact it was placed as the fifth most stressful factor, with almost half of the respondents (49 %) reporting feeling stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. The comments expressed in this connection talk about the difficulties of taking care of the multi-ethnic customer contacts in a competent manner, when not everybody is pulling in the same direction.

The suggestions coming from the empirical data include targeted personnel training, ample customer time, and special service counters to account for the special needs of these types of customer contacts. A general understanding from the administrative level concerning the demands of these contacts was also called for, as well as recognition of the central role they can have in the whole process of decision-making within the administrative system. These findings indicate the importance of appropriate administrative arrangements for enabling a competent handling of the multi-ethnic customer contacts. These are all matters that go beyond the individual civil servant's personal approach to the customer service task, even though on the individual level too they can, and often do, work towards making a positive difference within the constraints of the administrative system.

It takes time, continual effort and resources to develop a comprehensive system which takes into consideration the special requirements of the multi-ethnic customer service system, including targeted training of the personnel: "It would be a long-term attack across a broad front, not an attack on an isolated spot in the hope that results would spill over to the rest of the organization" (Kealey 1995:82). As the latter part of Kealy's above quote shows, not taking a comprehensive approach means that one falls short of wide-ranging and sustainable results. This is truly attested to by Kealey's (1995) mention of a failure rate of almost 50 % in co-operative joint ventures globally owing to this factor.

The notion of widening intercultural competence beyond the individual to the organisational level is pluralistic in Kealey's (1995:82) reasoning in the sense it can be carried further still, by seeking to affect similar capacity building of entire functional fields, such as public sector on the whole, as well as their networks with private sector or any other stakeholders in their common tasks, "on the grounds that what matters is a country's capacities" (italics added) (Kealey 1995:82).

In commenting on the problems encountered in international projects aimed at technology and knowledge transfer, Kealey (1995) says that half of them do not get completed and hence do not reach the intended goals. In connection with the Kenya study already mentioned earlier on, poor project definition and planning, differences in understanding and objectives between donor and host countries, and the lack of an institutional framework to support the transfer of skills were the main factors inhibiting effectiveness (Kealey, 1995:3). Out of the four factors mentioned, two were organisational factors. This indicates the importance of organizational-level issues in intercultural efforts, in providing the necessary scaffolding for effective action to take place. This same conclusion can be applied to government authorities dealing with an increasing number of immigrant customers. Good planning and organisational support is needed for effectiveness in different areas.

One such area is the personnel resources, i.e. the staff dealing with multi-ethnic customer contacts. It is a worthwhile investment to ensure that the staff becomes interculturally competent to handle this task. If the initial adaptation phase of this task takes a lot of effort and calls for special support measures for the staff and the clientele, it is a worthwhile investment for a better quality effectiveness in the long run. "The fact that a large percentage of those who will be most effective overseas will initially experience severe culture shock only emphasizes the need for in-country support for advisors and their families" (Kealey 1995:38). The same conclusion can be extended to the workplace context studied in this research.

7.3   The dialogical intercultural meta-communication

Communication that is deemed to be on an adequate level to reach the needed level of understanding has been regarded by many as the key component of intercultural effectiveness (Gudykunst and Hammer 1988, McGuire and McDermot 1988), and has actually often been used as measure of intercultural competence (Ward 2003:90). What is meant by the 'needed' level is of course a matter of interpretation and depends from the situation, so perhaps another phrase to describe the central importance of communicative competence in the intercultural context is to talk about the situationally sensitised intercultural communication competence. The comments of the Finnish civil servants concerning their multi-ethnic customer contacts, as discussed under the Communication and Cultural learning vistas, most definitely attest to this, with communication issues being a central concern in them. With the term dialogical intercultural meta-communication I describe the *pragmatic* intercultural skills and behaviour aspect in the attainment of cultural adaptation as I conceptualise it through the goal of achieving the competence of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional.

The fact that the intercultural contact with the clientele is often limited to the customer service situation only, is one reason why I see dialogical intercultural meta-communication competence to be of central importance in

the effective handling of the multi-ethnic customer contacts by Finnish civil servants. The fact that the civil servant does not necessarily have a wide knowledge base or understanding of every non-ethnic Finnish customers' cultural background, calls for this kind of particular, situationally sensititised intercultural communication. It enables the civil servant to communicate about the cultural conditioning affecting what is being said and *how* it is said.

This is not to say that the Finnish civil servants involved in this research would not have any experience of other cultures outside their working life, as many of them certainly have had, and continue to have, intercultural exposure in varying measures. What is meant by 'limited' in this context is that in most cases the customer contact is the only context in which the Finnish civil servants come into contact with these particular persons, or nationalities. Both parties bring into the customer contact their cultural backgrounds and prior experiences, part of which are the expectations concerning the workings of administrative culture. This includes much more than just the culturally conditioned outward linguistic exchange, with its verbal and non-verbal aspects. However, communication, expressed as a holistic framework of culturally conditioned administrative system, is the channel through which these cultural patterns and expectations are expressed.

Multi-ethnic customer contacts are quite demanding in this respect, calling for great versatility in intercultural communicative competence. One reason for this is limited cultural knowledge: The civil servants do not necessarily have the knowledge concerning a particular customer's cultural background or the administrative culture the customer is used to. Thus they may not understand what effect they may have on how the customer communicates or interprets the civil servant's communication. Possible predictable causes of intercultural misunderstandings may thus be missed. Neither does the civil servant necessarily know how customer's personal circumstances might affect the particular social interaction at the time of the customer contact. However, those situations where such issues *are* divulged in the customer service situation by the clientele, or in situations when it is quite evident that a cultural misunderstanding is at work in the situation, also call for such skills as listening, empathy, understanding and openness. These are all aspects of dialogical competence (Salo-Lee 2006). As seen in this research, they are also those qualities that the Finnish civil servants themselves stress in their comments as being important for the smooth running of their multi-ethnic customer contacts.

The double nature of the Finnish civil servants' task in their multi-ethnic customer contacts indicates the importance of dialogical intercultural meta-communication competence. As already mentioned in various contexts in this research, in the course of their work the civil servants are not only taking care of the customers' cases. They are simultaneously also informally integrating the customers into the Finnish administrative system and into the Finnish way of communicating. This is an important function, needing the qualities of dialogical competence listed above, as well as the ability to take responsibility

for the communication to proceed. Such responsibility is one component of the dialogical competence (Salo-Lee 2006).

'Responsibility' as part of the dialogical competence in the context of the Finnish civil servants' integrative task means taking the conscious initiative in bringing the other person into an awareness of the dynamics concerning cultural adaptation and integration issues at work in the situation. This calls for the ability to dialogue in a sensitive and constructive way, whether a particular intercultural matter is the issue behind the difficulty encountered, or whether the cause of the problem is something else. Ting-Toomey (1999) talks about the responsibility of one party in the social interaction being able to initiate effective intercultural communication, even though ideally it takes both parties to be most effective.

Dialogical competence is also expressed by engaging in mutual critique and adaptation in the sense of looking at one's own ways of doing things from an outsider's point of view and asking what the Finnish administrative communication can learn from the immigrants, how one should adapt one's communication to a particular multi-ethnic customer contact, for example. In this research the Finnish civil servants show evidence of this kind of self-critique and adaptive communication taking place in a manner that depicts the components of dialogical competence as it is described above (e.g. Holden 2002 and Salo-Lee 2006), indicating that it is an important factor in their working methods with the multi-ethnic clientele.

Also intensifying the need for dialogical competence on the part of the Finnish civil servant is the fact that the multi-ethnic clientele's exposure to intercultural issues and awareness of their own behaviour's cultural conditioning varies, as does their involvement in the Finnish society. With some of the ethnically non-Finnish customers, there may be very little prior exposure to other cultures. To others, their contacts with the Finnish authorities may be almost the only social interaction they have with the host culture members. These kinds of factors make it even more vital that the civil servants have good dialogical competencies. Again, at times the scales can also weigh the other way, with the ethnically non-Finnish customer having more exposure to other cultures and being interculturally more sensitive and competent than the Finnish civil servant. In these cases the Finnish civil servants need to develop their dialogical competence for increased intercultural effectiveness.

The foreigners' first contacts with the Finnish society and Finnish authorities are often with the Immigration Department of Finland and The Social Insurance Institution in Finland, whose multi-ethnic customer contacts are under scrutiny in this research. Thus the chances for mutual misunderstanding are at their greatest in these instances.[82] Once a wrong picture has been formed, or a mistake been made by either party as a result of a wrong interpretation, it takes much more time and effort for both parties to correct the situation, than if the situation had been sorted out in the first

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[82]   This topic was also brought up already earlier on, in discussing the background and context factors of the multi-ethnic customer contacts

instance, or at least a positive start on intercultural communication and towards integration had been made. This fact warrants a need for well-developed dialogical competence in the multi-ethnic customer.

Starting off on the right track, so to speak, is mutually beneficial in the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts. Things get handled more smoothly, and the customers get an understanding of the new environment they are functioning in. It also has positive ramifications for the image of the civil service. In this respect, dialogical competence is a crucial part of the civil servant's intercultural competence at the initial phase of a non-Finnish customer's contacts with the Finnish authorities. This is an area of intercultural competence, which is in constant demand, as the multi-ethnic customer contacts of the two government bodies involved in this research will always include customers who have newly arrived in Finland and are unfamiliar with the Finnish communication style.

That dialogic competence is an important factor in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts is also due to language difficulties, which feature as the central stressor in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts in this research. In the combined results for the DOI and KELA, the civil servants' ability with foreign languages came out as the highest stress factor in telephone contacts (79 %) and as the second highest stress factor in the face-to-face contacts with the multi-ethnic clientele (70 %). When asked to place the stressor into an order of stressfulness, in the KELA survey language issues featured prominently, with the customers ability in Finnish and other languages placed as the second and third most stressful factors respectively, and the civil servants' own ability in foreign languages coming straight after, as the fourth most stressful factor.

As far as the civil servants' language ability is concerned, one obvious answer is to increase the proficiency levels in foreign languages. However, particularly when it is a matter of the customer's limited ability to communicate in any of the languages, which the civil servant is able to use, the above mentioned components of dialogic competence become increasingly important for the customer contacts to be handled in a sensitive manner that understanding is reached. As is evident from the comments in this research, the need to reach an understanding as to what is meant by either, or both parties is a central concern.

This central concern for correct understanding in the multi-ethnic customer contacts under study here brings me to the meta-communication aspect in the definition of dialogical meta-communication competence. The quantitative results of this research show that in the combined results of the DOI and KELA concerning the overall stressfulness of the ten stressors examined, the complicated nature of the customers' cases is ranked as the most stressful factor in the face-to-face contacts (73 %) and as the second most stressful factor in the telephone contacts with the multi-ethnic customers (76 %) so the actual percentage is slightly higher there. However, the main point is that the complexity of the customer's cases is a considerable cause of stress. This is also attested to by the fact that when asked to rate the stressors in an order of

stressfulness, the complicated nature of the customers' cases came out as the second most stressful factor.

The above figures pointing to the grave difficulties experienced in this area also attest to what was said earlier in connection with 'Communication concerns'. They included the detrimental effect of such issues as the emphasized addressee focus on grounding activities, the impression management by the customers inhibiting the effectiveness of communication in connection with limited language ability, and the interconnectedness of language and culture. These factors all add to the complexity of the communication situation.

When all of the above factors are summed up, a following picture emerges: The Finnish civil servant and the customers only have a limited sphere of contact with each other, i.e. the intercultural customer contact situation. The success of this interaction can vary for many reasons. Both parties may come to the situation with possibly limited background knowledge on how the communication culture, and other cultural and/or individual factors affect the situation. They may also face additional communication problems due to language difficulties. The customer's case may be quite complicated and difficult to explain, with part of the difficulty arising from the different administrative system of Finland from what the customer is used to. Explaining the Finnish system is part and parcel of the civil servants' unofficial job description. They continually bear the responsibility of trying to make sure that the customer understands and at the same time try to ensure that they, too, equally understand what the customer says despite the above-mentioned limitations and possibilities for misunderstanding. Coping with the reactions of the customers when they arise and being the 'intercultural practice ground' so to speak for the new immigrants, and vice versa, as they themselves are learning new things with new sets of clients, are also part of the multi-ethnic customer contact work. Part of the professional competence on the civil servants' part, and a measure of cultural adaptation on the part of the customer, is to learn to differentiate, for example, is a particular communication clash due to intercultural factors, or is the root cause something else. With such diverse factors at work in the background, no wonder both parties in the multi-ethnic customer contact get left breathless and stressed out at times.

The above description of what may be going on in one single multi-ethnic customer contact shows that it is a communication context with several complex issues condensed into one single intercultural communication situation. This kind of situation demands for a high level of intercultural competence. One hast to know in which way to transcend the difficulties in a linguistically appropriate level onto the level of meta-language, to determine the crucial elements at work in the dynamics of a particular customer contact situation, and come across in a spirit of genuine dialogue in order to assist the other person to handle the situation on the same level.

The limited context of the contact and the fairly limited time of the customer contact[83] combined with the complexities discussed above mean that to be interculturally effective in the situation, the demanding nature of the communication context calls for an equally demanding communication strategy, with a simultaneous merging of different components of communicational competence. When it is a question of intercultural issues, the ability for meta-language communication in a dialogical manner is crucial for handling the multi-ethnic customer contacts in an effective and mutually satisfactory manner. Thus the acute need for dialogical intercultural meta-communication competence in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts for genuine intercultural effectiveness to be reached. Dialogical meta-communication competence in the intercultural arena needs to be grounded on interculturally sensitised identity for it to be most effective and sustainable as a skill.

7.4 Flexibility: 'Open horizons'

Flexibility is one of the component qualities of intercultural competence mentioned by Stahl (2001) and others. Another component factor he also lists is tolerance of ambiguity. The way I look at it, flexibility is an overt expression of an attitude of being able to tolerate ambiguity. Seen in this sense, these two really reflect two facets of the same quality. Flexibility expressed on the level of communicative behaviour could thus also be part of the intercultural meta-communication competence. Be this as it may, while dialogical intercultural meta-communication competence discussed above focuses directly on the communicative competencies, flexible attitude and behavioural flexibility as an outward manifestations of an attitude of keeping 'open horizons' focuses more on the identity of the intercultural communicator. They address the issue of cultural adaptation and intercultural effectiveness as the reshaping of one's identity in a manner Lie[84] talks about in connection with creating intercultural spaces via globalizing/localizing identities.

The term 'open horizons' was already introduced when discussing the two topics of intercultural philosophy as mutual adaptation and critique and critical pragmatic intercultural professionalism, as well as in connection with the topic of cultural learning vista. I will also return to this theme later on in the application section.

This component of intercultural competence addresses the integrity and cultural learning vistas of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts. Within the scheme of critical pragmatic intercultural professional, it touches on the intercultural sensitivity, expressed through awareness and attitudes. In this context being flexible means being *interculturally* critical about ones own culturally bound identity and engaging in the process of cultural

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[83]   Even though for the reasons listed in this section, the multi-ethnic customer contacts can take up more time than the customer contacts with ethnic Finns.

[84]   Ibid

adaptation towards interculturally sensitised identity, manifested in mindful intercultural competence.

