

**CULTURE AND *KULTUR* -  
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE, OR IS THERE ANY?**

**A comparative analysis of cultural content in English and Swedish  
textbook series for upper secondary school**

**Master's thesis  
Susanna Lamponen**

University of Jyväskylä  
Department of Languages  
English  
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<p>Vieraiden kielten opettaminen on vuosikymmenten myötä muuttunut yhä kommunikatiivisempaan suuntaan ja oppimisteorioissa on alettu kritisoida kielitieteiden kielivähemmistöjä, minkä myötä kielten opetuksen keskiöön on jo vuosien ajan ollut nousemassa kulttuuri ja kulttuurien välinen viestintä. Yhä useammat tutkijat ja kielenopetuksen asiantuntijat ovat sitä mieltä, että kulttuuri kuuluu olennaisena osana kielten opetuksen ja tämä onkin otettu huomioon myös uusimpien opetussuunnitelmiin laadinnassa. OPS:n suuntaviivoja noudattavia kielten oppikirjoja kohtaan on täten muodostunut uusia odotuksia: niiden oletetaan tukevan myös oppilaiden kulttuurien välisen kompetenssin kehittymistä. Koska oppikirjoilla on aina ollut keskeinen asema Suomen koulujärjestelmässä, on niitä vuosien saatossa tutkittu monesta eri näkökulmasta keskittyen kuitenkin aina yhden kielen oppikirjoihin kerrallaan. Tässä tutkimuksessa otettiin tarkasteluun sekä englannin että ruotsin kielen uusimmat lukion oppikirjasarjat ja verrattiin niiden kulttuurisisältöjä.</p>	
<p>Tutkimuksen lähtökohdaksi muodostuivat Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteista nousevat kulttuurien opetuksen suuntaviivat, jotka muistuttavat toisiaan suurilta osin sekä englannin että ruotsin kielessä. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää millaista tietoa oppikirjat sisältävät kohdemaiden kulttuureista sekä miten paljon kulttuurisisällöt eroavat toisistaan, kun vertaillaan englannin ja ruotsin oppikirjoja. molemmat analysoivat oppikirjasarjat olivat Otavan julkaisemia ja ne on painettu uusimman LOPSin julkaisemisen jälkeen. Tutkimusmenetelmänä oli sisällön analyysi. Jokainen kirjasarjojen kirja käytti järjestelmällisesti läpi ja niistä löytyneet kulttuurielementit sijoitettiin kymmenestä kulttuurikategoriasta koostuvaan luokitteluun, joka muodostettiin Byramin ja Karjalan ehdotelmiin pohjalta. Lopuksi kaikki luokittelun kategoriat vertailtiin kahden kielen välillä niin, että erot ja yhtäläisyydet englannin ja ruotsin kielten oppikirjojen kulttuurisisällöissä tulivat esille.</p>	
<p>Tutkimus osoitti, että <i>Open Road</i>-kirjasarjan kulttuurisisältö oli pirstaleisempi eikä tarjonneet yhtä hyvää käsitystä englantia äidinkielenään puhuvien ihmisten arjesta kuin <i>Galleri</i>-kirjasarja ruotsia äidinkielenään puhuvista. <i>Gallerin</i> kulttuurikuvaus oli laajempi ja antoi yksityiskohtaisemman kuvan ruotsalaisesta ja suomenruotsalaisesta kulttuurista. molemmissa kirjasarjoissa ns. korkeakulttuuri sekä turistinäkökulma olivat selvästi tehneet tilaa ns. syväkulttuurille, eli tavallisten ihmisten arjelle, mielipiteille, uskomuksille ja tavoille sekä tottumuksille vaikkakin musiikki, taide ja kirjallisuus dominoivat etenkin varsinaisten kulttuuri-kurssien kirjojen sisältöä. Varsinkin <i>Open Roadin</i> heikkoutena oli, etteivät kirjat tukeneet opiskelijoiden kulttuurien välisen ymmärryksen ja -kompetenssin kehitystä, toisin kuin <i>Galleri</i>, ja että <i>Open Road</i> keskittyi, kuten monet edeltäjänsä, kahden pääkulttuurin, Britannian ja Yhdysvaltojen, kuvalemiseen.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

A person learns a new language and, as we say, gets a new soul. He puts himself into the attitude of those that make use of that language. He cannot read its literature, cannot converse with those that belong to that community without taking on its peculiar attitudes. (Mead quoted by Takala, 1991: 200)

Languages have been learned and taught through the history of mankind and under its long history language teaching has undergone many changes, especially under the last hundred years. According to Byram (1993a:13), one of the most influential changes has been the introduction of a method called Communicative Language Teaching. It introduces a new way of viewing both language and the way in which it should be taught. Instead of concentrating on how to use the grammar of the language, this method emphasizes the importance of learning how to use the language successfully in socio-cultural contexts. The approach has been adopted into the standards for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages by the Council of Europe, after which many countries have renewed their national curricula to match the latest requirements for foreign language (FL) teaching. The quotation above gives an insight of the new goal of FL teaching, i.e. to give students an opportunity to 'get a new soul' and 'a new attitude' through learning a new language. For this to happen, students need to be given information not just about the lexical and grammatical aspects of a language, but also insights about the socio-cultural aspects and behavioural patterns that prevail in different social situations in the target language society. This is best gained by providing students with chances to compare the target language culture with their own culture as well as teaching them that even though these two may vary they are still equally valuable. What we are then aiming for in language teaching is developing students' Intercultural competence which is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.

In a world that is invariably becoming more and more international versatile language proficiency is important for countries which represent so called small languages, such as Finland, because it provides greater chances for success (Elomaa 2009: 13). International contacts have become very common for many people who, either due to their

work or free time activities, are in contact with people living in other countries. Here in Finland we have long been able to take pride in our efficient and successful language teaching which guarantees high level of proficiency in foreign languages. The education in Finland is regulated by the Finnish National Core Curriculum in which it is stated, for example, that children in Finland start studying their first foreign language (A-language) during the third year of their comprehensive school education. According to SUKOL (2011), the majority of Finnish children choose English as their first foreign language. In 2009 90.2 percent of Finnish pupils started English in their third school year, whereas 7.5 percent began their English studies during their fifth school year (SUKOL 2011). Since Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, whose official status has been regulated in the Finnish constitution pupils here in Finland start their studies of Swedish or Finnish in the seventh grade. This regulation dates back to the reform in the Finnish comprehensive school regulations in the 70s when it became obligatory for all pupils who have Finnish as their first language (L1) to start their studies of Swedish in the seventh grade and, equally, those who have Swedish as their L1 in Finland are required to begin their Finnish studies at the same age. If one chooses to continue their studies in upper secondary school after completing their nine years of comprehensive school one will continue to study both of these languages, i.e. the A-language, which for most students in Finland is English, and Swedish or Finnish as the second official language. The standards set by the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary School (LOPS) for both English and Swedish resemble one another in many perspectives, not least when it comes to the aspect of culture teaching. The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary School will be more closely examined in section 2.2.1.

When choosing the topic for my study I was first and foremost challenged by my wish to combine my major and minor subjects, English and Swedish, and find a topic that would suit both of them. Secondly, I have always been fascinated by culture and thought that it should be an essential part of FL teaching and, thus, wanted to do research around that topic. I decided to start by looking into the standards set by LOPS to see whether something interesting would come up there. I realised, as stated above, that the guidelines for culture teaching for both English and Swedish were almost identical and decided to do my research about how these guidelines are turned into practice by analysing the cultural content of two textbook series, *Open Road* and *Galleri*, both designed for upper secondary

school use. The textbook series that I chose are both published by Otava and they are the latest textbooks available published after the release of the current LOPS. My aim was to see, firstly, what kind of cultural information these two textbook series designed for two different languages contained and, secondly, whether the cultural information of these two languages resembled one another since the guidelines set by LOPS suggested that the cultural contents might be quite similar. In my analysis of the textbooks' cultural content I used a ten-point categorisation based on two already existing cultural categorisations that had been tested and used in previous research done in the field (see sections 2.1.2 and 4.3). I was also interested in finding out whether or not the latest textbooks had raised to the challenge of trying to raise students' cultural awareness and to develop their intercultural competence, but found out as I was analysing the data that it would have distracted the focus of the present study as well as made the area of research too wide for a study of this scale.

In the present study the main interest is, as stated above, to find out what kind of cultural information is included in most recently published textbooks for the study of both English and Swedish in Finnish upper secondary school. The focus is on the cultural information of the target language societies, i.e. the countries where English and Swedish have an official status and are spoken as L1. The next two chapters deal with the concept of culture as well as study the reasons why culture should be taught in schools. Since the present study is based on textbook analysis, the role of textbooks in foreign language teaching will be discussed in chapter 3 where some examples of the previous research dealing with the same topic are also presented. In chapter 4 the data of the present study and the method of analysis, including the categorisation of the cultural elements found in the data, are presented. The results of the present study are reported in chapter 5 after which they are further discussed in chapter 6. In the final chapter I will reflect on the advantages as well as the disadvantages of the present study and make some suggestions for further research.