Flexibility, as described above, is a central component quality in the intercultural effectiveness of the Finnish civil servants under study in this research. This is primarily due to the multiplicity of ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the clientele they are in contact with. They are constantly faced with new people, some of whose cultural ways of expressing their identities and communicating they are already familiar with through their long work experience in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. This particularised cultural knowledge has often been gained through the method of trial and error. They also continually need to learn new ways of adjusting their behaviour with those customers who come from backgrounds that they are less familiar with. Apart from the extent of their own intercultural repertoire and intercultural sensitivity, and for the need to keep on extending it and applying it in a flexible manner, they also need to be flexible in taking into account the extent of the respective knowledge of each customer that they serve. They need to take varying approaches depending on how much knowledge and experience of the Finnish systems the particular customer has.

One way of looking at the issue of flexibility in connection with the identity issues of the Finnish civil servants and their multi-ethnic clientele is through the responses to the questions in the quantitative data concerning the customers' and the civil servants' emotional reactions. According to these responses, displaying intercultural competence means being flexible in handling ones own and the customers' emotional reactions, not letting them get the best of oneself or hindering the handling of the customer's case.

Based on the quantitative results of this research, the customers' emotional reactions are a central concern to the respondents. In the Second Survey conducted in the Directorate of Immigration, customers' emotional reactions came out as the most stressful factor when the different stressors were placed in the order of stressfulness. Likewise, when the individual stressors were rated through the multiple choice questions, again customers' emotional reactions came out as the most stressful factor in connection with the telephone contacts, at 80 % total stress level. In connection with the face-to-face contacts it received the third highest stress figure (38 %). In the KELA survey this stressor came out as the fifth most stressful factor when measured in percentages, yet in both modes of customer contacts more than half of the respondents reported stress of varying levels (55 % in the telephone contacts and 66 % in the face-to-face contacts). When combining the KELA and DOI responses, the customers' emotional reactions come out as only the fourth most stressful factor in both modes of customer contacts. However, measured in percentages, still more than half of the respondents, as many as 62 % in the telephone contacts and 54 % in the face-to-face contacts, feel varying levels of stress due to this factor. These results indicate that the customers' emotional reactions are of considerable concern to the civil servants, with much emotional energy going into handling them.

In looking at the other side of the matter, the civil servants' emotional reactions in the multi-ethnic customer contact situations came out lower on the overall stressfulness scale counted in percentages, being the seventh most stressful factor. Still, around half of the respondents reported stressing about it (56 % in the telephone contacts and 47 % in the face-to-face contacts). When the two surveys are looked at separately, in the Directorate of Immigration the civil servants' emotional reactions received a total stress percentage of 55 % in the telephone contacts and 44 % in the face-to-face contacts, while the respective figures for KELA were 55 % and 66 %. So, in summary, about half of all the respondents felt some level of stress due to their own emotional reactions in the customer contacts. However, when the stressors were listed in an order of stressfulness, this factor was placed low on the stressfulness scale in both respondent groups, as the eight most stressful out of the 10 stressors in the Directorate of Immigration and only as the ninth out of ten in the Social Insurance Institution. These results indicate that even though half of the civil servants experience stress because of their own emotional reactions, they have learned to keep it under control and act flexibly in the situation.

The quantitative results of these two questions, when looked at together, show that dealing with the clientele's emotional reactions touches on the identity issues of both parties, taking up a lot of psychological energy. Both parties negotiate new ways of doing and being with each other, part of which is experiencing culture shock reactions that are manifested in emotional overreactions, for example. Part of the general cultural adaptation process is to learn flexibility. The comments of the civil servants quoted in this research show that some of the civil servants have learned this to a wider degree than the others, and for those who have still more to learn in the area of cultural adaptation, flexibility is one of the crucial qualities to nurture as part of one's intercultural effectiveness.

7.5 Intercultural professionalism as contextualized intercultural effectiveness

In looking at the globalizing/localizing perspective within the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contact situation, the contextualized intercultural competence can be summed up with the term intercultural professionalism, personified by the critical pragmatic intercultural professional. It is important to stress the *inter*cultural nature of the professionalism and critical pragmatism, which define it further. This is what differentiates it from the more narrow culturally bound professionalism. The point I am making is that in intercultural contact situations, when faced with intercultural mismatches and misunderstandings, the civil servant can act in one of two ways. The first option is carry out the task in an interculturally-aware manner, with positive ramifications for effectiveness in communicative issues, particularised cultural learning and in the development of intercultural professional identity, which means being able to function in multicultural and pluralistic contexts.

The second alternative is that when intercultural challenges present themselves in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, one can be critical of the other party, as well as of oneself, from a culturally bound perspective. Likewise, one can try to find pragmatic and immediate solutions to the intercultural communication concerns in the multi-ethnic customer contacts from a culturally bound framework, rather than tackling these issues with an intercultural approach. Engaging in these kinds of culturally bound mono-cultural strategies is not a very effective way to garner intercultural understanding in multi-ethnic customer contacts. Neither is it conducive to particularized cultural learning, nor for learning to appreciate intercultural professional identity. The main goal in these situations, professionally speaking, is first and foremost to ensure mutual understanding, as the task is to be able to take care of the customer's case. Not making sure that this is done to the best of one's ability is unprofessional.

The fact is, though, that both parties involved in the communication situation often choose culturally bound strategies in the multi-ethnic customer contacts unconsciously. The civil servant isn't aware of the limiting affects it has on one's intercultural professional competence, or how the ethnically non-Finnish customers understand the communication. Neither do the ethnically non-Finnish customers necessarily realize that they are interpreting the communication in the customer contact situation through their own cultural filter, and that the Finnish civil servant may also be misinterpreting the customer's communication for the same reason. If one is aware of what it is that is hindering understanding, the tendency is to address that issue directly with the necessary tools in order to rectify the situation. However, lack of such awareness hinders one from using such professional tools that are available and would be needed for clarifying intercultural misunderstandings.

The crucial factors for the host culture members' contextualised mindful intercultural competence in the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts are the intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural awareness and an attitude of interculturally open horizons are the two components of intercultural sensitivity. From these two deep-level adaptive components rise the two surface-level competencies of particular intercultural competence and general intercultural skills, expressed in actual behaviour. For the surface-level communicative competencies to have a genuine, enduring and sustainable effect, they need to be firmly grounded on the deep level sensitivity components. If the two surface-level intercultural competence components of intercultural communication skills and outward expressions of intercultural behaviour are used without the deep-level intercultural sensitivity components, they are left 'hanging in the air' so to speak. Such usage employs them more as mechanical gimmicks, rather than as expressions of cultural adaptation on the level of identity change towards intercultural professionalism in the context of multiculturalism and pluralism. Hence only employing the surface-level intercultural adaptive measures renders the exercise both qualitatively and quantitatively less effective interculturally.

In this connection it also needs to be restated that when the intercultural contact situation and the cultural adaptation process are looked at as a two-way process, with both parties affecting each other, as stressed throughout this research, the fact remains that one's attitude often is detectable in the communication situation. Customers can detect when intercultural competence I sutilized just as the means of going through the motions for getting thing done. Likewise, they sense when a person is expressing genuine intercultural sensitivity, with the communicative competencies resting on awareness concerning intercultural issues, and on a genuinely open attitude towards those with a different culture and language.

Of course, intercultural misunderstandings can cause misinterpretations of another's attitudes by both parties. However, this is exactly the point I was making above in stressing the crucial importance of intercultural awareness and a flexible, open horizons attitude. If one has a highly developed intercultural awareness, the possible intercultural misunderstanding and misinterpretation of one's attitude can be more easily detected, and the situation corrected in an attitude of acceptable towards the other party in the communication situation, with the right communicative tools. Hence, it can be said that the intercultural competencies expressed through intercultural communication skills and through other behavioural level activities are less effective on their own, without the components of intercultural sensitivity expressed in genuine understanding for those with a different culture and language.

Thus I conclude that to display mindful intercultural competence, the intercultural professional first and foremost needs to emphasize intercultural professional identity, expressed by a deep-level recognition of one's own culturally-bound ways of working and communicating, as well as understanding for the multi-ethnic clientele's respective position in the intercultural communication situation with the Finnish civil servants. Several researchers of multiculturalism in Finland have arrived at similar conclusions. In addressing the concept of professionalism in the context of multi-ethnic work, Forsander et al. (1994) state that being able to recognize the effects of cultural and religious affiliations on their working methods, attitudes and values will enable persons to act objectively, and 'rise above' these affiliations so to speak, while working in multi-ethnic contexts. They also state that part of intercultural professionalism in working with immigrant population is to understand the various issues surrounding the immigrants' move from their own country. These include the reasons for leaving one's home country and the attitude of the host country towards the newcomer. The latter mentioned are expressed in the immigration policy and through the general attitude of the public towards immigration. Other factors at work in the situation are cultural issues, both as particularised cultural knowledge and as an awareness of intercultural issues. An additional element is the ability to take note of the particular situation of the customer.

As to learning through the threefold scheme of awareness, knowledge and action (Matinheikki-Kokko 1997b), intercultural training can bring about a

conscious shift in the frame of reference by encouraging a change in one's behaviour through taking intercultural action, and making that the starting point for cultural adaptation, with the knowledge and awareness aspects following on from that. Matinheikki-Kokko (1997b) summarises this approach by stating that the way a person behaves and interprets the actions of a person with a different cultural background, will have an effect on how the other party in the communicative situation behaves.

This positive connection between deep-level understanding of multiculturalism and intercultural effectiveness is also attested to by Kealey (1995). He states that evidence indicates that the Canadian overseas experts who demonstrated the greatest understanding of their partners were also often those who were rated as most effective in transferring skills and knowledge. Overseas effectiveness depends, therefore, on the advisor's ability to understand the nationals with whom he/she works and gain their respect and confidence:

> "A high degree of contact fulfils one's expectations and desires, resulting in less stress and increased satisfaction for the advisor. This, in turn, results in a greater degree of understanding between the advisors and their national counterparts.[85] Greater understanding is likely to contribute to an increase in trust and respect on the part of the national. Learning is facilitated by this foundation of mutual trust and understanding, and an effective transfer of skills and knowledge can occur" (Kealy 1995:61).

The above can also be applied to the Finnish civil servants' relations with their multi-ethnic clientele. The high degree of contact, as understood by Kealey (1995), may not necessarily be achieved in the relatively short time span of the multi-ethnic customer contact situations, even though a single customer contact can be quite long, and the same customer may be in contact with the same civil servant repeatedly. However, this obvious limitation can be, and often is, compensated by the intensity and depth of the communicative interaction in the multi-ethnic customer contact situation. As one does not necessarily have much opportunity for observing and learning about the communication styles and other aspects of the various ethnic groups represented by the clientele outside the customer contact situations, and as one continually meets representatives of new ethnic groups in these customer contacts, one has to constantly be particularly alert concerning how the cultural differences may possibly affect the communication in the customer contacts. In other words, the limited contact sphere, coupled with the large number of culturally conditioned communication styles, requires the Finnish civil servants to adapt to a variety of intercultural situations in order to secure successful communication, which is crucial in this line of work.

The depth and intensity of the communicative contact is expressed in the manner and level of communication. Displaying openness, respect and understanding encourages trust in the clientele. This calls for flexible attitude

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[85]   Nowadays the politically correct term is "partners".

and behaviour, as well as the organisational level support. In this approach the generalized and contextualised intercultural efficiency components become intertwined. Particularly in connection with the informal integration task the civil servants continually perform while taking care of the customers' cases, this kind of approach will greatly enhance their effectiveness in transferring the skills and knowledge in a manner promoted by Kealey (1995:61) in the above quote. This is what is needed by the newcomers in order for them to be able to function without undue stress in the Finnish administrative contexts.

For effective professionalism in the intercultural context, the Finnish civil servants need to develop their intercultural sensitivity as intercultural awareness and flexible attitude, to be able to deal with the multiplicity of cultural communication contexts they face in their daily multi-ethnic customer contacts. Developing this kind of sensitivity at an in-depth level, and likewise instilling it in the clientele if need be, is about helping both sides to take the globalizing/localizing perspective of 'we and they in between here and there'.

In this sense, intercultural sensitivity as part of the contextualized intercultural professionalism of Finnish civil servants is intertwined and equated with the general intercultural competence component of flexibility. By including both 'us' and 'them' this perspective, I already imply that acquiring this perspective calls for a two-way influence, where mutual adaptation is arrived at through self-reflection and mutual critique.

People in social interaction define and influence each other mutually (Scollon and Scollon 1995). One area of further study in connection with the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts would be to examine them from the mutual perspective of how the civil servants' behaviour affects the clientele's intercultural adaptation process and vice versa. However, as already stated at the beginning, the focus of this research has intentionally been shedding light to the host culture member's side of the process.

Intercultural professionalism as the core component within the contextualized effectiveness of the Finnish civil servants leads to the development of an intercultural professional identity. With the focus on mutual cultural learning, where both parties have an openness and acceptance to learning from each other, a civil servant with an interculturally professional identity is, for instance, able to ensure that the principle of equal treatment of customers works in practice by giving the multi-ethnic clientele a genuinely equal opportunity through appropriate means, such as the utilization of flexible communication strategies. A civil servant with an interculturally professional identity also makes a conscious effort to tackle the unofficial integration task vis-à-vis the multiethnic clientele and also makes this cultural adaptation process visible to the clientele in a culturally appropriate manner, whenever needed. In doing this, he/she is taking the initiative negotiating and developing new, shared meanings (Young 1996). I see this as being crucial for the critical pragmatic intercultural professional. This is the central ethos for any bi-directional cultural change with a real chance of success.

Intercultural professionalism as the main component of the contextualized intercultural effectiveness of the Finnish civil servants in their multi-ethnic customer contacts can be further specified and given more content by combining the term with the two qualifying adjectives of critical and pragmatic. In this way we get the phrases 'critical intercultural professional', and 'pragmatic intercultural professional', or professionalism, depending on whether we look at the issue as a personalised, individual-level competence or as an abstract concept, which can be applied to both individual and organizational levels.

The critical intercultural professional expresses intercultural effectiveness by being able take a critical stance towards the cultural conditioning at work on the societal and organisation levels, as well as within his/her own and the clientele's identities. Through cultural learning, the critical intercultural professional can differentiate integrity issues from intercultural issues within the multi-ethnic customer contacts.

The pragmatic intercultural professional displays intercultural meta-communication competence, expressed in the multi-ethnic customer contacts through interculturally appropriate communication skills and behaviour.

The fact that I consider the main component of the contextualized intercultural effectiveness in the Finnish civil servants' intercultural professionalism to be intercultural sensitivity, consisting of awareness and attitude, also has particular significance and ramifications for how I see the attainment of intercultural effectiveness in this context. As it is not possible for the Finnish civil servants to achieve the extent and level of particularised cultural knowledge and learning with which they could master the great variety of culturally conditioned communication repertoires they face in the multi-ethnic customer contacts, they can not always rely on their intercultural communication skills and communicative behaviour to be adequate to cover all eventualities. Hence the particular need for intercultural sensitivity.

Thus the nature of the process of acquiring the kind of intercultural sensitivity I take to be at the core of intercultural professionalism is different from the one involved in learning the more mechanical intercultural skills, such as outward behavioural pattern or communication styles adjustments to accommodate the cultural background of the customers. The process of developing an interculturally professional identity is a deep-level process, which requires going through stages of liminality and working through cultural issues. This must be done in the cognitive, affective and behavioural areas with an awareness of the opposing ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull towards the qualities of critical pragmatic intercultural professional in order to practice mindful intercultural competence.

8   Summarising the analysis

In this research, I set out to explore the cultural adaptation process of a group of Finnish civil servants in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, and its connection with the qualities of intercultural competence as critical pragmatic intercultural professionals.

These themes were further developed with the help of an interdisciplinary analytical framework, drawing on intercultural research, communication studies rooted in the tradition of humanities, and social psychology. The empirical data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The qualities of the critical pragmatic intercultural professional were seen to include two types of intercultural competencies. First of all they include of the surface-level competencies of communicative skills and behaviour, both in specific cultural contexts and at the level of intercultural meta-communication dialogue. This is so because, given the circumstances and restrictions of the multi-ethnic customer contact situations, one is not able to master the vast variety of culture-specific communicative phenomena presented in its entirety in these contacts in an in-depth manner.

Secondly, they include the deep-level competencies of an interculturally sensitised professional identity, based on professional intercultural attitude, which in its turn rests on interculturally raised awareness. I adapted the concept of mindfulness (Ting-Toomey 1999) for intercultural communication competence to mean surface level intercultural competence, which is based on deep-level competence.

As for the cultural adaptation process, my aim has been to see first of all how much stress is experienced in the multi-ethnic customer contacts and to determine which factors are the most stressful. Secondly, motivated by some of the newer research into the culture shock phenomenon (e.g. Kealey 1995) and research into transition shock (Bennett J. 1994), my aim was to see how intense the role of the stress in the Finish civil servants' cultural adaptation process is and what positive indications it could have for the development of intercultural effectiveness.

The results showed that questions of language and the complicated nature of the customers' cases were the most stressful factors, with the compounded effect of the two increasing the chances of cultural misinterpretation and consequent stress. The results also indicated that the stress was more prominent than that indicated by the quantitative results. This is an indication that the intercultural awareness of the respondent group is less developed than what they indicate themselves, a fact that is also attested to by other studies using subjective evaluations.

The connection between intensive culture shock and later long-term intercultural effectiveness of this particular research group cannot be verified in any systematic way on the basis of the type of questionnaire used in this research. However, the results show a high degree of intensity in the experience of stress, particularly in the initial stages of intercultural contact, in the interculturally

uninformed stage, prior to experience or informal 'peer training'. This augurs well for later intercultural effectiveness (Kealey 1995), and in some of the comments of the Finnish civil servants with longer work experience with multi-ethnic customer contacts, this kind of intercultural competence expressed in communicative effectiveness and interculturally sensitised identity is clearly in evidence.

In analysing the cultural adaptation process of the Finnish civil servants in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, I found that they deal with the adaptation issues and the concomitant stress through the three interconnected vistas of integrity, cultural learning and communication. These were found to be connected to the development of the surface-level and deep-level intercultural areas of effectiveness as skills and behaviour, and sensitivity as awareness and attitudes.

The integrity vista in the cultural adaptation process was seen to connect with the area of sensitivity as a cultural identity issue, through the process of developing an interculturally sensitised professional identity. This allows for a meaningful expression of the communicative intercultural competence.

On the level of intercultural sensitivity, I analysed the qualities of the critical pragmatic intercultural professional taking shape in the concrete customer contact situations as a dialectic process between ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pulls, looking at the questions of "What is happening to the person in the intercultural communication situation?" and "Who is communicating?" For this purpose I utilised a dialectic view of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity developed by Bennett (e.g. 1986, 1993). On the level of intercultural effectiveness, I analysed the qualities of the critical pragmatic intercultural professional through a parallel dialectic two-way opposing pull of globalizing/localizing identities as a process of creating intercultural spaces, (Lie 2001) looking at the question of "How is the intercultural communication performed?"

I then looked at a model for intercultural communication designed for institutional contexts, called the Communication Display Portfolio Exchange (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002). For intercultural training purposes, in the next chapter I will suggest a modification of this model in answer to the frequently voiced question by the intercultural trainees of: "What shall I actually say?"

As one of the main themes of this research was to study the goal of the cultural adaptation process, I also looked at how intercultural competence get expressed in the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts as certain qualities and certain types of communication orientations.

In Chapter 6 I presented the major theoretical contribution of this research through a novel way of conceptualising ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism within the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett 1986, 1993). I merged this with the parallel concept pair of globalizing/localizing (Lie 2001) in order to combine the three main themes of cultural adaptation, intercultural competence and their interconnectedness into one single framework.

In doing so, I presented a holistic picture of becoming a critical pragmatic intercultural professional through a dialectic process of opposing pull factors,

which affect both the identity and the communicative competence of the person. The three cultural adaptation vistas of integrity, communication and cultural learning form the frame for creating intercultural spaces. It is in these spaces that the opposing pulls of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism and globalizing/localizing identities take place. Depending on whether they touch on the intercultural sensitisation of the identity as awareness or attitudes, or on the intercultural effectiveness as skills and behaviour, this back-and-forth movement expresses itself in different forms. It can be expressed as self-reflection, mutual critique and mutual adaptation. Increased competence allow one to foster, and most importantly, to *initiate* an atmosphere of mutual learning and mutual development.

I also looked at the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts against some related research into intercultural competence and compared some of the general competence components listed by other researchers against the concept of critical pragmatic intercultural professional. The findings of this research are that apart from these general competence components the demanding nature of the multi-ethnic customer contacts, the limited contact time and particular nature of the communication context call for a contextualized intercultural competence. This equates with the components of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural professionalism, expressed in mindful communication.

In discussing the practical motivation for this research, the three main themes with the subsequent research questions were approached with a view of how to apply the knowledge gained in the intercultural training for the host culture adaptees. I will turn to this application in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7.   TRAINING TOWARDS CRITICAL PRAGMATIC INTERCULTURAL PROFESSIONAL

1   Focus on context, strategies and critique

Before applying the results of this research to the context of intercultural training for host-culture adaptees, let us first look at what such training has been seen to be lacking in general. The most serious shortcoming in the majority of intercultural training manuals is that things are not put into appropriate social contexts, but instead are talked about on a level that is too abstract. Perhaps the most pervasive error, however, is the social abstraction of most treatments. The context and the communicative task are seldom taken into account. Most writings in this field deal with the business context, or else there is no mention of any kind of context at all. "No attention is paid to differences in language of communication (is it theirs, ours or a third language), differences in the politics of communication (Are we meeting as equals? Does one party feel superior?), in the task (is it negotiation, planning, exchange of information, artistic sharing, etc.), or to differences in the institutionalised arrangements surrounding the communication (is it an international organisation with established protocols or a casual encounter among fellow tourists)?"(author's brackets) (Young, 1996:181).

Through the questions in the surveys upon which this research is based, I addressed the concerns of the particular context of the civil servants dealing with their multi-ethnic clientele. It was for the very reason that issues such as the role of language, power relationships and institutional arrangements featured so prevalently in the many discussions during the intercultural training seminars I have conducted over the years that they were picked out to be among the topics of the questions. First of all these topics rose from the Finnish civil servants' own experiences and felt needs. Secondly, they are also the three features Young (1996) says are lacking in intercultural training manuals. Moreover, many of the comments by the Finnish civil servants in

these surveys spontaneously centre on these three issues even outside the designated topics. This material can be utilised in tailoring intercultural communication training geared to the particular context of multi-ethnic customer contacts.

One final shortcoming of the intercultural manuals with the rules-based view of culture is that they often lack practical usefulness on the behavioural level. Cultural differences are usually defined in terms of concepts or worldviews and little help is given to actually coping with them. The result of all these shortcomings is that the intercultural trainee learns a list of rules for doing things. However, such rules can at times be misleading and as they cannot cover every eventuality, though they are not without some usefulness.

I share the observations that "learning intercultural communication would proceed better if it proceeded through relatively complex and culturally constructed simulations of culturally embedded institutional talk contexts, and focused not on rules but on strategies and critique" (italics added) (Young 1996:182). Over the past several years, in the many intercultural training seminars I have conducted, similar sentiments have been echoed in countless comments by Finnish civil servants, who in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts have grappled with the need for relevant contextualisation and practical coping skills on the level of more generally applicable strategies, rather than on the level of culture-specific rules with only limited applicability.

The three surveys upon which this research is based also include several comments about the difficulty of discussing the 'real issue', causing confusion, difficulty, misunderstanding or a total break-down in the communication with the ethnically non-Finnish customer. These comments show that in the kind 'meta-level talk' in intercultural context, which Young (1996) talks about, is exactly what is needed. Often the Finnish civil servants may have a general awareness of what hinders the communication in a particular multi-ethnic customer contact, yet they feel that they lack the confidence to discuss the matter with the other party in a culturally sensitive manner.

What is proposed here as an answer to this need is the development of a practical communication method based on the model of Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002), resting on the philosophical ideals of Young (1996). The Communication Display Exchanges through meta-level intercultural dialogue offers the kind of broad-based practical coping skills Young (1996) wants to see developed, by placing high value on such methods as 'intercultural talk strategy', or other workable means to address the intercultural communicators' felt needs for relevant strategies in order to gain a deeper level of cultural adaptation displayed in mutual critique, mutual learning and mutual development in intercultural contexts. This leads to the kind of understanding of persons from other cultures that has both width and depth and has the makings of genuine pluralism. This is the mega-goal of intercultural training.

2   Two-pronged approach to intercultural training

One obvious aim for intercultural training looked at in the context of host culture adaptees is giving the trainees a better understanding and better coping skills concerning intercultural competence to deal with those intercultural difficulties that are recognised as such. Another aim is to bring to conscious level the latent effects of intercultural factors that they are unaware of. How this is done in practice, and what are considered to be the main themes through which to approach these issues?

I derive the essential elements of intercultural training and learning for the host culture adaptees involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts from the main themes in this research. I consider them to be the two main components of cultural adaptation, and hence they also need to be addressed in any training for host culture members' increased intercultural competence. The first training point is developing an interculturally sensitised professional identity. From this is derived the second training point, i.e. the ability to be engaged in mindful communication in intercultural contexts.

The goal for the kind of intercultural training promoted is interculturally sensitised identity as a basis for mindful, strategic intercultural communicative effectiveness. This definition is another way of describing the qualities of the critical pragmatic intercultural professional, spelling out the two areas of cultural adaptation with the ensuing intercultural competencies.

Also, as discussed in Chapter 5., based on the analysis of the Finnish civil servants' comments in the surveys, I see the relationship between the deep-level and surface level cultural adaptation taking place on three interconnected fronts. Intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity for mindful intercultural competence in multicultural working contexts are developed through the vistas of identity dynamics, intercultural communication and cultural learning. When the intercultural training concentrates on the cultural adaptation process, then these three vistas can be treated as the sub-themes under which all the relevant issues are dealt with.

To reiterate, I see the goal of intercultural training of host culture adaptees for the contexts of multi-ethnic customer contacts to be twofold: Firstly, it is about sensitising cultural identities towards an interculturally professional identity, manifested in an increased intercultural knowledge and in an interest beyond one's immediate cultural surroundings. This process is initiated in developing an awareness concerning one's own culture, concerning the process of cultural adaptation and intercultural issues on the whole. It also includes developing a positive orientation towards the task of integrating the customers informally, which is often an inherent part of the customer contact situation. Actually the last-mentioned goal goes beyond mere integration into the Finnish way of doing things. As mentioned earlier on, in connection with discussing the themes of this research, the aim is to provide the trainees with the kind of intercultural competence that will encourage them to foster an atmosphere of

mutual learning and mutual development in their intercultural contacts with their multi-ethnic clientele.

Secondly, from the attainment of the first goal of interculturally sensitised professional identity, arises the goal of strategic intercultural communicative ability, applicable to multiple cultural contexts.

I consider the following to be the three central themes for intercultural training: raising the level of awareness concerning the trainees' cultural identities, understanding the cultural conditioning of communication, and being able to at least begin to raise similar self-awareness of these two areas in the other party in intercultural encounters. Including the development of intercultural sensitivity into the training scheme enables the intercultural skills that are being taught to be more meaningfully employed in intercultural professional and social interaction, rather than the new learning gained being treated only as superficial motions for managing to cope in intercultural contact situations. Any training method can be applied for the purposes of all three themes.

3   Planning for integrated and contextualised training modules

What elements should a comprehensive intercultural training module include? How can it be contextualised for the particular target group in a relevant manner? What are the goals aimed for? Should one try to influence all of the different areas of the intercultural components, i.e. the skills, behaviour, awareness and attitudes? If so, should one intertwine the various topics at different levels? Which components suit which theories and models the best, and what are the best methods for teaching them in a particular training context? In which order and in what kind of combination should they be introduced? These are some of the questions that an intercultural trainer needs to find answers to, depending first of all on the background and the needs of the target group, as well as on the time constraints and other situational and external factors affecting the training context.

Figure 28. below displays how the theoretical frameworks presented in this research can be used as a basis for planning training modules for the kind of critical pragmatic intercultural professionalism that makes use of such a bi-directional process of mutuality in cultural adaptation. From the multiplicity of theoretical frameworks available, I have chosen, and adapted, for this research particular ones with a view on how they could be applied in intercultural training with the goal of developing the qualities of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional.

CRITICAL PRAGMATIC INTERCULTURAL PFOFESSIONAL

Intercultural competence	**Process** of becoming one *Cultural adaptation*	**Who** is one? *Professional identity*	**What** does one do? *Content of behaviour*	**How** does one act? *Mode of behaviour*	**Why** become / be one? *Motivation*
SENSITIVITY •Awareness •Attitudes *Learning vista*: •Cultural learning •Integrity *Type of learning:* •Cognitive •Affective	Modification of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) *(Adapted from Bennett 1986, 1993)* • Process of dialectic pull between Ethnocentrism and Ethno-relativism Stress-adaptation-growth spiral *(Kim 2001)* Mindfulness theory *(Ting-Toomey 1996)* • Culture shock Process Embodied ethnocentrism *(Bennett and Castiglioni 2004)*	Intercultural philosophy and ethics *(Young, 1996)* MindfulnessTheory *(Ting-Toomey 1996)* • Identity Embodied feeling of culture *Bennett and Castiglioni 2004)*	Acculturation orientations as Communi-cation orientations *(Adapted from Berry 1997)*	Creating intercultural space globalizing/ localizing *(Lie 2003)*	Acculturation *(Berry 1997)* and Intergroup (Liebkind, 2006, 2004) research as an integrated approach *Application:* Realities of multicultural society and multicultural working environment
EFFECTIVENESS •Skills •Behaviour *Learning vista*: •Intercultural •Communication *Type of learning:* •Operational			Communication Display Exchanges *(adapted from DDPE by Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002)*		Peer support in inter-cultural learning in the workplace

FIGURE 28. Example of theory-based training scheme for critical pragmatic intercultural professional

The above training scheme looks at the host culture adaptees' cultural adaptation and intercultural competence and their interconnectedness not only

through different theoretical frameworks, but also through the basic questions of "who, how, what and why?"

Training for intercultural sensitivity through a dialectic view of DMIS addresses the issue of identity change as part of the cultural adaptation process. At this point the training answers the question "Who is communicating?"