## 2 TEACHING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

In the modern world, with its high technology, mobility of people and the formation of multicultural nations, traditional language teaching has been faced with new challenges. There is an urge for deeper understanding of the languages being taught, which is why it is no longer enough to learn only the lexical and grammatical items of a language. A citizen of the modern society is expected to be able to communicate using the target language in an appropriate way according to the norms of the target culture. Thus, one might say that in order to truly learn the language, one must also understand its culture. The interest in incorporating culture into language classrooms was first raised before the 1970s, as is pointed by Buttjes (1991: 11), but the real concern for the cultural aspects in language teaching arose in the 1980s when researchers such as Seeley (1984) and Byram (1989) published their work concerning the matter. After this the number of publications about the issue has risen and research has been conducted both in the field of classroom practices and textbook analysis. However, there are still various unstudied areas to be taken under the microscope.

### 2.1 Defining culture

In this chapter I will first take on the challenging task of defining the concept of culture. There have been many attempts to define culture in the past and the definitions vary from one researcher to another. In fact, culture is such a wide subject that to define and illustrate it with as much complexity and from as many angles as one might want to is perhaps impossible in a study of this scale. However, I will do my best in scratching the surface of cultural definitions and present some of them here and then explain how culture is understood in the present study. I will also sum up some ways of categorising cultural content, for example, in textbooks. After this I will move on to explaining why bringing culture instruction into classrooms and textbooks is considered important, and also discuss the relationship between language and culture. Here I will lean on to the evidence from research done so far and the guidelines provided in the Finnish National Curriculum. Lastly I will look more closely at the terms Intercultural communication and Intercultural competence which are the aims of cultural instruction and show how their importance has been realised in language learning research in the past two decades.

### 2.1.1 Definitions of culture

As Seeley (1984: 14) states, culture has traditionally been seen, especially in language teaching, as containing elements only of the so called elitist culture comprising the fine arts, science, geography and history. It was considered enough to teach pupils about the important historic events and inventions and to give information about some of the influential characters in the literary and artistic world. This view of culture has, however, changed and many researchers today see culture as containing all aspects of human life (Seeley 1984: 13). According to Karjala (2003: 16), treating culture only as high culture, i.e. arts and science, would be incorrect, especially when we consider the Finnish educational system, which is supposed to be all-around education.

There are probably as many definitions of culture as there are people trying to define it. According to Seeley (1984: 8), “culture includes anything that people have learned to do”. This definition shows that culture as a word actually holds hundreds of concepts in itself and that it is not a simple task to try to draw the line between what is and what is not culture. According to Kaikkonen (1994: 69), culture includes the values, norms, rules and expectations that have been formed and agreed upon by the members of a society, and that these values etc. guide conduct and communication as well as are the reasons for any actions and products that have been born as the result of their existence. *Oxford English Dictionary* (2010) defines culture as the “refinement of mind, taste, and manners; artistic and intellectual development”. This definition represents the traditional way of interpreting culture, i.e. it includes all the arts and scientific achievements or other intellectual manifestations of human beings. The same source also gives the following, much broader definition for the word *culture*: ”the distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviour, products, or way of life of a particular society, people, or period.” This latter definition is supported by Karjala (2003: 20) who says that if we think about culture being the way people behave and think etc., it is characterized by the following:

- it is a complicated entity peculiar to groups of people
- it contains the language, knowledge, skills, products, beliefs, values, habits and the way of life of a group of people
- it is based on learning and mediated mostly through language
- it changes constantly
- it varies among the members of the group

In these definitions we can see a clear connection between language and culture since, on the one hand, culture includes language and, on the other hand, language is the medium through which culture is usually expressed. One could therefore say that when people are learning about languages they are also learning about cultures. As Kaikkonen (1993: 19) states, it is with the help of language that people have formed and reformed their cultures over time and that every step of development found in a nations history is reflected in the language as well as inevitably connected with culture. This is why it is unnatural to separate language and culture from one another. We can also see that Karjala (2003: 20) considers culture to be dynamic as it changes through time and is affected by encounters with other cultures. He also points out in his definitions that while culture is dynamic and varies among group members, there are still some inherent features that are shared by people belonging to the same cultural group. The same idea is supported by Kaikkonen (1993: 23) as well as Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004: 5). According to Kaikkonen, joint culture among societies and different nations exists but only in very narrow and limited form and that each person living in a specific culture has his or her own unique variant of that culture. Kaikkonen (1993: 23-24) stresses also the fact that the more cultures blend the more different the versions of each individual's culture. This can, for example, be seen in Europe today (Kaikkonen 1993: 24). Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004: 5) give different definitions to the word *cultural*. One of their definitions is that *cultural* refers to "the totality of way of life shared by a group of people linked by common and distinguished characteristics, activities, beliefs and circumstances" (Tomlinson and Masuhara 2004: 5) and they give examples such as Arab culture and Liverpool culture. Kullick (1992: 144-145), however, disagrees by claiming that it is old-fashioned and even incorrect to talk about Western culture or Finnish culture since culture no longer is "a bounded universe of shared ideas and customs" because people nowadays have access to the ideas and lifestyles of other groups of people and are influenced by them. Also, the idea that every person, for example, in Finland would have the same knowledge of the world sounds impossible according to him. Another definition by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004: 5) for the term *cultural* refers to the attitudes and behaviour of certain groups of people who share similar interests and goals, for example, pop culture, football culture or even facebook culture. These

subcultures, as one might call them, are in no way bound to specific national cultures, but are instead cultures whose phenomena have spread throughout the world.

There is also the possibility to observe and define culture through various learning theories. Kaikkonen (1994: 72-78) presents four different learning theories all of which have a slightly different way of interpreting what culture is. First of these theories is called *behaviouristic* and, according to it, culture includes traditions, learned habits, actions and rituals that are bound to certain situations. These are easy to pick out and learn but the behaviouristic theory does not go beyond this or try to explain the actual phenomena behind these behaviour patterns (Kaikkonen 1994: 72-73). The second theory is called *functional*, and it sees culture as a social phenomenon. It strives at explaining the underlining reasons for social behaviour within a given culture. Therefore students are taught how to cope in different social situations in target culture societies (Kaikkonen 1994: 73-74). The third theory presented by Kaikkonen (1994: 76-77) is *cognitive*, and it concentrates on the process that goes on inside the learner as he or she is learning about culture. According to the cognitive theory, culture and the worldview of an individual can be considered being almost identical. Therefore, culture does not consist of things or people or feelings but it is the process that happens in a person's mind where all the things, happenings and feelings are processed, interpreted and stored. The final theory is called *symbolic*, and it defines culture as the system of symbols and meanings (Kaikkonen 1994: 77-78). According to the symbolic theory, each individual is part of the never ending process of change that goes on in any given culture. This theory supports the fact that there is only very little of so called joint culture existing in the world. On the contrary, each nation and society has developed their own cultural groupings with their own special characteristics and ways of doing things.

The contradiction of whether or not to present cultural information as being shared by the people living in the target culture area and the overwhelming amount of definitions of the term culture can discourage teachers and leave them confused as to what they should be teaching to their pupils. Seeley (1984:26), however, gives some positive encouragement to teachers as she states that teachers who are dedicated to teaching culture and intercultural communication skills (see section 2.3) do not even care about the definition of culture, because it does not really matter how it is defined, as long as the definition is broad. And as for the question of whether there are such things as specific national cultures any more, we as teachers can perhaps do very little but continue to present the norms and habitual

behaviour found in the target culture as they are presented in our teaching materials and bringing into the classrooms all the personal experiences that we posses and introducing students to additional examples of the target cultures, for example, from the media. At the same time teachers should also remember to point out that there is variation in each national culture and that each person living in the target culture area can have a different way of doing things. This is especially important when we consider the English language and the culture or more appropriately cultures attached to it. If one compares English and Swedish and the target culture areas that are linked with these two languages, it is quite obvious that the term culture becomes much more varied and fragmented when we connect it with English than it does with Swedish for Swedish is a language spoken as a mother tongue by about 8.3 million people as for English is spoken as L1 by 328 million people not to mention how many speak it as a second or foreign language (Ethnologue 2011). The problem with English therefore is that teachers and textbook designers have to make decisions as to which cultural areas they see worthwhile in emphasising in their teaching and teaching materials. As Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 1-3) state, in their presentation of Standard varieties of English that around the world there are more than the two traditional Standard varieties of English, i.e. British English and North American English, which have traditionally been taught in schools and universities especially in Europe. Also, Trudgill and Hannah do not consider it to be a bad thing if a learner of English is exposed to more than one variety of English. This has at least been the attempt in Finnish schools, although the two main varieties (Br.Eng and Am.Eng.) still dominate the contents of textbooks as we will see in section 3.2.1. Considering the same issue from the point of view of the Swedish language, it can be stated that Finnish Swedish is the dominant variety in textbooks in Finland outstanding the different dialects of Swedish spoken in Sweden. By offering learners with more than one variety gives them greater opportunities to cope with linguistic barriers while communicating with people from different countries as well as provides them with a more truthful picture of the reality of language varieties around the world. And the reality is that there are more than one acceptable way of speaking and writing English as well as Swedish and offering these linguistic as well as cultural varieties to students depends greatly on teachers as well as textbook writers.

In the present study the term *culture* is considered to include the traditional aspects of culture such as arts, history and geography which in their special way reflect and also

shape the way the people living in the target culture area think and the way they live. Most importantly, however, the everyday life, habits, beliefs and values of people living in the target culture area are seen as the key aspects of culture and are the main interest of the present study since the recent trends as well as the guidelines in the renewed LOPS both suggest that learning the language also means learning about the everyday life of the people living in the target culture areas. Both of these facts will be discussed more thoroughly in the next sections.

### **2.1.2 Categories for cultural content in four studies**

As there are different ways of defining culture, there are also different ways of categorising cultural content. I will now review some of them and also illustrate how they have been used before in empirical research by their developers and sum up the results of their studies. In all of these studies the cultural content has been studied in foreign language textbooks and thus each and every one of them could be used as a basis for the present study. After reviewing all of them, I will specify some of the pros and cons of the different categories from the point of view of the present study and determine which one(s) will be chosen as the basis for the cultural categorisation in the present study.

In her study of Scandinavian elementary level foreign language textbooks Rissager (1991: 182-191) used four categories in analysing the cultural content in them. The first category is called *the micro level* which contains phenomena of social and cultural anthropology, including the life and activities of the textbook characters, their material environment and their feelings, attitudes, values and perceived problems. The second category Rissager calls *the macro level*. This category contains social, political and historical matters, as well as descriptions of broad socio-political problems such as unemployment or pollution. Rissager's third category is *international and intercultural issues* which contains issues such as stereotypical views of the culture, co-operation with other countries, possible conflicts within the country or internationally as well as comparison between the target culture community and the pupil's own. The fourth and last category is called *point of view and the style of the author(s)* which contains aspects that may influence the way pupils view the target culture and its representatives.

The aim of Rissager's study was to look at how the cultural content of foreign language textbooks had changed since the 1950s. Each category was analysed separately

after which she summed up her findings. The study shows that some characteristics remain the same irrespective of when the textbooks have been published. For example, all textbooks seem to share the same socio-cultural focus, presenting characters who are more or less of the same age group as the pupils for whom the books have been designed. The characters also represent people from the middle-class, living in an urban environment and they engage in rather trivial conversations which take place in either some arena of consumption or free time activity, such as shopping, going to the cinema or a football match. The lack of presenting situations that take place in peoples' workplaces may, according to Rissager (1991: 189), depend on the intended age-group of the pupils and that the language used in workplace situations might be too difficult for them. She continues by pointing out that it would, however, be crucial to include such situations in textbooks designed for older or adult learners.

Another thing that all the textbooks have in common is that they avoid topics which might cause conflicts or be provocative, which in its turn influences the portrayal of the characters who have no strong opinions or do not express feelings or emotions. Rissager (1991: 189) explains this with cultural relativism, an ideology that has been influencing textbook planning and language teaching since the 1960s. It emphasizes the equality of cultures and that one should not criticize or evaluate them, which according to Rissager (1991: 189), compromises the pedagogical aims of reflection, discussion and engagement.

Rissager did, however, report some changes as well. She found out that the latest textbooks offered, especially through illustrations and pictures, a growing amount of information to pupils about different social groups as well as locations. The increase of visual images is one of the clearest changes since the 1950s. Broad socio-political problems are almost entirely absent with a few exceptions when youth unemployment, violence or racism are briefly mentioned in the latest textbooks analysed by Rissager. The historical background of the target culture representatives is not discussed nor are international or intercultural issues touched upon (Rissager 1991: 187).

In his study Byram (1993b: 34-35) suggests the use of eight different categories for the analysis of "the minimal content of knowledge about a foreign country and culture for textbooks in secondary education". The categories were used by Byram and his colleagues to evaluate and analyse five different textbook series for teaching German to British students, some of them published in Germany and some in Britain. Byram (1993b: 34)

starts his categorisation by *social identity and social groups* which include groups within the nation-state, for example, social classes and ethnic minorities. Next on his list is *social interaction* by which he means the conventions of behaviour in social interaction that are typical at different levels of familiarity within the target culture. The third category is *belief and behaviour* which contains the routine actions and moral and religious beliefs. The fourth of Byram's categories is *social and political institutions* containing provision for healthcare, law and order, social security, local government, elections, etc. *Socialisation and the life-cycle*, the fifth of Byram's categories, includes institutions of socialisation, for example, families, schools, employment, military service and the different ceremonies which mark passage through stages of social life. *National history* comes next on the list and it holds within it periods and events, whether historical or contemporary, which are significant in the building of the nation and its identity. Byram's seventh category is *national geography* which contains geographical factors that are significant in members' perceptions of their country or other information which is important for an outsider to know in intercultural communication. The final category in Byram's list is *stereotypes and national identity* which aims in answering the question of what is "typically" English or German. Symbols of national stereotypes and their meanings as well as famous monuments and people are also included in this final category. In addition to categorising the cultural content of the textbooks, Byram et al. (1993) wanted also to see to what extent the authors of the books realised their conception of cultural studies and to what extent the books give opportunities to explore the areas of experience suggested in the National Core Curriculum.

Each textbook series was presented and analysed by a different pair of researchers in a similar way. First they gave a detailed summary of each book, outlining each chapter and giving the important content information with accurate page numbers. After these lists, they moved on to discussing the research questions and finally giving an analytic description of the eight categories explained above. For example, in analysing the textbook series *Deutsch Heute*, published between 1991-1992, Byram and Baumgardt (1993: 129-131) found out that it represented people from a wide range of social classes, especially in terms of occupation, but failed, however, in the representation of different age-groups. Also the omission of cultural and ethnic minorities was seen as a weak point by Byram and Baumgardt (1993: 129) since it should have been taken into account, given the date of publication, that Germany no longer is a monocultural society. In analysing the category

*social interaction* Byram and Baumgardt (1993: 129) state that levels of formality, i.e. what is the appropriate way to talk to people who are for example older than you, are not touched upon in the textbooks, nor are the different gender roles or taboos. Some attention is given to mealtime decorum. Moral or religious values are not discussed, which the researchers consider slightly odd, since understanding Germany requires insights into Catholicism and Protestantism. The routine actions of Germans are ignored as well. Meanwhile the textbooks introduce many opportunities for learning how to survive as a tourist in Germany. The category of *social and political institutions* is dealt least well, since only healthcare is introduced in two short dialogues. The category which is given most attention is *socialisation and life-cycle*. Family life, school and education as well as leisure and work are discussed often and there is ample information of nearly everything except the media. *National history and geography* are given quite little attention, which, as Byram and Baumgardt (1993:131) point out, could be a consequence of the time of publication which coincides with the re-unification of Germany. When also the category of *stereotypes and national identity* is dealt with weakly, the resulting analysis of the cultural content of the textbooks is that learners are likely to be left with a very fragmented image of German life and culture (Byram and Baumgardt 1993: 131).

In his study Karjala (2003: 114-119) presents an eleven-point list of categories which he used in analysing the cultural content of seven Swedish textbook series published during 1983-1999 to see how the image of Swedish culture and Swedish people, provided by the textbooks planned for secondary school pupils studying Swedish as a second language (L2), has changed over the years. The categories include population, view of life, interaction, society, economic life, arts, sports, technology, geography, history before the second world war and culturally unaccepted phenomena. Within each category there are multiple subcategories. Under *population* Karjala (2003: 114-115) includes the individual with all his physical and mental characteristics, the habits that have to do with eating, drinking and leisure time. Under the same category one can also find public characters, family life and things to do with home as well as the subcategory of immigrants and emigrants. Under *view of life* Karjala (2003: 116) lists religions and religious events and holidays as well as superstition, mythologies and taboos. Under the category *interaction* one can find things such as verbal and non-verbal communication, small-talk, the level of formality, international co-operation and common service situations. Within the category

*society* Karjala (2003: 117) has linked national symbols, politics, regimes, national institutions, the media, different organisations and questions of social security. Under *economic life* we have different industries, businesses and trademarks as well as work-life. *Arts* as a category comprises the traditional literature, visual arts, architecture, music, dance, films and theatre while under *sports* one can find a variety of outdoor and indoor sport activities. The category *technology* includes traffic, different inventions, energy sources and computer technology. Under *geography* Karjala (2003: 119) has placed geographical facts as well as issues that have to do with climate, vegetation, nature and natural resources as well as famous sights. The category of *history before world war two* includes both the important dates and events as well as persons with historic influence. Karjala (2003: 119) closes his list of categories with *culturally unaccepted phenomena* which include racism, stereotypes, physical or mental illness, violence, poverty, homelessness, conflicts, accidents, drug abuse, crime, any violation of equality, natural catastrophes and pollution.