When the concepts of ethnocentric and ethnorelativist pull are intertwined with Lie's concept pair of globalizing/localizing identities in the context of creating intercultural spaces, the teaching point is that of the individual psychological processes and group level social processes of interculturalisation through self-reflection, mutual critique and mutual adaptation, particularly in the area of communication. At this juncture, the training is about "How is the communication carried out."

The Communication Display Exchanges, adapted from Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002), brings the intercultural training to the concrete level of actual verbal exchanges. The intention is to practice and develop the kinds of skills for intercultural meta-communication dialogue, which would be a hallmark of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional's mindful communication. Here the training concentrates on the actual practice of "What is being done or said."

As for the individual, professional and societal level motivation for gaining and displaying intercultural competence, the training provides the reasoning for "Why are cultural adaptation and expressing intercultural competence needed?" This is one question that the trainees most definitely are faced with outside the training context in various ways. In this area the support from peers in the workplace often serves as unofficial training.

In planning for intercultural training modules, a working chart of the type presented below can be utilised for ensuring a comprehensive coverage of the desired themes. In the columns titled Theory/Model and Topic, the trainer enters those he/she chooses to use in the training. With each choice of theory and topic, the relevant boxes in the chart are ticked off according to how they cover the different areas. This allows one to see any biases and omissions, so that additional material can be planned for a more complete coverage. This planner also helps a trainer to write a lesson plan with a particular level goal and context in mind. When used in electronic form, detailed notes can also be included in the boxes to assist in making detailed lesson plans.

TABLE 6. A checklist for intercultural training content

THEORY/ MODEL	TOPIC	INTERCLTURAL EFFECTIVENESS		INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY		CULTURAL ADAPTATION
		Skills	Behaviour	Awareness	Attitudes	
Critical						
Pragmatic						
Professional						
Context						

4   A thematic framework for intercultural training

For intercultural training to be effective, measured by the results being sustainable and beyond a mere surface-level learning, all of the themes discussed above need to be included at least to some extent in any one training scheme, regardless of the time constraints. If the contact time with the trainees is very short, it is better to concentrate on one single topic and handle it from all the different angles mentioned above, i.e. how it addresses the intercultural sensitivity and components from the point of view of the three vistas of integrity, communication and cultural issues on the cognitive, affective and operational levels.

For increased effectiveness, the training needs to be theory-based, as already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Furthermore, it enforces instruction to take an interdisciplinary approach by introducing theoretical frameworks from more than one scientific field, and to utilise a mixture of methodologies. I see this kind of holistic and integrative approach necessary for strategic learning as it allows the trainee to better apply the newly acquired knowledge in one limited topic independently of other topics in consecutive intercultural contacts. This result, if materialized, in my mind by far outweighs the benefits of gaining new learning on a wider range of topics but in a less in-depth manner, which does not prepare the trainees to replicate the learning as effectively in real life intercultural communication situations.

The above discussion concerns the intercultural learning processes of the Finnish civil servants as one particular group representing the host culture adaptees, based on training experience in this context. In Figure 29. below this learning process is represented in the wider context of intercultural training in general. It presents a holistic picture on how intercultural sensitivity and intercultural effectiveness are gained. The results are a deepening awareness, experience and knowledge concerning the three cultural adaptation vistas and their interrelatedness. Creating the intercultural spaces in the context of intercultural training means involving cognitive, affective and operational levels. It calls for a variety, overlap and mix of methodologies, models and theories.

This kind of integrative and dialectical use of analytical frameworks in an overlapping manner reflects the reality of the way intercultural learning takes place, as depicted in Figure 26., exemplifying the dialectic nature of this process through the two-way pull between ethnocentric and ethnorelativist tendencies and globalizing and localizing identities. Likewise, in the training context the logic of the teaching schemes constructed in this dialectical manner is that they include elements, which can be used intentionally for negotiation between the two opposite pull factors via various means. The combination of certain approaches may intrinsically cause such back-and-forth negotiations between opposing pulls for creating intercultural space without the trainer having to design them specifically.

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A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL TRAINING
for
PROFESSIONAL CONTEXTS

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Critical awareness, experience and knowledge on the pragmatic effects of:

SKILLS AND BEHAVIOUR   **AWARENESS & ATTITUDES**

Own   Own culture
communication
patterns

RELATIONSHIP
Other cultures'   **OF**   Particularised
communication   **LANGUAGE & CULTURE**   knowledge of
patterns   other cultures

Intercultural learning as adaptive
changes on cognitive, affective
Meta-level   and operational levels   Cultural categories
intercultural   through   of differences
communication   contextualised strategies
and overlap of
methods,
models
and
INTER-   theories   **CULTURAL**
CULTURAL   **ADAPTATION**
COMMUNICATION   **PROCESS**
COMPETENCE

IDENTITY SENSITISATION

Awareness of own cultural identity

Reshaping own identity through culture shock

Identity negotiation with cultural others

GOAL

⇩

INTERCULTURALLY STRATEGIC DIALOGICAL COMPETENCE & CRITICAL PRAGMATIC IDENTITY

FIGURE 29. Training for critical pragmatic intercultural competence

The three tiers of topics under the Communication competencies, Cultural competencies and Identity dynamics are presented in an order that depicts a growing awareness, complexity and a deepening nature of adaptive changes. The first tier deals with the most familiar, with one's own culturally conditioned communication patterns and culture as values, norms, beliefs, practices etc. The next tier deals with what happens when the familiar is confronted with cultural differences. For example, in the arena of identity dynamics, one is faced with culture shock as the start of an intercultural

sensitisation process. On the communication arena, the learning consists of gaining understanding of a particular culture's communication patterns, both verbal and nonverbal. On the cultural side of the triangle, this level of intercultural learning and teaching is about gaining knowledge of particular features of various cultures. Within the third tier, in connection with the communication competence, this level of intercultural teaching involves imparting the meta-skills of knowing how to communicate with persons from other cultures in such a way as to get them interculturally sensitised. In the cultural view, this tier of teaching takes a contrastive view of cultural differences, looking at how cultural categories are utilised in dividing cultures into dichotomies, such as individualistic vs. collectivist cultures, linear-active vs. multi-active vs. reflective cultures etc. in the tradition of Lewis (2004), for example. Within the identity vista, intercultural training on the third level involves gaining understanding of how to getting past the initial discomfort of cultural adaptation and about integrating the new cultural elements as part of one's identity at various levels, be it professional or private.

The three vistas of communication competence, cultural competence and identity dynamics are all interrelated. This is reflected in the way various topics are ideally organised for effective learning in intercultural training. The topic of intercultural communication addresses the interrelatedness of identity and communication, dealing with achieving the actual communicative adroitness in intercultural social interaction, both verbally and non-verbally, and a holistic understanding of the communication context. The interrelatedness of identity and cultural competence is dealt with under the title 'cultural adaptation process'. The interrelatedness of culture and communication is looked at under the topic of the relationship between language and culture. It takes a macro-view of this relationship, for example bringing to the trainees' awareness how the particular languages we use may predispose us to certain thinking patterns, conceptualisations and perceptions, and how differences in preferred and dominant communication styles between different languages reflect this same interconnectedness (e.g. Strømnes 1982).

In a holistic and dialectic training approach, there is overlap and back-and-forth movement between the different topics chosen for the training scheme and in how they are merged and combined through the three vistas of cultural learning, communication and identity dynamics. For example, a certain topic can first be talked about from a purely communication point of view, after which the interrelatedness of language and culture can be brought to bear on that issue for an effective teaching point to be made. The three vistas can also be seen as being interrelated in another sense in this type of holistic approach to intercultural training: Intercultural communication learning rests on the learning received concerning the interrelatedness of language and culture and intercultural identity. In other words, intercultural communication is an expression of the interrelatedness of language and culture with identity sensitisation in intercultural contact situations. Of course, intercultural communication can also be taught and learned in isolation, without any

reference to other two above-mentioned topics, as instruction concerning correct communication behaviour in particular intercultural contexts. However, without being rooted in interculturally sensitised identity and without adequate cultural competence, it will remain surface-level learning only.

For a more ambitious goal, additional tiers can be included to increase and elaborate on the levels of abstraction, complexity and interrelatedness of the components. However, the ultimate goal of the basic model in intercultural training presented here can be described as interculturally strategic dialogical communication competence and critical pragmatic identity, where the 'intercultural' defines both the communication and the identity components. Salo-Lee (1996) quotes Törrönen (2001) in talking about dialogical competence as a direction, or orientation, towards the other. Central in dialogical competence understood in this way is responsibility. I take it that this can be applied into the context of taking responsibility for initiating meta-level intercultural dialogue, in order to 'negotiate new, shared definitions of situations, roles and expression of self' with cultural others, to use Young's (1996) definition of a critical pragmatic professional, to which I have added the term 'intercultural'. This also concurs with the notion that "the effort of one individual can set competent communication in motion" (Ting-Toomey 1996:40).

Taking initiative in the intercultural encounters by engaging the cultural other in a dialogue concerning the intercultural dynamics possibly operating in the situation takes the focus away from oneself. One is actually informally 'training', i.e. sensitising the other party in the social interaction interculturally. This is what is meant by the final tier of 'Identity negotiation with the cultural other'. In the context of the Finnish civil servants multi-ethnic customer contacts, due to the professional task of the authorities in that situation, they are bound by law to try to ensure to the best of their ability that the customer has understood the communication. They also have the unofficial role and task of integrating this clientele into the Finnish system in the course of their work. Thus they have the position and motivation to attempt to engage the customer in such intercultural dialogue of mutual critique for effective handling of both of these tasks. When successful, the critique should lead to mutual adaptation, expressing the kind of critical pragmatic intercultural professionalism that makes use of such a bi-directional process of mutuality in cultural adaptation.

5 The effectiveness of intercultural training

Continuing on from what I stated above about the possibility of superficial learning, it can be asked, as many interculturalists indeed have done in all earnestness, whether it is possible to influence and change people's behaviour and attitudes to be more intercultural through training. Or, to put it in the terms of this research, can intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity be taught and learned, and if so, which of these two areas is more susceptible to receiving new learning? There are also many other questions to be considered,

such as which of the two areas would be better suited as the starting point for a training scheme for reaching the stated goals in the most effective manner. Other questions for consideration would be does the attainment of sustainable results call for the sensitivity and effectiveness components to be introduced in tandem? How should one test the validity of the training scheme to ensure that these two areas chosen for the main themes indeed are the issues with relevance to intercultural learning? Is one of the two areas more easily tested than the other, and if so, for what reason, and what does it say about how they should be included in a training scheme? In other words, is there evidence that intercultural training actually has any effect, and what are the reasons why one should teach or study intercultural communication?

The question of how effective is intercultural training, is by no means trivial. "A positive answer, acceptable to scholars, would legitimise the field" (Landis et al. 2004:3). However, Bennhold-Samaan notes that there is virtually no quantitative evidence on the effectiveness of training, although there is a plethora of anecdotal and qualitative reports (Landis et. al. 2004:7). Renwick states that "Intercultural training is both an art, which is appropriately passed on by experienced teachers, and a science, which is appropriately winnowed by empirical research. The art without the science risks invalidity and self-aggrandizement, the science without the art risks irrelevance and sterility" (Landis et al. 2004:435-454). Mendenhall et al. suggest that training seems not to be effective in changing behaviour or performance, but has positive effects on knowledge and attitudes (Landis et al. 2004:129-144). Landis, Bennett and Bennett rightly note that the above results are not surprising as behaviour is more difficult to measure compared to measuring knowledge and attitudes, particularly if it is done as part of the training (Landis et al. 2004:3).

There are various imperatives of why one should study intercultural communication. These include technical, demographic, economic, peace and ethical imperatives. In addition to these, they stress the self-awareness imperative as being one of the most important reasons, because of the awareness it raises of our own cultural identity and background (Martin and Nakayama 2007:31). The last mentioned one is one of the least obvious reasons, as it seems to be diametrically opposed to the more obvious goal of *inter*cultural (italics added) learning, which is learning something about other cultures' ways of doing, thinking and conceptualising things. However, as Adler (1975), a noted social psychologist has rightly observed: "the study of intercultural communication begins as a journey into another culture and reality and ends as a journey into one's own culture"(Martin and Nakayama 2007:31).

Raising self-awareness also brings to the fore our cultural identity, causing us to immediately plunge deeper into the intercultural issue than just at the surface level of skills and behavioural patterns for intercultural survival. Such deepening of one's cultural self-awareness has ramifications for intercultural competence that go beyond the more narrow application of skills and cognition, also affecting a person's, or group's, attitudes behind the actions taken (Martin and Nakayama 2007). Hence, I see the identity issue being of paramount

importance to effective intercultural training, with effectiveness measured by how the inclusion of this issue yields results that are more far-reaching than if it were excluded. The benefits of including the awareness and attitude issues into intercultural training include a deeper and more sustainable intercultural influence upon the trainees' identities and an ability to informally train or sensitise others in intercultural contact situations in the areas of intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity. Engaging the clientele in meta-level intercultural communication can do this.

So, from the two stated goals arises the third, additional goal of creating the opportunity to develop agents of change for intercultural understanding. This warrants talking about training for strategic intercultural effectiveness. This kind of training does not concentrate only on the immediate concerns of the intercultural interactive situations at hand as the stated main reason for the training, but simultaneously makes use of the content and methods of the training sessions to enable their further application by the trainees in ensuing client contacts in two ways. On the one hand, the new knowledge and understanding helps them to cope better interculturally. On the other hand, it also gives them tools to help the clientele to cope better in the immediate customer contact situation and to gain new knowledge and understanding for utilisation in other contexts. This gives the clientele the further incentive of possibly passing the new learning on informally to other persons.

With the above training framework, the picture that emerges is of one single stone being thrown deep into the water, with the plunge effect causing the original ring on the surface of the water table to multiply itself in ever widening circles with a wave effect. The heavier the stone is, the deeper it plunges and the wider the circles travel on surface of the water. Thus it can be said that strategically effective intercultural training for the qualities of the critical pragmatic intercultural professional, expressed through mindful intercultural communication, is about making the maximum-force plunge effect in order to create the widest possible wave effect.

The type of intercultural training described above, which takes a systemic and analytic view of what takes place communication-wise in intercultural contact situations, starting from one's own culturally conditioned existence. Arising from this research there is also a need in intercultural training for the third vista of cultural adaptation, namely cultural knowledge. Inasmuch as it deals with cultural categories from the point of view of differences, such as individualistic vs. collectivist cultures, the topic of training partly fits within the general intercultural knowledge category. However, when one looks at what goes into collectivist practices within a given cultural context, it is part of the particularised cultural knowledge category. This kind of culture-specific knowledge and understanding concerning the various domains of different cultures, with which the trainees are likely to come into contact with, is also needed. The particularised and generalised knowledge categories complement each other. Particularly in the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts, where one is constantly dealing with people from several different ethnic and cultural

backgrounds, it is useful to realise that generalised intercultural knowledge can assist one in knowing how to get to the particularised cultural knowledge more effectively and more extensively. Also, the existence of a multiplicity of particular cultures is the very reason for gaining generalised intercultural knowledge. There would not be any need for the latter without the existence of the first one.

The training goals described above are also present in Young's (1996) call for pragmatic critical professionals who are able to engage in critical communicative and cultural analysis, both on individual and institutional levels. He makes a strong point that critique must be intercultural in nature in order to be effective, because one inevitably places one's own culture in a critical framework when opening oneself to learning from other cultures. He then makes even a stronger point that intercultural learning is necessary for critique:

"…internal resources of a culture, its capacity for self-critical learning are limited – too limited perhaps for effective criticism *unless we are willing to learn from other cultures*" (italics added) (Young 1996:209).

Young's ideal, when realized, addresses the final implied strategic goal of making the trainees into informal trainers in the process of intercultural training, as discussed above.

Knowing how to work successfully in multi-ethnic customer contacts is part of building up the professional competence of the Finnish civil servants in the midst of increasing multiculturalism, and emerging pluralism and eventual super-diversity of the surrounding society. This application section, through the suggestions for theories, models and methods of intercultural training, responds to the present-day situation of increasing multiculturalism by giving the appropriate tools called for by today's standards of intercultural professionalism. The ethos behind the intercultural training scheme suggested here for the host culture adaptees involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts is Young's (1996:208) call for the new knowledge and skills in intercultural communication to be followed with the accompanying willingness to "learn from other cultures *enough* (Young's italics) to live peaceably together, on one planet, or within one political nation."

6 Theory-based learning as strategic effectiveness

For the training application, I complement the two basic theories forming the core of my analysis in connecting cultural adaptation and intercultural competence with other relevant theorising. The works of Kim (2001), Bennett and Castiglioni (2004) and Bourhis (1997) are looked at through the aspects that parallel some areas of the theoretical framework developed in this research concerning cultural adaptation and intercultural effectiveness. Ting-Toomey's (1996) theory of Mindful communication and the Communication Display Portfolio Exchange (CDPE) developed by Pan, Scollon and Scollon also have particular relevance to intercultural training via the central concepts of

intercultural effectiveness and intercultural sensitivity as the constituent parts of critical pragmatic intercultural professionalism.

Young's (1996) intercultural philosophy provides the main thrust of the critical approach in this research. Lie's (2003) theorising also has this aspect, but its greatest value is its intercultural pragmatism, showing the reality of the dialectics within the intercultural encounters. Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) model provides the groundwork for discussing an interculturally professional identity, with my dialectic view of it describing the realities of the actual process of cultural adaptation of the host culture members.

To return to the two main supplementing analytical frameworks introduced in this chapter, the concepts within the theory of mindful communication by Ting-Toomey (1999) are applicable both to the sensitivity and the spheres of intercultural effectiveness in an ethos similar to the main concepts of this research. The CDPE method, adapted from Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002), provides a fitting model for practice in developing the communication skills of a pragmatic intercultural professional.

Why the need for several theoretical frameworks addressing the same concerns? Why does it not suffice to look at each concept just through one relevant theory? Why utilise theory in the first place in intercultural training? How does it add to its effectiveness? Here I refer to a discussion by Landis and Bhawuk (Landis et al. 2004). They refer to Anderson (2000) who defines the use of principles and theories in organizing problem solving as 'strategic learning' (author's italics).

There are several examples of different approaches adapted by novices and experts in problem solving (Larkin 1981), showing that the experts' reasoning methods are superior and more accurate, as a result of the expert way they can handle the theory that can assist them in finding the solution. The one and a half century old transfer-through theory principle (and Woodworth 1901) (Landis et al. 2004:454- 456), emphasizing the value of theory for learning to perform particular tasks has been demonstrated in a classic study by Hendrickson and Schroeder (1941). As a parallel extension of this notion, Bhawuk (1998) suggested that culture theories be used in the development of intercultural expertise. He presented a developmental model based on studies concerning cognition and stages of learning, the number of which in the context of intercultural expertise he set at four; a lay person lacks any knowledge outside one's own culture, a novice has gained intercultural experience either through training or by staying in another culture. An expert is a novice who has knowledge of relevant culture theories enabling one to organise categories of cultural differences in a more meaningful way. An advanced expert has, through experience, the ability to perform the needed tasks in an intercultural context already semi-automatically. The dividing factor between novices and different-level experts is that the latter mentioned ones utilise theory to organise knowledge, while the novices do not. Andersen (2000) goes on to describe the three steps of going from declarative knowledge through procedural knowledge to the autonomous stage when learning a new skill. It is

the use of theory that will allow an efficient process on this continuum to take place (Landis et al. 2004:454-456).

With the efficacy of theory-based learning thus established, I see the enforcement learning effect achieved by looking at an issue through a variety of parallel, or even diametrically opposed, theoretical frameworks greatly enhancing the efficiency of intercultural learning, both the width and depth of cognitive, affective and operational learning.

The fact remains, however, that in reality it is often difficult to separate these three in an intercultural teaching cum learning context, as inevitably any activity planned as part of the training scheme will to a certain degree involve all of them. The crux of the matter is to be able to see which of them is the most important for the particular goal in mind for any one intercultural training exercise, and concentrate on that without totally forgetting about the other two aspects.

However, in this context it is important to come back to what was said earlier on, in subsection 2 of this chapter, concerning Mendenhall et al.'s (Landis et al. 2004:129-144) findings that intercultural training does not seem to be very effective in changing behaviour or performance but seems to have positive effects on knowledge and attitudes. This would indicate that in order to get to the desired behavioural changes, in formal intercultural training one should first of all concentrate on the cognitive and affective areas.

This is exactly my point in dividing intercultural competence into the two categories as I do, into sensitivity as attitudes and awareness, and effectiveness as skills and behaviour. This is also why I stress the point that in order for the surface level manifestations of intercultural competence to be strategically effective, in the sense that Anderson (2000) uses the term in connection with strategic learning, they need to be deeply rooted in the sensitivity components.

That is also why the summary of the theoretical framework for intercultural training, which follows, concentrates on the components of intercultural sensitivity. It does so by describing what the components are and by explaining the process how this sensitivity is developed. It also shows how these components are utilised in a manner that arises from the deep level components of intercultural awareness and attitudes.

One needs to keep in mind that there are both cultural and individual preferences for the order in which new things are approached (Matinheikki-Kokko 1997b). They can be summarised as:

a. knowledge → awareness → action
b. action → awareness → knowledge
c. awareness → knowledge → action

Regardless of which of the above three routes one prefers, or is forced to take, in cultural adaptation, the core issue is not so much what the actual patterns of the new culture are, but "how we feel them", as Bennett and Castiglioni (Landis et al. 2004:259) put it. What this means is that the operational mode of learning cannot be ignored, despite the findings of earlier studies that behaviour and skills are less easily affected than knowledge and attitudes. On the contrary, they need to be included in an integrated manner, so that people become

'sensitised' to the new culture to the extent that they are able to flexibly restructure themselves in the newly created intercultural space, soul, mind and body. Thus they can experience the new cultural space in its totality as much as possible. To reiterate, creating intercultural spaces also includes the physical re-experience of the culturally conditioned environment. The challenge for the intercultural trainer is to be able to draw on all of the senses, including the physical ones, in order to touch the sensibilities of the trainees enough to jolt their consciousness into action on all modes of learning.

7   Communication competence in intercultural training

My experience as an intercultural trainer is that the inclusion of identity issues from the very start in intercultural training gains the attention and interest of the trainees. However, it adds to the effectiveness to connect this issue with some concrete situation that demands communication competence with which the trainees can identify. This observation goes to show that the main goals, themes and sub-themes of the training are all intertwined. Consequently, in the training context there is also a need to treat them in an interconnected manner, with identity issues being embedded into the communication concerns for strategic, in-depth and sustainable effects to be gained from the training.

7.1   CDE as training tool and communication in practice

Through the method of communication display exchange, the Finnish civil servants, in the course of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, have the potential for becoming agents of change by facilitating the development of the clientele's intercultural communication.

 The nature of the multi-ethnic customer contacts studied in this research differs greatly from that of the contacts between two organisations in different countries, for which the original Communication Display Portfolio Exchange model was developed. Therefore, a modification of it needs to be developed for the context of the Finnish civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts. However, as already mentioned, the idea of the communication portfolio need not be discarded altogether. Creating a portfolio, where the professional communication in administrative contexts is looked at from the four perspectives of members' generalisations, objective view, individual case histories and contrastive studies, can be a fruitful exercise in connection with intercultural training for creating cultural self-awareness.

 Thus the first step of the original Communication Display Portfolio Exchange (CPDE) is made use of, with the added element of the intercultural trainer bringing in the contrastive views through examples from other communication cultures. This takes the exercise to the second step of the original DCPE-method, where the portfolios are passed on for commenting to

the participants involved in the exercise in different countries, in order to gain the contrastive intercultural feed back.

The goal of the second step in this modified method in the training context is to prepare the participants to take the role of an informal facilitator in the multi-ethnic customer contacts. The lack of opportunity for exchanging formal portfolios with the customers is compensated by the intercultural communication gained through the training sessions, which prepare the host culture representatives, such as the civil servants in the context of their multi-ethnic customer contacts, to reflect on their own communication styles as well as those of their customers in the cross-cultural encounters. This is intercultural meta-communication in practice. It is expressed in self-reflection and mutual critique, where the end result can be mutual adaptation mutual learning and mutual development.

I see utilising the CDE method as a type of intercultural meta-communication dialogue. As such, it can be used as the behavioural manifestation of the model of intercultural mindfulness (Ting-Toomey 1996). Through a meta-dialogue based on the DCE-method, an individual has the tools to set in motion competent communication, even when the other party to the intercultural communication situation is less aware interculturally.

As already mentioned, in the third step of the original CDPE method the participants at each site make self-assessments of their communication styles and practices and decide how to make adjustments based on these findings (Pan, Scollon and Scollon 2002). In the intercultural training, these adjustments can be practiced as simulation exercises. Apart from merely adjusting one's communication style to suit the customers, an important skill in this context is to learn how to use meta-level intercultural communication, or intercultural talk strategy, to make explicit those communication rules that one sees as possibly being at the root of the communication difficulty in evidence in the situation.

In the reality of the multi-ethnic customer contact situations, this requires for the persons trained to facilitate the customers to utilise all three steps of the communication display exchange. Their task is to make explicit the communicative rules operating in the context, invite the customer to reflect on how they experience the communication style used by the customer service personnel, and to reflect on how the customers' culturally conditioned communication style may be affecting the situation. Any of the four perspectives, i.e. members' generalisations, objective view, individual case histories and contrastive studies which have relevance in the given situation can be included in the reflective talk. This is a flexible and also in a sense an extended way of utilising the steps of the original idea in the Communication Display Portfolio Exchange model. The plural form 'exchanges' in the name of my modification of the method also suggests the flexible and multifaceted manner of its application.

The original model is intended to be a one-time learning tool, with the steps being followed in a certain order. After this the new awareness and learning is put into practice for improved intercultural communicative competence. In my

modified method, the original communication display portfolio exchange model is first explained step by step, but in a flexible way; the intercultural trainer providing the expertise and materials for comparison and reflection can replace the feedback from other cultures. This can be done only on cognitive level, or, it can be supported by simulation exercises. Resources permitting, this phase can also be carried out as interaction training, which calls for face-to-face contacts between the host/foreign nationals by utilising resource persons from particular cultural backgrounds to provide the contrastive view in the training sessions. These resource persons from another culture can act as customers with a certain culturally set agenda. Some of the trainees act as customer service personnel, while others observe the situation. The trainer then debriefs the situation and assists the trainees in learning to utilise the CDE method in customer contact situations. The resource persons from other cultures can also be asked to take on the role of a customer without any briefing concerning how they should communicate in the training exercise.

In the real-life intercultural encounters, in this modified version all the different steps of the original model are intended to be utilised in one go in an intercultural communiction situation whenever it is deemed useful. Due to the time limitations of a customer contact, the three steps of the original method are used in a compressed manner so to speak. Depending on the nature of the difficulty encountered in the multi-ethnic customer contact situation, there is also variation as to which of them need to be addressed, and in which order. The extended sense in using this method in this manner comes from the attempt to extend the new awareness and learning also to the other party in the intercultural encounter. Once trained in this method, a person is then able to utilise it in actual customer contact situations repeatedly. Thus the new awareness and learning gained is informally extended through the method of reflective dialogue as metal-level intercultural communication with the other party in the communication situation.

7.2 CDE as Young's mutual critique in practice

Employing intercultural communication through communication display exchanges as meta-communication dialogue is one answer to Young's (1996) critique on the limitations of most manuals on intercultural communication. He calls for "empirical research on interlanguage, stranger talk, intercultural talk strategy, lingua franca, bilingualism what people typically do when confronted with the need to communicate with someone from a different culture is valuable, because it shows that people draw on the widest range of resources when confronted by the intercultural communication situation"(Young 1996:181).

The more research-based manuals do provide useful discussions of how communicators simplify, repeat themselves, use more gestures than usual and increase the redundancy of their messages, etc., much in the same fashion as the Finnish civil servants in this research recount their modified strategies of communication for overcoming intercultural communication clashes. However,

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this is only the first step, a surface-level activity in the development of cultural awareness and cultural adaptation. Even those intercultural manuals that actually go into the concrete level of how things are handled in actual situations, still have shortcomings. "There is seldom any reference to the strategy of talking *about* the difficulty in communication (author's italics) or to the problems posed by very different levels of linguistic competence in the language in use" (Young 1996:181).

It is this very type of competence for utilising intercultural talk strategy in the form of meta-level intercultural dialogue of talking about the real issues behind the intercultural communication difficulty that I consider to be one aim in intercultural training. In this process, self-reflection and critique are used to invite mutual reflection and critique in a way that sensitises both parties to mutual adaptation.

This kind of competence is about the ability to discuss with persons from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in a non-threatening and natural manner about the difficulty in communication. Through this kind of meta-communication an interculturally competent person is able to start unravelling the possible causes for the miscommunication. Is it caused by *what,* or *how,* or *why* something is thought to be said or done? This kind of competence also gives one the ability to know how to discuss cultural assumptions. With his type of meta-dialogue competence one can initiate and facilitate communication that allows mutual learning and mutual development through interculturally sensitised critique and mutual adaptation towards a more interculturally sensitised and competent identity. This is what displaying the qualities of a critical pragmatic intercultural professional in meaningful communication is about.

The strengths of the Communication Display Exchanges method utilised in the above manner in multi-ethnic customer contacts are many. The informality of this kind of reflective talking makes it possible to blend it into the communication exchange in an easy and natural manner. This unobtrusiveness makes it less threatening to exchange ideas about on how the communication is going and creates an atmosphere where one is more free to the 'open horizons' approach, which facilitates intercultural learning.

This is also the stated goal of Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002) when they talk about this method creating an environment conducive for assessment and reflection in such a way that the identity of the persons or institutions represented by them is not affected in a negative manner. Identity issues, and by extension integrity issues, which Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002:11) seem to talk about with the phrase 'risk to the identity', are inevitably touched by intercultural communication situations, as familiarity is replaced by the unfamiliar and culture shock symptoms appear. Therefore, from the point of view of intercultural learning, it is important to employ methods of social interaction, which allow one to develop an interculturally sensitive and competent identity.

One of the strengths of utilising the CDE method through meta-level intercultural dialogue is that it answers the immediate concerns of both parties,

being mutually beneficial. By doing so, it has the potential of creating a positive learning environment, where new intercultural understanding and cultural insights are gained in the above-described manner.