In his analysis of the seven textbook series Karjala (2003: 132-173) first gives a more detailed summary of each series after which he sums up the findings of the four newest series to build up a more comprehensive image of the Swedish culture provided by the textbooks. In this summary he uses the eleven categories and gives examples of each of them. Outlining the results of all the categories would take too much room, so I will present the findings to his first category *population* since it is one of the central elements in how culture is understood in the present study. Karjala (2003: 166-169) found out that representations of young people with their own culture, strongly influenced by American youth culture, dominate the textbooks even though the adult population is also present. The picture that the textbooks give is that the Swedes are a wealthy, though not rich, people with representatives of many occupations. Class distinctions are not obvious with the exception of the royal family. According to the findings most Swedes seem to live in urban environments, in different types of housing with good health and without expressing strong emotions. Equality, Christianity (though secular in nature), security, peace and taking care of one's obligations are considered important values among the Swedish population. Equality between sexes is shown by presenting working mothers. The picture given of families varies from one-parent households to non-married couples with children and the traditional two parents with two to four children families. Questions concerning nature are also important to Swedes, which is reflected, for instance, in the cleanliness of cities.

Textbooks ignore some unhealthy habits of Swedes, such as the use of tobacco products (Karjala 2003: 168). Free-time activities are not described in detail but music, sports, movies and travelling seem to be the most popular ways to spend your free-time in Sweden. The books represent also the multicultural side of Sweden by showing pictures of ethnic minorities and immigrants. However, their everyday life or adjustment to the Swedish society is not dealt with (Karjala 2003: 169).

In her study of comparing the themes presented in texts and exercises in a textbook called *Fremde in der Nacht* Elomaa (2009: 164) made use of Takala's (1991: 202-204) list of 18 categories for making observations of American culture. These categories include, for example, relationship with nature, attitude to time, outlook on life, youth culture, family structure, mobility, religion, politics, sport, social interaction and norms of politeness. All the categories suggested by Takala are presented in *Fremde in der Nacht* in addition to housing/ living, music, food and the media/ TV, which are not mentioned in Takala's list of categories (Elomaa 2009: 164).

All the categorisations reviewed so far have both positive and negative sides when it comes to applying them in the present study. Rissager's (1991) categorization might be more functional when analyzing the cultural content of textbooks for adult learners since they are more mature to understand topics such as socio-cultural problems or intercultural issues, and thus, they might be present in textbooks designed for older learners. However, the categories used by Byram et al. (1993) were more explicit and particular without being too binding, i.e. they are easy to adapt. Their use made it also easy for the researchers to compare two or more textbook series. Takala's (1991) categories, though variable and interesting, did not form as clear and comprehensible units and were too widespread to be used in the present study, on top of which they lacked some of the inherent features of culture considered to be important in the present study. The categorisation used by Karjala (2003) was both variable and accurate covering all parts of culture by dividing the different aspects of culture into comprehensible subcategories. Of these four different ways of categorising culture I will be using a modified and combined version of the categorising developed by Byram et al. and Karjala since they are most easily applicable and represent a wide definition of culture stressing the social aspects of human life. Another reason for combining these two ways of analysing the cultural content is that the categories of Byram et al. lacked some of the important aspects taken into account in Karjala's categorisation,

which in turn was too wide and detailed to be used as such in the present study. The modified version of the categories which will be used in analysing the cultural content in the present study is introduced in section 4.3.

## **2.2 Reasons for teaching culture**

Why then is it important that we also teach culture when we are teaching a language? One argument is introduced by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004: 5) who suggest that providing students with experiences which help them to develop cultural awareness, i.e. perceptions of cultures shaped in our own minds, will help them to become more sensitive and empathetic toward other cultures and also facilitate their acquisition of the language itself. Another argument for the importance of teaching culture is presented by Tseng (2002: 13) who notes that the acquisition of cultural knowledge is the basis of language learning since cultural background knowledge is required for communication and for understanding the target language. This view is supported by Broady (2004: 69) who demonstrates the importance of becoming aware of the cultural connotations and meanings of words by giving an example of the word *individualism* which Americans associate with positive words such as *freedom* and *creativity* while the French tend to link it with negative associations such as *egoism* and *solitude*. According to Kaikkonen (2004: 25-27), it is important for us to understand that people with different cultural backgrounds have different ways of expressing themselves through their language as well as by using different unspoken signals. As an example Kaikkonen brings up the fact that people in Finland are probably one of the most straightforward nations when it comes to language use and that people from other cultures may be baffled by our way to saying things the way they are without softening the message with any politeness phrases that can be an essential part of discourse in some other cultures. Another examples that Kaikkonen gives are connected with nonverbal signals that can be difficult to interpret if one has not familiarized oneself with the art of nonverbal communication of the foreign culture. Kaikkonen (2004: 27) lists, for example, the subtle bows and smiles of the Chinese and Japanese, the way the French kiss on the cheek and the way the Germans shake hands. All of these gestures and signals are culturally bound and that understanding them, as Kaikkonen states, is very important if we want to avoid misunderstandings in intercultural communication situations.

Byram (1989: 7) as well as Kaikkonen (2004: 104) state that it is important to teach culture with language because the two are linked with each other. Language is an integral part of culture, which “shapes and is in turn shaped by socio-cultural actions, beliefs and values” (Byram 1991:18). This view is supported also, for example, by Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen (1991: 119) who say that language and its culture are so embedded in one another that it has influenced the current trend visible in modern language teaching called socio-cultural, or plainly, cultural competence. They go on to explain that teaching cultural competence to students means teaching them the norms of the target culture with the appropriate behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal, and they remind that in order to communicate successfully, the participants engaged in a communicative act must, at least to some degree, understand the hidden cultural values which may affect the communication situation. The same observation is also made by Byram (1993: 14) who explains that since each person has their own way of interacting with people of a similar culture then, in order for two people representing different cultures to have a successful discussion, the other one, at least, has to be able to understand the differences that they may have and make an effort in “embracing the cultural meanings and values of the other”. Both views suggest that teaching culture to students enables them to become more successful communicators in the target language, which is one of the most essential aims in cultural instruction.

Besides enabling students to become more successful target language communicators, cultural instruction has also another equally important aim: to bring down cultural barriers that lie between different cultures and to fight against stereotypical images that students might have of the target cultures and people representing them. According to Byram (1994: 41-42), both auto- and hetero-stereotypes, i.e. opinions that social or ethnic groups form of themselves and associations or a prejudiced opinions that an ethnic group forms of another, can be major hindrances in intercultural communication. Byram (1994:41) also remarks that stereotypes do not disappear by merely providing students with positive and attractive images presented in textbooks of the target culture environment and people. Instead, he suggests that we need to talk about stereotypes directly and openly in classrooms and include exercises that enable these kinds of discussions also in textbooks. Kaikkonen (2004: 149) supports this view by saying how important it is that students are guided and encouraged to make comparisons between their own and the target culture in

order break down culturally bound values and norms that dictate our behaviour and way of thinking and that can easily lead to stereotypes.

As was shown in section 2.1.1 there are many different ways to define and categorise culture. This leads to the fact that there are also many possible interpretations of what should be included in teaching culture. According to Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen (1991: 119), we need to teach students about high culture, referring to the arts, history, geography, etc. in order for them to understand the society better. However, they continue by emphasizing the importance of teaching students more than just lists of facts about the target cultures since teaching cultural competence inherently means developing students' tolerance towards other people and increasing their positive curiosity towards foreign cultures and ways of living that differ from their own. As teachers we can help students to counter prejudice through culture teaching and to develop their capacity to understand and accept what is unfamiliar to them and to encourage tolerance. We are also able to give students the necessary resources they need to enable them to travel or work abroad and meet foreigners with awareness and sensitivity to differences that may lie between them and give them confidence in their own abilities. On top of this, as Elomaa (2009: 108) puts it, teaching students about the language, culture and intercultural communication can make learning languages meaningful and motivating.

### **2.2.1 The National Core Curriculum**

The National Core Curriculum is the basis on which education is built on, providing teachers with guidelines, defining the themes which should be covered and the goals which ought to be met during the years of education. The curriculum also provides guidelines for textbook writers, giving them, however, the freedom to choose which themes and aims to emphasize and which ones to leave in the background because the curriculum does not say anything specific about how, for example, cultural instruction should proceed. Together the curriculum and the textbooks create an idea of what is essential in learning languages, as Huhta et al. (2008: 206) and Luukka et al. (2008: 53) point out, but they also give room for teachers to apply and adapt the material and content in their teaching.

One reason for the current trend of integrating language and culture teaching is that it also comes across in the latest LOPS, which was published in 2003, that students should be introduced to the linguistic and grammatical as well as the cultural components of the

language that they are learning, and that one of the goals in teaching is that students become familiar with the societies where the target language is spoken as L1. One of the major goals in both foreign language education as well as in L2 education, according to LOPS (2003: 84, 100) is that students obtain cultural knowledge and become aware of the differences between their native culture and the culture of the people whose language they are learning. As was mentioned before, and as Takala (1991: 194) states, the emerging of culture into syllabuses as a clearly defined objective was in most parts due to the work of the Council of Europe and its language projects. The inclusion of culture is closely connected to the communicatively oriented syllabuses which we here in Finland were among the first in the world to adopt (Takala 1991: 195). As syllabuses and curricula guide language learners to use language to communicate successfully, it automatically means that in order for them to accomplish meaningful and successful interactions with foreigners, they need to be aware of foreign cultures as well.

Since the aim of the study is to analyse and compare the cultural content of English and Swedish textbooks, I will now specify how the cultural instruction regarding these two languages is taken into account in LOPS. As English is taught as a foreign language the guidelines for it can be found under *Foreign languages* in LOPS (2003: 100-106). As for Swedish, the second official language in Finland, the guidelines can be found under the heading *Second official language* (LOPS 2003: 84-87). It is stated in LOPS (2003: 84, 100) that both foreign languages and Swedish are considered subjects of knowledge, practice and culture. It also emphasises that the different themes in both subjects should be approached in a way which provides students with opportunities to compare their own culture to the target culture (LOPS 2003: 84, 100). According to LOPS (2003: 84, 101), special attention ought to be paid to the differences in communication between L1 and L2 and to the cultural factors that explain these differences. The goals listed in both subjects contain the following: the students should get an opportunity to develop their understanding and appreciation of the target culture and learn how to communicate by the norms that are peculiar to the target language and its culture (LOPS 2003: 84, 100).

In the guidelines given to the Swedish language the aspect of bilingualism is highlighted and one of the goals is to aid students to deepen their knowledge of bilingual Finland (LOPS 2003: 84). Moreover, the aim is to teach, not only the culture of Sweden or the Swedish-speaking Finns, but also the joint culture of the Nordic countries, i.e. Norway,

Iceland and Denmark. The same idea lies behind the teaching of English-speaking cultures: in many school-specific syllabuses it is said that students ought to be given information, not only about British and American cultures, but also about Australian, New Zealand, Indian and South African cultures at least, and textbooks tend to follow this principle, although, as is pointed out by Seppälä (2010), Pohjanen (2007) and Aho (2004) (see section 3.2.1), the two major varieties, British and American, dominate the cultural content in textbooks. The same observation was made by Hanttu (1989) and Ylkänen (2000) who studied Swedish textbooks and found out that most space is dedicated to Sweden and Swedish culture and that the other Nordic countries, though mentioned, have an inferior status (see section 3.2.1). This may seem overwhelming and even impossible a task to accomplish, but as long as the point in cultural instruction is to awake positive interest in other cultures and help students to cope with intercultural communicative situations, it does not matter which culture is highlighted the most. What matters more is that cultural instruction actually takes place, instead of teachers pushing culture aside so that it does not interfere with other aspects of language instruction.

In LOPS (2003: 101-103) under the heading *Foreign languages* there is a listing of themes that form the six obligatory courses and the two advanced courses for the language that students have been studying the longest (A-language). Since English usually is the first foreign language that children take on in Finnish schools, I will now summarise the course descriptions for this A-language. The six obligatory courses are named *The young and their world*, *Communication and free time*, *Education and work*, *Society and the world around us*, *Culture and Science*, *economy and technology* during which students discuss themes such as everyday life and relationships, free-time activities, studying and working as well as different scientific fields, achievements of technology, media and economic life. Also, the communicative skills required in formal and informal situations are taken into account during several courses. The fifth course, which is named *Culture*, is supposed to introduce culture widely through such themes as cultural-identity, cultural-knowledge and communication and media-skills. During the advanced courses *Nature and sustainable development* and *Our common world and internationalisation* students are prepared to understand language that has to do with nature, natural sciences and sustainable development as well as to talk about current events and different ways to see the world.

Similar themes are given for Swedish (LOPS 2003: 86-87) which students here in Finland usually start learning in secondary school, which makes it their B-language. I will now summarise the course descriptions for the five obligatory and two advanced courses for Swedish as a B-language. The five obligatory courses are called *School and free time*, *Everyday life in the Nordic countries*, *Finland*, *Nordic countries and Europe*, *Living together and apart* and *Our environment* in which themes vary from education and free-time activities of the young to education, work and different public services. Other themes are values in life, current phenomena in society, nature, variable surroundings, sustainable development and the media. Learning to express one's opinion is also dealt with as are different communicational strategies. Students are also led to compare Finland to other Nordic countries and to consider Finland as a Nordic country being a part of Europe. The two advanced courses *The ones who make and experience culture* and *Our common world and internationalisation* deal widely with culture and global issues.

If we compare these course descriptions to the cultural categories that were discussed in section 2.1.1, we can see that the themes which emerge from them have the same aspects as the cultural categories. However, the course descriptions are highly suggestive and give an enormous amount of room for textbook planners to pick out the themes which they see fit to emphasize. Since the descriptions are also very wide and hold many extensive themes within them, it makes it impossible for textbook writers to account for all of them and to treat them with equal weight. The descriptions do, however, show that the tendency is towards representing culture as a widely defined term that includes the everyday life of people, especially young people, and that international issues and communication skills are essential and come up in different courses. In section 2.3 I will concentrate on unfolding the terms intercultural communication and intercultural competence which have become important goals in L2 teaching, as can be seen from the goals and course descriptions set in LOPS.

### **2.2.2 Research evidence: does theory turn into practice?**

The National Core Curriculum of each individual country attempts to give instructional guidelines to teachers, textbook designers and other authorities who supervise the educational issues in these countries. How these guidelines are put into practice has been studied in different countries. I will now sum up three empirical studies, two of them

conducted in the early 1990s, one in Finland and the other one in Britain, and one conducted in 2010 in Finland. All three studies attempted to find out about the state of cultural instruction in foreign language education in the countries in question. The timeline between the two earlier studies and the present study, as well as the one conducted in 2010, is quite long and one of the reasons for choosing these studies is to show what the state of cultural instruction and the amount of cultural content in classroom practices and textbooks was twenty years ago and compare it to what it is today. In the discussion part of the present study the results and findings will be compared to the ones reviewed here. Also, even though the studies do not touch upon teaching or learning Swedish, the results are in no way language specific but can be generalised into considering any foreign language teaching context, and are thus applicable also to teaching Swedish.

In their study Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen (1991:120-122) interviewed twelve teachers of English on their notions of cultural instruction in Finnish schools. They wanted to find out if the teachers considered cultural instruction important, how they went about it in practice and if they had faced any problems in executing cultural instruction. The teachers represented different age groups and taught at different levels from elementary school all the way to upper secondary school. All the teachers interviewed were positively oriented toward introducing culture in their classrooms and moreover, they reported that their pupils and students had also been in general very positive when it came to learning about the target cultures and other foreign cultures. The study showed, however, that introducing culture in the classrooms was not that straightforward.

The concept of culture meant different things to different teachers and that is why some of the teachers considered it more important to introduce pupils to elitist culture, which meant that everyday life along with the culturally-based communication strategies did not receive as much space in the classrooms. Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen (1991:121) observed that teachers often based their comprehension of what culture is solely on the textbooks that were used in classrooms. The teachers expected their pupils to get the information about the target cultures indirectly through the texts and illustrations in textbooks. These two facts clearly provide evidence for that textbooks have a powerful status in language teaching.

Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen (1991:121) suggest also that it seems to be the case in many language classrooms that pupils are offered one-sided and simplistic information

about the target culture, which only tends to strengthen the stereotypical image pupils might have of the target culture, especially if teachers do not take the time to provide the reasons that lie behind the specific behaviour described or the target culture norms and values in general. As it turns out, the study also shows that many of the teachers interviewed did find that there was not enough time to focus on cultural instruction and unfortunately many of those interviewed saw culture as something extra that could be added between the study of grammar and vocabulary, which they referred to as “serious work” (Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen 1991:122).

What Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen found discouraging was that the teachers did not consider teaching students about intercultural communicative competence, i.e. how to behave in international encounters and to avoid possible difficulties which might arise between people coming from different cultural backgrounds. According to Heilala-Rasimov and Vesanen (1991:122), the lack of such instruction can lead to situations where students are not able to get their message cross effectively when talking to foreigners. They suggest that if cultural competence of students is to be increased during language lessons, there is a desperate need to improve both teacher training and teaching materials.

A similar study was conducted by Seppänen (2010) who interviewed nine Finnish so called novice teachers of English about their understanding of what culture is and how they went about teaching it to their students. The study also concentrated on finding out if English as an international language has found its way into language classrooms or textbooks. The results of the study showed that the teachers interviewed considered culture as a separate entity that was not directly linked to the language. They also taught culture by giving concrete examples and focused only on those cultures where English is spoken as L1, and of these the two major varieties, British and American, were given most room (Seppälä 2010: 71, 77). These cultures were introduced to pupils one at a time and there was very little mentioning of English as an international language. The only times teachers took notice to some non-native speaker variants was when pupils commented them. All in all, culture received minor attention in teaching (Seppälä 2010: 71).

In their study Byram et al. (1991) interviewed over 200 secondary comprehensive school pupils in Britain who studied French as a foreign language. They also observed classes over a period of eight months and analysed the textbook that was used and made notes on how it was used during classroom instruction. The results of the study showed that

the role of the textbook was very dominant when it comes to determining what teachers chose to teach to their pupils. The study raised an understandable concern over the range and depth of the cultural content of the instruction which turned out to be very didactic and based on information transfer from teacher to pupils. The cultural information given to the pupils came solely from the textbooks and the instruction was guided by it, which according to some pupils did not help them to see the “real life” of the people living in the target culture environment (Byram et al. 1991: 118) suggesting, thus, that textbook writers should become more aware of their important contribution to culture teaching and that some serious changes needed to be made in designing textbooks.

All three studies, although different in their scale and execution showed that although both students and teachers are willing and eager to learn and teach about the target cultures the reality of classroom instruction is not what one might hope and expect. These studies also reflect the important position of textbooks in guiding the teaching of culture and stress the importance of developing more culturally oriented textbooks, i.e. teaching materials which will help teachers to teach intercultural communication skills.

### **2.3 The goals of cultural instruction**

Intercultural communication and intercultural competence have become central goals in modern language learning and teaching which aim at providing students with adequate knowledge of the language so that they will be able to cope with communicative situations. Because of this I will now summarize the meanings of the two terms and explain why it is important to include them into our teaching as well as into our teaching materials.

*Intercultural communication* is defined by Löfman (1993: 148) as interaction between people coming from different cultural, subcultural or ethnic backgrounds. All people have their own way of perceiving the world around them, the way their culture has taught them to perceive it. According to Löfman (1993: 152), our cultural background determines what we consider to be important and valuable, and he states that when two cultures with differing value systems come together, communication is likely to break down. Löfman (1993: 152) also believes that in most intercultural communication situations people tend to focus on the most obvious surface differences, which can lead to stereotyping and thus make conversation problematic. According to Kaikkonen (2004:137), the basis of intercultural education is to teach students that all people and all cultures are

equal, no better or worse or somehow inferior and that, thus, the goal of teaching intercultural communication skills is to raise students' interest in other cultures as well as to make them respect and understand things and phenomenon that are strange and different to them. To overcome these obstacles, we need to teach people about different cultures and most importantly, we need to provide our students with resources and skills needed in intercultural communication i.e. teach them intercultural competence. This should be the ultimate goal of cultural instruction within second and foreign language education.

Meyer (1991: 137) defines *intercultural competence* as being one part of foreign speaker competence and meaning the ability to behave "adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign culture". One should in other words be aware of the cultural differences that may lie between one's own and the foreign culture and, moreover, be able to accommodate and compensate in these intercultural communicative situations in a way that results in a successful transformation of ideas and opinions without placing a threat to one's own or the other persons face. The word intercultural in itself tells that something happens between cultures. As Kaikkonen (2004: 147) points out, whenever people from different cultural backgrounds work together it means that they are between their own and the other person's cultures and in order for them to understand or learn from each other, they have to have intercultural competence. Equally important in teaching intercultural communicative competence is, as Broady (2004: 72) states, to "develop students' ability to use the target language as confident and efficient non-native speakers, rather than as imitation native-speakers". He also stresses how important it is that we provide students with a range of native-speaker varieties and encourage them to become aware of them.

According to Meyer (1991: 137), the traditional foreign language teaching tends to concentrate on the cultural differences between L1 and L2 cultures on a "cognitive level", which means that students become aware of the differences but do not learn how to act in cross-cultural situations. Teaching intercultural competence means that we need to prepare our students to encounter problems that they may face when communicating with foreigners, problems that do not always stem from inadequate knowledge of the language itself (Elomaa 2009: 117). In some cultures it is, for example, considered polite and therefore expected from the parties taking part in conversation to show that you are in fact listening. Students should become aware of the use of so called indicators of listening and

non-verbal gestures such as nodding and different hand-gestures as well as the linguistic and grammatical aspects of language. As Elomaa (2009: 124) concludes, the acquisition of the knowledge and the skills required to develop intercultural communicative competence is not, however, possible until students have attained a certain level of knowledge and skills in grammar and vocabulary. However, Kaikkonen (2004: 167) stresses that language teaching that takes place merely in the classroom or only concentrates on the analysis of the language itself and its forms cannot be considered intercultural language teaching since it lacks the authenticity and real life interaction with representatives of the target culture. Thus students are not faced with any conflicts and they are not required to change the perspective from their own culture to the culture of their conversation partner, both of which are important elements if there is to be any intercultural understanding.

Seeley (1984: 9) explains that the goal of cultural instruction should be the skills that are acquired in intercultural communication. The seven skills, which she lists, not only help language learners to cope in communicative situations with foreigners but also develop their sense of culturally bound behaviour and appreciation of differences between people with various cultural backgrounds. The skills involve, for example, being able to understand that people may act the way they do because they have been raised and taught by the terms which their society allows or because variables such as age, sex, social class or place of residence may in some countries bear significant implications which affect the way people speak or behave. Language learners should also become aware of the different cultural connotations which some words and phrases carry. According to Seeley (1984: 26), they should develop intercultural curiosity and empathy toward different cultures, which is a prerequisite to learning how to make personal observations about the target cultures and how to locate information about them.

Smith (as quoted by Takala 1991: 196) suggests five different “senses” that people need in order to survive effectively in intercultural communicative situations. The first one is *a sense of self* which means that we are aware of our own cultural environment, which again is the prerequisite for the second sense, *the sense of the other*. According to Smith (as quoted by Takala 1991: 196), the more one knows about foreign cultures, the greater is the chance for two people from different cultures to succeed in communicating and have a better chance to be able to overcome obstacles of misunderstanding. The third sense is *the sense of relationship between self and other* which means understanding the degree of

formality in interaction. The fourth sense is called *the sense of the setting and social situation* which in turn means that one ought to be aware of the different expectations and ways of functioning in varying situations. Finally, *the sense of the goal or objective to be accomplished*, means that whether the goal in the communicative situation is complex or simple, one must always keep it in mind so that verbalising it becomes more effortless. Takala (1991: 196) concludes that intercultural contacts are best coped with if we master at least the following three knowledge systems: knowledge of the subject being addressed, knowledge of the language system which we are using in interaction and finally knowledge of the target culture and the cultural expectations.

Including intercultural communicative competence into our teaching places a challenge not only to teachers but also to textbook writers and designers. Textbooks should contain information that is both culturally variable and stimulating so that it will help to open students' eyes to cultural differences and similarities and allow them to become more culturally sensitive and develop their intercultural competence. In the next chapter I will move onto discussing one of the most central tools in language learning and teaching, the foreign language textbook, and consider how culture, on the one hand, has been and, on the other hand, should be presented in them.

### **3 FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND THE TEXTBOOK**

In the preceding chapter the concept of culture, which is the key element in the present study, was viewed from various angles and the importance of raising students' cultural awareness and developing their cultural competence was explained. Now it is time to approach the other important component of the present study: the foreign language textbook. By a foreign language textbook I am referring to material drawn up for educational purposes containing information, both textual and illustrated, about vocabulary, grammar and culture, and which is published as a book. According to Karjala (2003: 46), a textbook can be observed from different angles. For example, one must first bear in mind that the guidelines for textbooks come from society with certain restrictions. Secondly, one can either observe what the textbooks say about the world or how teachers and students use and interpret the information in the textbooks, and out of these two I will be focusing on the

former, i.e. what the textbooks say about the world and in particular the culture. In this chapter I will demonstrate the important position that textbooks have obtained in foreign language teaching and learning. I will also show how culture has been presented in FL textbooks over the years and what kind of research has been done in the field. Finally I will briefly discuss the problems that textbooks have had in presenting cultural content.