The process described above does not necessarily need to be a time-consuming exercise. At times it may be enough just to give a few extra minutes of the customer-time to this kind of self-reflective talk, while a similar opportunity for reflection is also given to the customers. This kind of mutual exchange on their communication styles and on their interpretations of the each other's communication style can be very helpful. This is the kind of mutual critique in practice, which Young (1996:209) talks about being: 'no more than a mediating moment', epitomising the critical pragmatic intercultural professional at work. At other times, however, multi-ethnic customer contacts do take more time than those where both parties share the same communicative background, as already expressed in the Finnish civil servants' comments in this research and by the Finnish authorities in the survey conducted by Pitkänen (2006). In cases where intercultural misunderstanding prolongs the communication, the method of utilising communication display exchanges through a meta-language communication means making good use of the time, as it can pay dividends in consequent encounters with the same customer as a result of the improved understanding and efficiency between the two parties.

8   Intercultural sensitivity training

For developing intercultural sensitivity, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity developed by Bennett (e.g. 1986, 1993), can be used in two ways in intercultural training. First of all, my dialectical interpretation of the model, combined with Lie's (2001) and Young's (1996) analytical frameworks, as presented earlier in this research can be utilised as an awareness-raising tool concerning the process of intercultural adaptation. As such, it provides an opportunity for self-reflection, mutual critique and adaptation for the process of sensitising one's professional identity interculturally.

The second way in which the DMIS can be utilised is as a means for the intercultural trainees to reflect on their present orientation towards other cultures on the affective, cognitive and operational levels. This can be done by using the different orientations of Bennett's (e.g. 1986, 1993) model to analyse various ways of reacting to simulation exercises, such as conflict scenarios within multi-ethnic customer contacts on the level of attitudes, knowledge and behaviour. Pre-written case studies can also be utilised for this purpose. In the debriefing of the exercise and in the discussions of the case studies respectively, reflection and critique need to be combined with a knowledge-based approach to the different DMIS orientations, with a view of encouraging the participants to change their behavioural patters.

Different training modules can be constructed around this model for this second purpose, depending on the needs and special contexts of the trainees. Each of the six orientations of Denial, Defence, Minimisation, Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration can be viewed as complete explanatory systems, by presenting their particular manifestations, i.e. the expressions of each particular orientation in the spheres of worldview structure, cognition, affect, behaviour, exercise of power and implications for organisation. Alternatively, training modules could concentrate or elaborate on one single sphere within the different orientations towards other cultures, such as world view, for example, or which ever of the spheres is deemed most crucial in the particular training context. The other spheres could then be treated in a more cursory manner, or covered as background reading. This is a particularly useful approach when there are time constraints and a need or desire to combine different models and approaches for a holistic training packet within the time limit. It is also useful for reaching the two-pronged goal of developing intercultural competence as both effectiveness as communication and interculturally sensitised identity.

When the behavioural sphere is concentrated on, the intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity issues can be expediently integrated for the attainment of mindful intercultural competence through the joint approach of Communication Display Exchanges and the Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). This double approach ties the surface level intercultural adaptation of new skills and behaviour into the deep level (inter)cultural adaptation involving identity change. Of course the DMIS in itself includes these two aspects through its six spheres and could be used as the sole model for tackling the above-mentioned two main goals I set for intercultural training. However, the Communication Display Exchanges can be utilised in tandem with the modified version of DMIS. In this double approach the CDE is the method through which the development from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelativist orientation within the behavioural sphere of the DMIS model is expressed. In other words, the meta-communication dialogue employed in the CDE for the attainment of the goal of an interculturally sensitised identity is the technique that is used in order to obtain the desired results of increased intercultural sensitisation of the other party in the intercultural contacts.

9 Training for the general context of customer service

There are some general considerations that apply to all customer contact work, which ought to be taken into consideration in one way or another also in the intercultural training within the context of the government services' multi-ethnic customer contacts.

One of the key differences between goods and services lies in the fact that customers usually derive value from services without obtaining permanent

ownership of any tangible elements.[86] However even though customers' main interest lies in the final output, how they are treated during service delivery can significantly affect their satisfaction. This is a crucial aspect for multi-ethnic customer contacts, as it gives rise to potential cultural misunderstandings concerning for example such issues as polite versus impolite serviceleading to consequent intercultural misattributions of attitudes and motives of the other party to the communicative situation. Another distinctive element of the service performance is that in itself it is essentially intangible, whereas benefits of owning and using a manufactured product arise from its physical characteristics and the brand image may add to this. In services, however, the benefits are derived from the nature of the performance (Lovelock et al. 1999, 16-17).

A further distinctive feature of services is their variability. This implies that different customers experience services in different ways because the receiving situation is never the same. The situations are affected by the customers themselves, the employees and sometimes also by other customers. The quality of the service may also vary when communicating with different employees. It is therefore important to develop employees' communication skills, to motivate them and enhance a good working atmosphere (Lämsä and Uusitalo 2003:18). In the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts, this includes intercultural communication skills.

Lovelock, et al. (1999:18) also note that the presence of personnel and other customers in the operational system makes it difficult to standardise and control variability in both service inputs and outputs. Products can be manufactured under controlled conditions aimed to optimise both productivity and quality, and thereafter checked for consistency with quality standards long before they reach the customer. However, when services are produced, the final assembly must occur at the same time. This may vary from customer to customer and from one time of the day to another, due to which mistakes and shortcomings are more likely and more difficult to conceal. These aspects render it difficult for service organisations to offer a consistent product.

However, Mclaughlin (1996:17-31) notes that not all variations in delivering service are necessarily negative. Modern service businesses are recognising the value of customising at least certain aspects of the service by catering to the needs and expectations of individual customers in fields where this is possible and essential. In the context of multi-ethnic customer contacts, this can mean culturally accommodating communication to ensure understanding.

An additional aspect of services is the absence of inventory; this is because a service is a deed or performance, rather than a physical item that the customer keeps. Thus it is considered perishable, as it cannot be restocked for resale. Although the necessary facilities, equipment and labour can be kept ready to create the service, these simply represent productive capacity but not the product itself

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[86] The discussion under this subheading, except for references to intercultural contexts, summarises a more elaborate handling of this topic in the unpublished thesis on Business Management by C. Muthoni, for the University of Applied Sciences. For a complete reference, please see Bibliography.

(Lovelock et al. 1999:19). This elusive nature of customer contacts makes it even more of a challenge and a necessity to develop intercultural communication for the purposes of multi-ethnic customer contacts.

As for customer satisfaction, various studies on the general area of service satisfaction have been conducted. Bitner and Hubbert (1994) developed the concept of overall service satisfaction. This refers to the customer's overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organisation based on all their encounters and experiences. More often than not, listening to customers might involve the unpleasant experience of listening to their complaints. However, as Harari (1997) notes, customers who complain give the opportunity to correct problems, restore relationships with the complainer and improve service quality for all. In the multi-ethnic customer contacts, if the complaint is recognised by the civil servant as being caused by a cultural mismatch in the area of communication, this provides a positive opportunity for intercultural meta-level dialogue. In the long run, it will increase customer satisfaction, as they are helped to gain communication competence in the context of dealing with the Finnish authorities.

Ojasalo (1999) shows in his study that good service quality is seen to correspond not only to the customer's prior expectations, but also to those expectations that possibly arise during the service process and outcome. Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2006:128) define customer satisfaction with a service by comparing perceptions of service with expectations of service desired. When expectations are exceeded, service is perceived to be of exceptional quality and also a pleasant surprise. However, when expectations are not met, the service quality is considered unacceptable. And when expectations are confirmed by perceived service, quality is satisfactory. These expectations are based on several sources including word of mouth, personal needs, and past experience. Parasuranam, Zeithaml and Berry (1985:48) list the dimensions of service quality being the following: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. The existence of these dimensions in the production of services can be expressed in different ways in different cultures, causing possible misinterpretations as to whether they are included in the service. Hence there is a need to address these issues in the intercultural training for customer contact situations.

Variability is to be expected in situations where customers differ widely and service personnel interact with those customers on a one-to-one basis (Mclaughlin 1996:17-39). This is exactly the kind of context in which the civil servants' multi-ethnic customer contacts occur. Furthermore, the longer and more actively customers are involved in the process of service delivery, the greater the likelihood that each customer's experience will differ in some way from that of other customers as well as from their own earlier experiences. However, not all variation in this context is negative. Gwinner and Bettencourt (1996) note that many customers actually seek a tailored approach that recognises them as individuals with unique needs. Hence the challenge is for staff to be flexible and serve each person as an individual instead of as a copy of the previous customer. This has particular relevance in the multi-ethnic

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customer contacts, where the culturally conditioned communication styles of the customers are a central issue.

To summarise, it can be a challenging task to manage service encounters between customers and service personnel in ways that will create a satisfactory experience, as the nature of the service experience is affected by so many variables. Organisational level factors, other people, as well as the difference in the quality of the employees serving customers and the type of customers in a particular service encounter may all form a part in defining the nature of the service experience.

The service encounter triad illustrated in the figure below captures the relationships between the three parties in a service encounter and suggests possible sources of conflict.
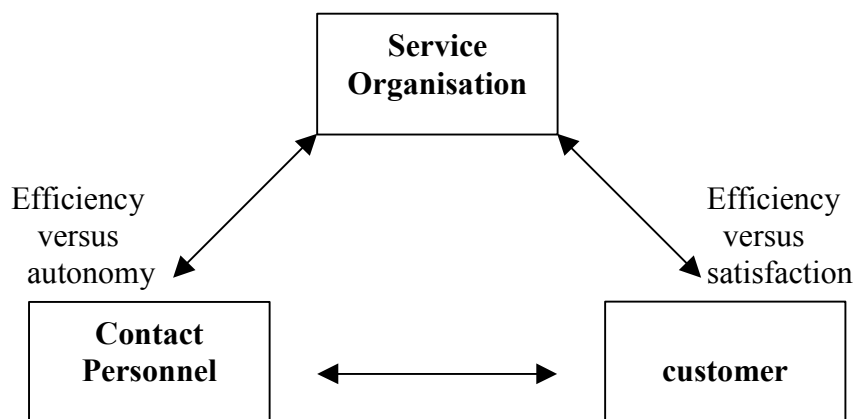
FIGURE 30. The Service Encounter[87]

10   Feed-back as a development tool

Feedback is one way of improving and developing one's training modules. In the intercultural training seminars, which were conducted in connection with collecting the data for this research, the above kind of integrated approach was used, though with a less developed analytical framework. The list of comments below is a summary of feedback in connection with one of these training seminars[88], indicating what was good and what was thought to be lacking:

- It opened many things to me. Made me think, and certainly in future customer communications with foreigners I will be able to function with

[87]   As adapted from Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons 2006. original source: John E.G. Bateson (1985) "Perceived Control and the Service Encounter," in J.A. Czepiel, M.R. Solomon, and C.F. Surprenant (eds.) *The Service Encounter, Lexxington Press, Lexington, Mass, pg. 76*

[88]   Training seminar on 'Foreigners as customer' 9.12.2005, Kela central office, Helsinki, Finland

more thought and better understanding. I also began to think more about the Finnish behaviour and gain a better understanding of it.

- For once the approach was about attitudes and thinking patterns, which is an exception to the usual fact-laden training in this field.

- Interesting and rewarding training concerning intercultural communication, how to interpret and evaluate different situations. All personnel with customer contact at our organisation would need this kind of training.

- Good theory, group activities livened up the day, kept the interest going.

- A good combination of lecture, participation and multimedia. More of this!

- For once fairly concrete application of the factual knowledge and versatile approach.

- The training approached the topic from the point of view of Finns in that when we understand the role of 'being different' with the foreigners, we are also able to take into consideration the different approach needed in the customer service with them.

- I received concrete tools for customer service. Just the right amount of information for digesting, clear presentation, interesting.

- Approached the topic from a new perspective, in the spirit of integrating the immigrants.

- Practical, down to earth, examples from real life.

- I received a completely new viewpoint on how to meet the ethnically non-Finnish customers.

- There should be more training on intercultural issues and for a wider selection of personnel.

- We need more realistic opportunities for being able to use the needed time in the customer contact situations.

- The directors and heads of departments also ought to participate in this kind of thing.

- I would have wished for more detailed information concerning the behavioural patterns of certain nationalities. Why do people of a certain nationality behave as they do?

- At the end of a handout, I would have wished for a short summary of particular features of certain cultures and customs for self-study, as there was no time to cover these areas in detail during the training.

The comments show that the multiplicity of viewpoints and methods is appreciated, it does not seem to make the training fractured or hard to grasp. Instead, the participants are able to get a holistic picture, as indicated in the comments. Also, the ideology behind the training, to get beyond the factual level and get the trainees to start thinking about the issues themselves, seems to

have been grasped. That always guarantees a more long-term sustainability of the results. The comments also suggested that the trainees are able to apply the new learning in their work, as a result of the contextualised examples. Repetition was seen as a useful means of re-sharpening one's intercultural communication.

Organisational-level concerns were also expressed. The desire and need for more training and for all of the personnel to be trained in intercultural issues were voiced in many comments, of which only one was included here. One comment suggested the need for measures for better handling of the customer contacts (acting as a 'from bottom up' change agent), while another comment saw the need for the leadership of the work organisations to be involved for the training to have a wider organisational effect (expressing the reality of the 'top to bottom' approach to most institutional changes).

The particularised cultural learning was one area where some of the participants would have wanted more information on. Even though the aim of the above kind of integrated approach to intercultural training is to give the participants some tools to begin to be able to communicate better with people from different cultures in general, particularised cultural knowledge is also important, and as such, is valuable critique. This need can be responded to in various ways in intercultural training.

1. Supplement reader: Information concerning particularised knowledge concerning different cultures can be handled in the way suggested by the last comment in the feedback, as written materials for self study.

2. Separate topics / modules: The second option is to give more teaching time to this topic by preparing specific training modules concentrating on certain cultural backgrounds, either in connection with a general intercultural training module as one subtopic, or as separate training modules. The cultures in question can be dealt with on various levels of depth and in differing contexts, depending on on the time constraints and the trainee groups' particular needs.

3. Integrated approach to particularised cultural learning: This is perhaps the most useful and in-depth way of handling particularised knowledge. In planning for a particular training module, one (or more than one if it is feasible) culture can be taken as the example culture against which all the teaching and competence areas are mirrored and compared with the respective features in the Finnish culture. This will maximise the knowledge gained concerning this one culture within the constraints of one single training module, and it will also help to contextualise this knowledge more extensively to the particularised needs of the trainee group.

4. Combined approach: These above three approaches are not mutually exclusive. While one culture can be focused on during the whole of the training module in an integrated manner, particularised knowledge on several cultures, (also including the one which has been focused on in the classroom), can be handled as a supplement reader.

11   Summarising the training themes

On the individual level, essential elements in the intercultural training for critical pragmatic intercultural professional competence of those host culture members who are involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts are:

1. To provide the host culture adaptees with an understanding of how culture affects their identity and communication in professional contexts, as well as the organisational structures and working methods they operate under.

2. To provide the host culture adaptees with adequate intercultural competence:

    *   Giving the relevant intercultural tools to communicate effectively with the multi-ethnic clientele

    *   Assisting them in gaining intercultural sensitivity, including understanding the cultural adaptation process and the role of stress in it.

    *   Instilling a desire for mutual learning and development

3. To provide the host culture members with particularised cultural knowledge with special relevance to the working context, when it is needed.

The organisational-level requirements for government entities involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts would be a topic for further research.

12   The role of motivation and support

In connection with all the components of intercultural competence, motivation and support form the scaffolding that help build up intercultural competence to the fullest possible potential. These two factors are often intertwined with each other. For cultural adaptation to actually take place, the most important things are willingness and personal resolve, which both talk about being motivated (Anderson 2000). Peer support is one specific motivating factor for the process of cultural adaptation (Smith 1998). On the organisational and societal level, this can be interpreted as adequate administrative and political support in the form or concrete steps for enabling cultural diversity and multiculturalism to exist in reality and for pluralism to develop.

People need motivation and support, not just technical training, for becoming critical pragmatic intercultural professionals, persons who are able to create intercultural spaces within the dialectic pull of ethnocentrism and ethorelativism, and within globalizing /localizing identities. What motivates people to be in social interaction with people of other cultures in a manner that allows for mutual learning and development through self-reflection, mutual critique and mutual adaptation? What makes people consider persons from other cultures as strangers to be feared (xenophobia) and what kind of strangers do we consider friends (xenofilia) instead? How is an attitude of wisdom towards

strangers developed and how does it express itself? Xenosofia is defined as wisdom concerning the stranger. Whereas xenophobia and xenofilia are ways of thinking that are easily defined, xenosofia is a more elusive concept. It is characteristic of xenosophia not to blow his own trumpet so to speak. "Perhaps it is by nature so ordinary and so unnoticed, that it easily gets trodden under dissociating speech forms"[89] (Löytty 2006:285). This research takes the same stance. Modest efforts also count and one person can begin to make a difference, with ramifications that go beyond the single individual.

On the individual level, this research clearly shows that due to the limited nature of the respondents' contacts with the particular multi-ethnic clientele, the role of the peer support is valuable. The colleagues who also are involved in multi-ethnic customer contacts give it. They informally teach new intercultural competencies, as well as express empathy and understanding for each other in processing the identity issues in the cultural adaptation process. Even though the respondents in this research expressed appreciation of such support, they also called for adequate support measures on the organisational level for the processes of gaining intercultural effectiveness and dealing with the concomitant stress. Those who make an effort to get involved with the local culture may experience greater personal stress, as a sense of separation from one's countrymen is added to the normal stress of intercultural adaptation. "The tendency of these advisors to also experience greater levels of initial culture shock *points to the necessity of providing greater in-country support services* (italics added) (Kealey 1996:41). Support is linked to motivation.

It is no exaggeration to state that motivation is the key to overseas effectiveness. Those who went overseas motivated and committed to contributing something to the development process reported that their greatest satisfaction came from participation in the development process, from meeting and getting to know nationals, and from their involvement in the local culture. It was further found that those who derived great satisfaction from cultural interaction were also rated as highly effective, by both their peers and the researchers (Kealey 1996:41). A professional commitment and desire to help are fundamental requirement for effectiveness overseas. Without these, interpersonal skills are insufficient to ensure an effective outcome.

It is significant to note that interpersonal skills, which also include communication skills, in themselves are not considered to be enough. Motivation and commitment are personal attitudes, addressing identity issues. For the Finnish civil servants in their multi-ethnic customer contacts, being motivated and committed not only to take care of the customers' cases well, but also to be able to help them integrate into the Finnish administrative ways indicates such a level of involvement with the multi-ethnic clientele. This will affect their attitudes and professional identity development towards multiculturalism and eventual pluralism. It is marked by intercultural sensitivity, which brings positive enjoyment of intercultural tasks. It is also accompanied with consequent intercultural effectiveness, which is the desired goal in the professional context.

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[89]   My translation from the original Finnish text.

However, as already stated earlier, conscious effort and desire are not necessary for a certain level of cultural adaptation. Even where there is a conscious choice to limit the social and cultural interaction with the host culture, with time, minimal adaptation *does* take place despite the persons' intention to the contrary (Kim 2001:58-59).

A parallel conclusion can be drawn from some of the comments made by the Finnish civil servants about their multi-ethnic customer contacts. As the staff members are in constant contact with ethnic-non Finns in their customer contact work, even those among them who have not made a concentrated effort in deeper-level cultural adaptation, learn to utilise the appropriate surface-level routine of intercultural strategies in order to handle these customer contacts smoothly. It is to their own advantage to do so, to ensure efficiency in their work and to minimize the otherwise recurring stress caused by cultural differences in these customer contacts.

However, this type of adaptation may only be minimal (Taft 1997:150). I would also add that this kind of adaptation is not only more limited in quantity, but also in its quality. It does not reach the deep-level cultural sensitisation with broad intercultural awareness and intercultural attitudes. Instead, the adaptation stays at the surface level of skills and behaviour, and is confined to particularised cultural knowledge and in dealing with intercultural differences, such as cultural differences in communication between the two cultures involved.

It should also be pointed out in this context that often one starts the cultural adaptation process from the surface-level skills and behavioural adaptation needed in the intercultural contact situation. This is quite understandable, as people are faced with intercultural issues through the concrete communication situations and have a practical need to know how to cope in them. The wider and deeper intercultural awareness and ensuing attitude changes often only take place gradually, and the knowledge and understanding gained in the intercultural communication arena can also serve as a motivation to develop intercultural sensitivity and competencies with a wider application in the arena of multiculturalism and pluralism.

To reiterate my point, to increase the effectiveness of intercultural training, it is good to include the deep-level intercultural issues from the very start. Those persons, who have to deal with intercultural learning on their own, without much prior exposure to other cultures, often do not have this choice. All they have to go by is the concrete intercultural communication situation with its immediate concerns. The wider intercultural ramifications only come with time, if at all. Regret for the lack of a wider intercultural perspective from the onset of their professional contacts with the ethnically non-Finnish clientele has been expressed by many a participant in the intercultural training courses I have run over the years for the Finnish civil servants. The feeling is that early intervention would have given them valuable tools for developing critical pragmatic intercultural professionalism. This sentiment is perhaps best exemplified by the following exclamation: "*I wish someone had told me this in very the beginning.*"

APPENDIX 1. THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(English translation of the questionnaire used for the DOI 2nd Survey and KELA Survey)

1. Evaluate the general stressfulness of customer contacts to you personally

i. Telephone contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

ii. Face-to-face contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

Additional comments, examples:

2. Evaluate the effect the following factors have on the stressfulness of the multi-ethnic customer contacts to you personally

A. The customers' level of ability in Finnish, or the difficulty in understanding the customers' foreign accent when using Finnish

i. Telephone contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

ii. Face-to-face contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

Additional comments, examples:

B. The customers' level of ability in the language used in the customer contact apart from Finnish, or the difficulty in understanding the customers' accent in that language.

i. Telephone contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

ii. Face-to-face contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

Additional comments, examples:

C. Your own level of ability in foreign languages
Specify, which language/languages, for ex. : 1. No stress: English, 2. Occasionally some stress: Swedish, etc.:

i. Telephone contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

ii. Face-to-face contacts
1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful

Additional comments, examples:

D. Customers' emotional reactions

i. Telephone contacts   **ii. Face-to-face contacts**
  1.No stress   1. No stress
  2. Occasionally some stress   2. Occasionally some stress
  3. I do not know   3. I do not know
  4. Often quite stressful   4. Often quite stressful
  5. Every time stressful   5. Every time stressful
Additional comments, examples:

E. Your own emotional reactions

i. Telephone contacts   **ii. Face-to-face contacts**
  1.No stress   1. No stress
  2. Occasionally some stress   2. Occasionally some stress
  3. I do not know   3. I do not know
  4. Often quite stressful   4. Often quite stressful
  5. Every time stressful   5. Every time stressful
Additional comments, examples:

F. Cultural differences in communication between the Finnish civil servant and ethnically Non-Finnish customer

i. Telephone contacts   **ii. Face-to-face contacts**
  1.No stress   1. No stress
  2. Occasionally some stress   2. Occasionally some stress
  3. I do not know   3. I do not know
  4. Often quite stressful   4. Often quite stressful
  5. Every time stressful   5. Every time stressful
Additional comments, examples:

G. The difficult nature of the customers' cases
i. Telephone contacts   **ii. Face-to-face contacts**
  1.No stress   1. No stress
  2. Occasionally some stress   2. Occasionally some stress
  3. I do not know   3. I do not know
  4. Often quite stressful   4. Often quite stressful
  5. Every time stressful   5. Every time stressful
Additional comments, examples:

H. The power relationship at work in the customer contact: Representative of the administrative authority vs. the customer
i. Telephone contacts   **ii. Face-to-face contacts**
  1.No stress   1. No stress
  2. Occasionally some stress   2. Occasionally some stress
  3. I do not know   3. I do not know
  4. Often quite stressful   4. Often quite stressful
  5. Every time stressful   5. Every time stressful
Additional comments, examples:

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I. Matters pertaining to internal work processes that affect the customer contacts

i. Telephone contacts

1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

ii. Face-to-face contacts

1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

Additional comments, examples:

J. Some other factor, which causes you stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts:

Please specify, which factor/factors:

i. Telephone contacts

1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

ii. Face-to-face contacts

1. No stress
2. Occasionally some stress
3. I do not know
4. Often quite stressful
5. Every time stressful

Additional comments, examples:

K. Name the three most stressful factors to you in the multi-ethnic customer contacts

List your answers in the order of stressfulness, marking the most stressful factor with no. 1. Add the numbers 1,2,3 after the relevant factors below.

A. The customers' level of ability in Finnish, or the difficulty in understanding the customers' foreign accent when using Finnish

B. The customers' level of ability in the language used in the customer contact apart from Finnish, or the difficulty in understanding the customers' accent in that language.

C. Your own level of ability in foreign languages

D. Customers' emotional reactions

E. Your own emotional reactions

F. Cultural differences in communication between the Finnish civil servant and ethnically non-Finnish customer

G. The difficult nature of the customers' cases

H. The power relationship at work in the customer contact: representative of the administrative authority vs. the customer

I. Matters pertaining to internal work processes that affect the customer contacts

J. Some other factor, which causes you stress in the multi-ethnic customer contacts

Additional comments and examples:

3. How do you rate your success in the multi-ethnic customer contacts?

i. Telephone contacts
1. Good success
2. Occasional uncertainty
3. I do not know
4. Often unsure
5. Every time unsure

ii. Face-to-face contacts
1. Good success
2. Occasional uncertainty
3. I do not know
4. Often unsure
5. Every time unsure

Additional comments and examples:

4. Evaluate the effect of multi-ethnic customer contacts on your feeling of well-being in the workplace

1. Causing continual heavy mental strain; considerably weaken my feeling of well-being in the workplace

2. Occasionally slight mental strain; weaken my feeling of well-being in the workplace from time to time

3. I do not know

4. Bring occasional variation and cheer to the job; one of the factors contributing positively to my feeling of well-being in the workplace

5. Mainly positive effect: a crucial positive factor for my feeling of well-being in the workplace

Additional comments and examples:

5. Describe briefly the greatest gain of multi-ethnic customer contacts by continuing the following sentence: *The best thing about the multi-ethnic customer contacts is...*

6. Describe briefly the greatest drawbacks of multi-ethnic customer contacts by continuing the following sentence: *The most tiresome thing about the multi-ethnic customer contacts is...*

7. Describe what is your usual emotional state after multi-ethnic customer contacts. Does it differ in any way from how you feel after a customer contact with a Finn?

8. Describe with a few words from the civil servants' perspective, what is:

A. Good telephone communication with a customer

B. Poor telephone communication with a customer

9. Which is a more stressful mode of communication with the customers, telephone contacts or face-to-face contacts? Please state your reasons.

10. Name those nationalities from amongst your customers with whom you feel the most stress. Please specify, what in the behaviour of these customers causes you stress.

11. In your opinion, which of the two parties feels more stress due to difficulties in intercultural communication in the multi-ethnic customer contacts?

1. The ethnically non-Finnish customer

2. The Finnish civil servant

3. Both of them equally

4. I do not know
 Additional comments and examples:

12. **How do you handle difficulties that arise in multi-ethnic customer contacts?**
    i. Telephone contacts   ii. Face-to-face contacts

13. **How do you unload afterwards your stress from the multi-ethnic customer contacts?**

14. **What expectations and suggestions do you have for the organisation and instructions concerning multi-ethnic customer contacts in your office?**

15. **My customer contacts in the present job has included:**

    A. Mainly telephone contacts

    B. Mainly face-to-face contacts

    C. Both modes of customer contacts equally

16. **Other comments**

17. **Question only in the DOI surveys**

18. **My main task is:**

    A. Case worker with a final decision making responsibility

    B. Case worker with a responsibility for preliminary decision making

    C. Secretarial level staff

    D. Other tasks, with no connection to individual customers' applications

19. **Question only in the KELA survey**
    How many years of experience with customer contacts do you have in KELA?