### **3.1 The role of the textbook in foreign language teaching and learning**

As long as there has been schooling that has been provided and administrated by the state, there has been a need for teaching materials, especially for textbooks. Karjala (2003: 47-48) summarizes the history of the textbook in the Finnish educational system as follows: the first Finnish book for educational purposes was published in 1543 by Agricola. When public education was introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the writers of educational materials were mostly people in high posts within the educational system, such as professors or school authorities. In those days the life cycle of the materials was considerably longer compared to the situation today as the same books were used for decades. Between the 1960s and 1970s Finland was introduced with the comprehensive school system which doubled the need for school books and teaching materials. After the reformation of the national curriculum the planning and production of textbooks changed dramatically: the previous work of a lonely intellectual now required more than one person, because instead of one book, series of books were now produced ranging from the first grade in elementary school to the final class in upper secondary school. The production of teaching materials went through yet another reformation between the 1980s and 1990s when publication turned into business. Publishing houses now had definite goals and people who were in charge of marketing. This era has also been named as the project-working era in textbook publishing, which means that it is now the official line that the work of planning and putting together a new textbook series is done in groups of experts. This enables negotiation between the experts and having more than one opinion of what is important and relevant to include in the textbook, which all in all can be considered a positive change, since one can only imagine that the contents of the textbooks designed by more than one person are probably more versatile than the productions of merely one mind. Although without any empirical evidence to support the speculation one might say that in this case the old saying “two heads is better than one” is probably correct and right to the point.

Whatever the time or decade, however, textbooks are not planned in a vacuum. According to Huhta et al. (2008: 204) and Luukka et al. (2008: 63), their contents and appearance are always influenced by the ideas and visions that are considered important in the language teaching and learning circles at the time. Also, another influential factor affecting textbook contents is, of course, the curriculum which is put into practise by textbooks, so to speak. According to Karjala (2003: 50) and Luukka et al. (2008: 64-65), textbook is a central element in the language classroom containing the content of the course, specifying the goals of teaching, giving guidelines to the structure of lessons (presentation, practice, production) and to the way students work during lessons (listening, writing, individual vs. pair/teamwork). Textbooks also enable people to learn language by themselves.

Textbooks used in foreign language education in Finnish schools are almost always produced in Finland. The two most productive publishing houses are SanomaPro (previously named WSOY) and Otava. Textbooks should in theory always follow the guidelines given in LOPS, which does, however, give textbook writers a lot of freedom. As long as the specific themes and grammatical content given in LOPS are taken into consideration, the rest depends on the writers' own preferences of what they see as important and worthy of teaching. According to Huhta et al. (2008: 206), the power of textbooks is based on this particular element: their content decides what is relevant to teach and what is left in the background, to a secondary place. This applies also to the teaching of cultural elements. As was stated in Heilala-Rasimov and Vesinanen's study (1991), as well as Seppänen's study (2010), (see section 2.2.1), textbooks play a central role in the teaching of cultural elements in foreign language classrooms. Teachers not only rely on the interpretation of what culture is in the textbooks version of it but they also trust that students get the necessary information indirectly through the texts and pictures in the textbooks.

### **3.2 Representation of culture in textbooks**

According to Rissager (1991: 181), there has been a significant change in the rate at which textbooks are altered and published since the 1950s, when the linguistic aspects of language learning were most central in foreign language textbooks. Since then the role of culture has, however, become a hot topic and thus the everyday life and natural environment of people

as well as the different social contexts have been integrated in language textbooks. Their status compared with linguistic content remains, however, inferior (Rissager 1991: 182).

Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004: 6) argue that students form perceptions about different cultures either directly by visiting the target culture area or indirectly through media, films, songs and literature, etc. Thus, in language classrooms students receive information and form perceptions of the target cultures indirectly by reading textbooks, looking at pictures in them and listening to songs that have been chosen in them. Elomaa (2009: 123) concludes that textbooks create a bridge between students and the target culture and its representatives since on many occasions students do not necessarily have any actual real-life contacts to countries where the target language is spoken as L1. As Karjala (2003: 13) states, language textbooks and their contents have a major role in helping students to build up an image of the target culture, although, nowadays students get a lot of information also through the different media. He also points out that textbooks are one form of intercultural communication.

I will now summarise some earlier studies that have been conducted on the representation of English-speaking cultures in English textbooks and Swedish-speaking cultures in Swedish textbooks here in Finland. Similar studies analysing the cultural contents of textbooks abroad were already introduced in section 2.1.1.

### **3.2.1 Previous research on cultural content in textbooks in Finland**

The cultural context in textbooks has been researched before from many angles and mainly in textbooks used in comprehensive schools, i.e. elementary school and secondary school. In most of the studies on English textbooks the aims of the studies have been to find out about some other aspects of language learning than culture, for example, lexical or grammatical items (see e.g. Tikkanen 1980, Pellikkä 1988, Pursiainen 2009) or for example gender roles or moral values (see. e.g. Piironen 2004, Varrio 2004). Culture has also been studied in English textbooks. In these studies the aim has been on finding out either which aspects of the English-speaking cultures are introduced or what information is given about a certain cultural variety or varieties (see e.g. Hälikkä 1989, Aho 2004). In studies on Swedish textbooks the cultural components that have been studied have usually included aspects of a joint Nordic or Scandinavian culture, not just Swedish culture (see e.g. Hanttu 1989, Perälä 2002), or they concentrate on finding out about some specific cultural contents,

for example youth culture (see e.g. Laitala 2009). Studies comparing two or several textbook series have also been conducted before but they have all concentrated in comparing textbooks that are used to teach the same language, not two different languages. Considering the aims of the present study, another important point is whether the previous studies have been conducted before or after the new National Curriculum was published in 2003 since one of the aims of the present study is to find out how well the latest textbooks apply the goals set for cultural education in the National Curriculum. I will now present some previous studies conducted in the field of textbook analysis which have concentrated on cultural aspects of language teaching. Some of them date back over 20 years, which helps us to see whether things have changed between the situation then and the situation today.

In her study Hälikkä (1989) set out to find what kind of a picture the comprehensive school textbook series *Jet Set* gives of British and American cultures. The findings indicate that the textbook series which could be used all through comprehensive school, i.e. from the third grade to the ninth, concentrates on describing the British culture leaving less room for the other main variant. Hälikkä draws the difference between surface culture (geography, history and arts) and deep culture (customs, attitudes, traditions, sense of humour etc.) and she found out that the information given in the books is mainly focused on surface culture, whereas deep culture is presented in a fragmented way. This, according to Hälikkä (1989: 79), emphasizes the important role of the teacher as an interpreter of the cultural facts which might be too hazy for the pupils to figure out on their own.

Aho (2004) conducted a study where two different textbook series for teaching English in upper secondary school, *In Touch* and *English Update Highlights*, were compared in order to find out which English speaking cultures were introduced in the books and how they were described. The study concentrates mostly on analysing the pictures and the vocabulary which are used to describe the different cultural variants. The study indicates that the textbook series under observation concentrated on presenting the British and American cultures mainly from a perspective of a tourist leaving the overall image of culture narrow and shallow. Other English-speaking cultures such as Canadian, Australian or Indian were also mentioned, but without any attempt for deeper analysis. The comparison of the two textbook series did, however, show that there are some differences between them. The textbook series *In Touch* turned out to be somewhat more diverse when

it comes to introducing different English speaking cultures and it gives more detailed information about the different cultures than the other textbook series *English Update Highlights*. In *In Touch* the information about different cultural variants has also been included in other themes that are presented in the books such as free-time activities and education.

In her study Pohjanen (2007) compared two English textbook series, *The News Headlines* and *Key English*, designed for secondary school students by using the cultural categories designed by Byram and Morgan (1994). She found out that the target cultures, mainly British and American, were presented from a perspective of a tourist and that the everyday life, beliefs and ideas of the people living in the target cultures were not introduced, and that the textbooks did not therefore help students to develop their intercultural competence (Pohjanen 2007: 130). According to the findings of Pohjanen (2007: 129), the textbooks series *The News Headlines* presented cultural facts as if one was reading them in an encyclopaedia, which meant, for instance, that pupils were introduced to different statistics of ethnic groups and religions. Any other information relating to the target cultures was scattered all over the textbooks. In *Key English* most of the cultural content was presented in a way which aimed in encouraging learners to visit and travel in the target language countries. In Pohjanen's (2007: 130) opinion reading the textbook series often felt like leafing through a travel brochure not a foreign language textbook. According to Pohjanen (2007: 136), pupils may come across some new facts about the target cultures by reading *The News Headlines* and *Key English*, but a lot of the information presented in the two textbook series is similar information that pupils have already heard when studying other subjects than English. The information in the textbook series did not, according to Pohjanen, help to increase the intercultural understanding of pupils. The way to achieve this would be that the books introduced real people from the target cultures telling about their every-day-lives, surroundings, countries, beliefs and values and by giving pupils a chance to compare these with their own lives (Pohjanen 2007: 136).