APPENDIX 2. CODES FOR THE QUOTES

THE DIRECTORATE OF IMMIGRATION (DOI)
The Nationality Department's telephone hour: Pilot Survey
Spring 2004
1DA GENERAL STRESSFULNESS
1DB CUSTOMER'S LANGUAGE ABILITY
1DC CIVIL SERVANT'S OWN LANGUAGE ABILITY
1DD CIVIL SERVANT'S EMOTIONAL REACTIONS
1DE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ISSUES
1DF COMPLICATED NATURE OF THE CUSTOMERS' CASES
1DG POWER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CIVIL SERVANT AND THE CUSTOMER
1DH WORK PROCESSES WITHIN THE DOI
1DI OTHER FACTORS
1DJ EFFECT ON THE EMOTIONAL STATE
1DK THE CONCEPT OF GOOD AND POOR COMMUNICATION IN THE CIVIL SERVICE
1DL STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING DIFFICULT CUSTOMER CONTACTS

THE DIRECTORAGE OF IMMIGRATION
2nd survey: The effect of multi-ethnic customer contacts on the well being in the workplace, July 2005
2DA GENERAL STRESSFULNESS
2DB EMOTIONAL REACTIONS BY THE CUSTOMERS
2DC COMPLICATED NATURE OF THE CUSTOMERS' CASES
2DD WORK PROCESSES WITHIN THE DOI
2DE THE CIVIL SERVANTS' OWN ABILITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
2DF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ISSUES
2DG CIVIL SERVANTS' OWN EMOTIONAL REACTIONS
2DH CUSTOMERS' ABILITY IN OTHER LANGUAGES BESIDES FINNISH
2DI CUSTOMERS' ABILITY IN FINNISH
2DJ OTHER FACTORS.
2DK POWER RELATIONS
2DL COMPARISON OF THE TWO WAYS OF EVALUATING STRESS
2DM SENSE OF SUCCESS IN THE CUSTOMER CONTACTS
2DN WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE
2DO PERCEIVED GAINS
2DP PERCEIVED DRAWBACKS
2DQ EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF MULTI-ETHNIC CLIENT CONTACTS
2DR NEGATIVE EFFECTS
2DS POSITIVE EFFECTS
2DT FINNISH VS. FOREIGN CUSTOMERS

2DU SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH FACE-TO-FACE
    CONTACTS
2DW MAGES OF GOOD COMMUNICATION
2DX IMAGES OF POOR COMMUNICATION
2DY TELEPHONE CONTACTS VS. FACE-TO-FACE CONTACTS
2DZ COMMUNICATION ISSUES WITH DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES
2DAA DISTRIBUTION OF STRESS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES
2DAB HANDLING DIFFICULTIES IN CUSTOMER CONTACTS
2DAC STRATEGIES FOR UNLOADING THE STRESS
2DAD TRAINING NEEDS'
2DAE ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS
2DAF THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER CONTACTS

THE SOCIAL INSURANCE INSTITUTION OF FINLAND (KELA)
Survey of the stress factors in multi-ethnic customer contacts, April 2006
SA GENERAL STRESSFULNESS
SB STRESS FACTORS IN TELEPHONE CONTACTS
SC STRESS FACTORS IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTACTS
SD THE COMPLICATED NATURE OF THE CUSTOMERS' CASE.
SE CIVIL SERVANTS ABILITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
SF CUSTOMERS' ABILITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
SG CUSTOMERS' ABILITY IN FINNISH
SH CUSTOMERS' EMOTIONAL REACTIONS
SI INTERNAL WORK PROCESSES
SJ INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION MATTERS
SK CIVIL SERVANTS' EMOTIONAL REACTIONS
SL OTHER FACTORS
SM POWER RELATIONS
SN SUBJECTIVE FEELING OF SUCCESS
SO WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE
SP PERCEIVED GAINS
SQ PERCEIVED DRAWBACKS
SR EMOTIONAL EFFECTS
SS IMAGES OF GOOD COMMUNICATION
ST IMAGES OF POOR COMMUNICATION
SU COMMUNICATION ISSUES WITH DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES
SV DISTRIBUTION OF STRESS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES
SW HANDLING DIFFICULTIES
SX STRATEGIES FOR UNLOADING THE STRES
SY IN MULTI-ETHNIC CUSTOMER CONTACTS

YHTEENVETO (FINNISH SUMMARY)

Stressin kokemus suomalaisten viranomaisten monietnisissä asiakaskontakteissa:
kriittis-pragmaattisen kulttuurienvälisen ammattitaidon kehittäminen

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee suomalaisen kantaväestön kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän ja kulttuurisen sopeutumisen haasteita kartoittamalla Kansaneläke-laitoksen sekä Ulkomaalaisviraston monietnisen asiakaspalvelutyön haasteita sekä puhelinkontakteissa että henkilökohtaisissa vuorovaikutustilanteissa.

Kulttuurienvälisessä viestintätilanteessa koettu väärinymmärrys omasta poikkeavan viestintätyylin muodossa saattaa aiheuttaa henkilössä epävar-muutta, epäluuloisuutta ja kielteisiä stereotypioita toisesta osapuolesta. Jos ei ole varma siitä, miten asia sujui eikä siitä, mitä toinen ajatteli, yleismaailmalli-sesti inhimillinen reaktio on siirtyä henkisesti puolustuskannalle ja peilata ti-lannetta tiedostamattomasti omasta taustasta käsin. Tämä saattaa tuottaa yliko-rostuneita stereotypioita.

Kulttuurienvälisessä viestinnässä samat käyttäytymisen lait pätevät molempiin osapuoliin. Koska kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän alalla tutkimus on keskittynyt paljolti maahanmuuttajaosapuolen kulttuurisen sopeutumisen ja kulttuurierojen aiheuttamien viestinnällisten haasteiden tarkasteluun, tämä tut-kimus haluaa nostaa keskustelunaiheeksi ja sitä myötä tämän tutkimuksen pe-ruskysymykseksi myös toisen osapuolen, kantaväestön, vastaavat prosessit. Suomalaisen kantaväestön kulttuurisen sopeutumisen haasteiden avoin käsittely maahanmuuttajien vastaavan prosessin rinnalla on tärkeä tekijä kantaväestön kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän ammattitaidon kehittämiseksi, maahanmuuttaja-väestön ja kantaväestön välisen todellisen kulttuurienvälisen ymmärryksen kartuttamiseksi sekä myös rasististen asenteiden ehkäisyssä puolin ja toisin.

Tutkimuksen filosofiseksi lähtökohdaksi on otettu Young'in (1996) esit-tämä kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän teoria siitä, että todellinen kulttuurienväli-nen sopeutuminen on kaksisuuntainen prosessi. Tutkimus myös haastaa väi-tettä (Kim 2001) siitä, että kantaväestön läpikäymä kulttuurinen sopeutumis- ja muutosprosessi on luonteeltaan vain rajoittunutta.

Peruskysymyksen alateemoina kysytään, missä määrin tietyt tekijät mo-nietnisissä asiakaskontakteissa aiheuttavat viranomaisille stressiä ja mikä rooli tällä stressillä on? Kvantitatiivisena aineistona mahdollisina stressitekijöinä tarkastellaan viranomaisten ja asiakaskunnan kielitaitoa, käsiteltävän asian luonnetta, virastojen sisäisiä työprosesseja, asiakkaan ja viranomaisen tunnere-aktioita, valtasuhdetta, tunnistetusti kulttuurienväliseen viestintään liittyviä ongelmia sekä tutkimukseen osallistuneiden vapaavalintaisesti ilmoittamia syitä. Tutkimus osoittaa, että subjektiivinen stressikokemus on oleellinen osa suomalaisten viranomaisten monietnisiä asiakaskontakteja. Etenkin alkuvai-heessa tämä kokemus on verrattavissa vieraaseen kulttuuriin saapuvan henki-

lön yleiseen kulttuurishokin kokemukseen. Tutkimus myös osoittaa, että kulttuurienväliseen viestintään liittyviä asioita ei aina tunnisteta ja että niihin tästä syystä liittyy virhetulkintoja, jotka haittaavat viestintää ja lisäävät stressiä asiakaspalvelutilanteissa. Sopeutumisstressi voidaan kuitenkin valjastaa positiiviseen rooliin kulttuurienvälisen ammattitaidon kehittämiseksi tekemällä kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin ja kulttuurisen sopeutumisen kehittymisprosessi näkyväksi ja käsittelemällä sitä tietoisesti.

Kvalitatiivisen aineiston pohjalta tutkimus tarkastelee sitä, kuinka suomalaiset viranomaiset luovat kulttuurienvälistä tilaa. Asiaa katsotaan kolmesta näkökulmasta: integriteettikysymyksenä, kulttuurisena oppimisena ja viestintäkysymyksenä. Kulttuurienvälistä kompetenssia tarkastellaan kulttuurienvälisen tehokkuuden sekä kulttuurienvälisen sensitiivisyyden kehitysprosessin kautta. Tutkimus osoittaa, että monietnisissä asiakaskontakteissa toimivat suomalaiset viranomaiset usein käyvät läpi monitahoista kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän ymmärrykseen liittyvää muutos- ja sopeutumisprosessia. Tutkimus osoittaa, että koska heidän kosketuspintansa asiakaskunnan kulttuureihin usein rajoittuu ainoastaan asiakaspalvelutilanteisiin ja vaihtuvan asiakaskunnan moninaisissa kulttuuritaustoissa saattaa jatkuvasti tulle heille eteen vieraita ja uusia viestintätapoja, he eivät voi, tai ehdi, saada tukea asiakkaiden kulttuuritaustojen ymmärtämiselle ja niiden vaikutukselle asiakaspalvelutilanteessa muista kulttuurikonteksteista. Tämän vuoksi monietnisissä asiakaspalvelutilanteissa tarvitaankin erityisen vaativaa kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän kompetenssia, kykyä dialogiseen kulttuurienvälisen metakommunikaatioon. Se on taitoa selvittää mitä erilaisimmista kulttuuritaustoista tulevien asiakkaiden kanssa, onko asiassa ongelmana viestintäkulttuuriin liittyvä seikka.

Eri tutkimusaloja yhdistämällä tässä tutkimuksessa kehitetään holistinen näkökulma kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin kehittämisprosessin kuvaamiseen. Bennett'in (1986, 1993) kulttuurienvälisen sensitiivisyyden kehittymisen ja kehittämisen mallia sekä Lie'n (2001) viestintäteoreettisen globalisoivan/lokalisoivan identiteetin käsitteitä dialektisesti soveltaen sekä akkulturaatiotutkimuksiin (esim. Berry, 1990, 1997, 2002, 2004) nojautuen tämä tutkimus pureutuu niihin välitiloihin, joissa viestintäkulttuurien erojen puiminen sekä kulttuurinen sopeutuminen identiteettitasolla käytännössä tapahtuvat. Keskeistä tässä tutkimuksessa on itse muutosprosessin kuvaus, sen näkyväksi tekeminen ja sen luonteen tunnistaminen. Bennett'in (1986, 1993, 2005) mallin kulttuurienvälisen sensitiivisyyden eri asteet: erojen kieltäminen, puolustautuminen, erojen minimoiminen, erojen hyväksyminen, eroihin sopeutuminen sekä integraatio ovat kehyksinä, joita vasten tämä tutkimus kartoittaa niitä prosesseja, joita läpikäymällä siirrytään sensitiivisyyden asteelta toiselle. Suomalaisten viranomaisten monietnisiä asiakaspalvelutilanteita käsitteleviin kommentteihin perustuen tutkimus ehdottaa, että keskeistä kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin kehittämisprosesseille on määrätynasteinen vastakkaisiin suuntiin vetävien vaikutteiden jännite, osittainen päällekkäisyys sekä edestakainen liike: kulttuurienvälisen tilan luominen tapahtuu etnosentrisyyden ja etnorelativismin vastakkaisvedossa, globalisoivien ja lokalisoivien vaikutteiden pääl-

lekkäisessä ristipaineessa. Vastakkaiset jännitteet eivät kuitenkaan vaikuta täysin sattumanvaraisesti, vaan siirryttäessä kulttuurisen sensitiivisyyden asteelta toiselle ne ilmenevät tietyssä järjestyksessä käyttäytymisen, tunteiden, kognition ja maailmankatsomuksen tasolla. Siirryttäessä erojen kieltämisestä puolustusmentaliteettiin etnorelativistinen mentaliteetti on vallalla kaikilla tasoilla. Minimointia kohti siirryttäessä etnorelativistinen asenne vaikuttaa käyttäytymisen ja tunteiden tasolla, mutta ei yllä kognition ja maailmankatsomuksen tasolle. Erojen hyväksymistä kohti mentäessä puolestaan on mahdollisuus siihen, että etnosentrinen veto on voimakas kognitiivisella tasolla, vaikka käyttäytymisen tasolla olisikin etnorelativistinen asenne. Eroihin sopeuduttaessa etnorelativistinen orientaatio voi yltää kaikille neljälle tasolle. Positiivisessa integraatiovaiheessa etnosentrinen ja etnorelativistinen jännite ovat siinä mielessä tasapainossa, että molempien vaikutuksista ollaan täysin tietoisia. Tämä antaa välineet toimia konstruktiivisesti eri kulttuureissa, kuten myös mahdollisuuden luoda uutta kulttuuria integroimalla itseensä erilaisia vaikutteita. Tätä voi kuvata myös globalisoivan/lokalisoivan identiteetin konstruktiivisena yhteensovittamisena. Työvälineinä tässä prosessissa ovat molemminpuolinen sopeutuminen, molemminpuolinen kritiikki sekä reflektio.

Tutkimuksen lopussa olevassa soveltavassa osiossa ehdotettu teoriapohjainen koulutusmalli käsittää sekä viestinnällisen kompetenssin että kulttuurienvälisesti sensitiivisen identiteetin kehittämisen. Nämä kaksi eivät kuitenkaan kehity toisistaan erillään, vaan ne voidaan, ja pitääkin yhdistää toisiinsa. Koulutusmallin identiteettiosio keskittyy kriittis-pragmaattisen kulttuurienvälisen ammattitaidon kehittämiseen, joka perustuu Young'in (1996) ajatuksiin todellisen kulttuurienvälisen vuorovaikutuksen ehdoista. Sen käytännön sovellutuksena viestinnällisen kompetenssin kehittämiseksi tutkimus ehdottaa Pan, Scollon & Scollon'in (2002) Communication Display Portfolio-metodin yksinkertaistettua sovellutusta strategisesti dialogisen kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän kompetenssin kehittämiseksi. Haasteena on siirtää tämä oppiminen yksittäisten viranomaisten vastuulta organisaatiotasolla toteutettavaksi, suunnitelmalliseksi ja tutkittuun tietoon perustuvaksi koulutukseksi.

Mitä enemmän kantaväestön edustajina toimivat viranomaisten tulevat tietoisiksi siitä, miten suuressa määrin kulttuurienvälisessä viestintätilanteessa vaikuttaa heidän oma kulttuuri- ja kielisidonnainen tapansa muovata todellisuutta, s.o. kuinka suuressa määrin se määrittää esim. sitä, mitten mm. itse viestittävä asia, sen konteksti, tilanteessa vaikuttavat valtasuhteet sekä viraston sisäiset työprosessit vaikuttavat viestintätilanteen tulkintaan, sitä paremmat mahdollisuudet heillä on määritellä itselleen onnistuneita strategioita toimivan viestintätilanteen aikaansaamiseksi. Työelämän tutkimuksen haaste on siirtää tämän tietotaidon satunnainen ja suunnittelematon työssä oppimisen kautta opetteleminen yksittäisten viranomaisten vastuulta organisaatiotasolle; tällöin viestintäkäytäntöjen muutokset perustuvat tutkittuun tietoon ja ne voivat toimia läpäisyperiaatteella osana koulutuksellista otetta oppivassa organisaatiossa.

Oleellinen osa kulttuurienvälisissä viestintätehtävissä toimivien viranomaisten ammatillisen osaamisen kehittämisessä on auttaa heitä muovaamaan

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selkeä itseymmärrys omasta viestintäkulttuuristaan ja antaa heille käyttökelpoisia viestinnällisiä työkaluja kyseisen tehtävän hoitamiseksi. Täten heistä voi tulla sellaisia kriittis-pragmaattisia ammattilaisia, jotka kykenevät monikulttuurisissa asiakaskontakteissa neuvottelemaan asiakkaan kanssa uusia määritelmiä siitä, miten tilanne hoituu, mitä roolit siinä otetaan, mitkä normit vaikuttavat taustalla ja miten ilmaista itseään. Tällaisen kulttuurisen osaamisen voi olettaa heijastuvan myönteisesti myös monikulttuuriseen asiakaskuntaan, jonka kulttuurisen keskusteluvalmiuden epävirallisena harjoituskenttänä yhteiskunnallisella tasolla ovat usein juuri heidän ensimmäiset viranomaiskontaktinsa, jotka siksi ovat erittäin konfliktiherkkiä tilanteita. Tutkimuksen soveltavana tarkoituksena on tuottaa suomalaisen työelämän tarpeisiin kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän alalta koulutusmateriaalia, joka tukee monikulttuurisissa asiakaskontakteissa toimivien suomalaisten viranomaisten ammatillista osaamista, heidän henkilökohtaista monikulttuurisuuden ymmärtämistään sekä työhyvinvointiaan.

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