The cultural content of Swedish textbooks has also been studied, for example, by Hanttu (1989). She compared three different textbook series *Heja!*, *Gymnasiessvenska* and *Målet* for teaching Swedish in upper secondary school. Her aim was to find out which of the textbook series provided students with most extensive amount of knowledge about Scandinavian culture and which cultural subcategories were emphasized the most. She

found out that in all three textbook series the most frequently mentioned cultural category was art in its different forms, i.e. literature, music, poetry, etc. The second most frequently mentioned category was geographical facts, of which Sweden and Finland got most attention. In the third place in almost all the books was a category called human society which included subcategories such as family life and free time activities. Hanttu also found out that politics and media are given the least attention in these textbooks series.

In his study Ylkänen (2000) compared two textbook series, *Medvind* and *Kanal*, in order to see if the elements of communicative and cultural competence were addressed in them and if these elements helped students to develop their communicative and cultural competence. The textbook series have been published approximately ten years apart from one another and Ylkänen originally assumed that this time difference might be significant when it came to the cultural contents of the books. However, it turned out that there was not that much difference between *Medvind* and *Kanal* in terms of them containing elements which are important to developing students' cultural competence. The difference lied mostly in the form in which the cultural elements were presented in these textbook series. In *Kanal* the cultural elements had been more subtly included in the main texts and students received information about the target cultures through the presentation of individuals and their everyday life, whereas in *Medvind* the cultural aspects were presented more up front, for example, through various biographs of famous writers, actors or musicians. Ylkänen (2000: 71) admits that the ways people tend to live and think in the target culture were also presented in *Medvind* but not in the same amount as in *Kanal*. In both textbooks series Ylkänen (2000: 50-52) found information about all the different Nordic countries of which Sweden was naturally most highlighted. What Ylkänen (2000: 72) found positive was that both textbook series provided students with ample amount of opportunities to share their own experiences about foreign cultures and in *Kanal* the students' native culture was often knowingly compared with the target culture.

In the previous studies reviewed above, the aim was to compare the cultural content of two or more textbook series used to teach the same target language. Although the present study will focus on analyzing and comparing the cultural content of two textbook series designed for two different languages, *Open Road* and *Galleri*, these previous studies will give me a reference point that enables me to see what, if anything, has changed in the last twenty years.

### **3.2.2 Problems in including cultural content in textbooks**

Perhaps one of the biggest problems in including cultural aspects in textbooks in the past has been that the cultural knowledge tends to be represented as lists of typical and haphazard facts or differences about the life led by the target culture people supplemented by simplistic information about geography and history (Byram 1989: 20). Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004: 6) argue that cultural knowledge is useful since it “helps us to understand ourselves and other people” but it also has its downfalls, for example, it is usually out of date, since it is fixed in time and simplified because it is reduced to what can be said in words. It is also always dependent on someone else's objectivity and experience. Another problem is that the target culture society which textbooks present to us are also in many cases stereotypical or too idyllic, as was discovered by Rissager and Andersen (as quoted by Byram 1989: 16). They studied French textbooks used in Denmark and found out that the books represented a very one-sided picture of France as a place where people have no financial troubles or housing problems and where people lived in peace and harmony with each other without any social or political problems. Byram (1989: 17) points out that “textbook writers who think that pupils live in something like the Enid Blyton world of textbook families are deluding themselves” and goes on by arguing that if textbook writers want pupils to take textbooks seriously they should offer pupils insights on how families truly live and avoid focusing on merely into the tourist-point of view in their texts.

When thinking about the way textbooks are usually organised, we are faced with yet another problem. Textbooks can either include cultural elements in their texts or treat them as separate background information which is presented at the beginning or end of each chapter or unit. Byram (1991: 17) sees that textbooks that have been divided into units and chapters tend to make the division between language work, meaning vocabulary and grammar exercises, and “background information”, i.e. the cultural content, which often leads to situations where teachers treat these cultural elements as additional and optional and include them in their teaching only if there are a few minutes to spare from “the serious business of language learning”. One reason that might explain the very traditional organisation of textbooks could be that textbook publishers are not too eager to make any big innovative changes because they fear that teachers might object them and want to sustain the old and familiar ways of doing things (Elomaa 2009: 123). It is a considerably

challenging task to design a textbook that would please both students and teachers and that would match the requirements of the National curriculum and the school-specific syllabuses and live up to the ideas of the latest trends within the educational research field.

## **4 PRESENT STUDY: DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

The following sections explain the research procedures of the present study, starting with presenting the aims of the study in the form of the research questions. Section 4.2 describes the data, i.e. the textbooks used in the study, and section 4.3 outlines the data processing procedures and the method of analysis.

### **4.1 Aims of the study**

As we have seen in the previous chapters there have been a number of studies examining the cultural content of foreign language textbooks, both English and Swedish textbooks, some of which have also been comparative in their nature. However, the novelty of the present study lies in its attempt to analyse the cultural information in textbooks designed for these two different languages and comparing the results by making notes of similarities and differences. The reason behind this approach is, as has been stated before, the desire to find out whether the textbooks designed for these two languages, that are the two most commonly taught L2s in Finland and to which the educational aims suggested in LOPS are quite similar, contain cultural information of equal quality and quantity. Granted that it would also have been interesting to compare the different Swedish and English speaking cultures with each other, i.e. to see whether Swedish culture is emphasized more in the Swedish textbook series *Galleri* than Finnish Swedish culture or which English speaking culture is discussed most in the English textbook series *Open Road*, it was decided that there would be no such comparisons in the present study. The reason for this decision is that including yet another level of comparison would have widen the topic of the present study too much. Therefore, the focus of the present study lies on combining all the cultural aspects of both Swedish speaking cultures found in *Galleri* and all the cultural aspects of English speaking cultures found in *Open Road* and comparing these with each other.

The research questions of the present study are:

- 1) What kind of cultural information do the textbooks *Open Road* and *Galleri* contain?
- 2) How does the cultural information that *Open Road* and *Galleri* contain differ from one another?

As one can see on the basis of the research questions the purpose of the present study is two-fold. Firstly, the content of the textbooks will be systematically examined and the cultural content will be divided into categories in order to find out what type of cultural information the textbooks contain. In the present study the main interest is, however, in the cultural information that tells us something about the societies where the target languages are used as L1. Thus, the stories and information given about other Nordic countries besides Sweden and Finland in the textbooks series *Galleri* will be omitted from the analysis in the present study. Secondly, the cultural content of the two textbook series for different languages are to be compared in order to find out what differences and similarities there are between these two languages. This is interesting because, as we saw in section 2.2.1, the guidelines suggested in LOPS are quite similar when it comes to teaching these two languages as foreign languages. Therefore one might speculate that the cultural content included in *Open Road* and *Galleri* could resemble each other in various ways even though we are dealing with two separate languages. The contents of the textbooks are analysed by using the categorisation that will be presented in section 4.3. This is done so that we can see what kind of cultural information is offered to students for the development of their intercultural communication skills by textbooks which are the central source of information and an important tool in learning languages. Placing the cultural information found in the textbooks into these categories enables us to see which categories are considered important according to textbook designers and which categories are left to an inferior status and with less attention paid to them. Again, comparing English and Swedish textbooks with each other will also give us insights to whether the same categories are addressed in both languages or whether the more complex status of English language (discussed in section 2.1.1) makes the cultural information provided in *Open Road* more fragmented than that included in *Galleri*.

## **4.2 Data for the study: textbook series *Open Road* and *Galleri***

For the present study I chose to analyse the content of two textbook series: *Open Road* designed to teach English as a foreign language and *Galleri* designed to teach Swedish as a second language. Both textbook series have been designed for upper secondary school students in Finland by groups of textbook writers. I chose both of these textbook series mainly because of their novelty. Since they both have been printed after the renewal of LOPS, one could assume that the textbook series *Open Road* and *Galleri* contain more ample amount of cultural information than their predecessors (see section 3.2.1). The textbook series are promoted to have been planned to match the standards and requirements placed in the current LOPS as well as the Common European Framework of Reference (Otava 2012). Both textbook series have been published by the same publishing house Otava, which may or may not have an effect on the contents of the textbooks. One might suppose that the printing house has some say in the contents of the textbooks, for example, in how many pictures can be included in the books, etc.

In the present study all the textbooks published for student use in these two textbook series, i.e. *Open Road 1-8* and *Galleri 1-7*, will be processed and analysed by using the cultural categorisation introduced in section 4.3. One of the reasons for analysing only the student material, and not the teacher's manuals or recordings, is that in this way the results of the study will be based on the cultural content that each student is able to absorb from the material which he or she has access to. This means that the results of the present study will be applicable in showing what type of cultural information a student who might be interested in taking an examination in English or Swedish, i.e. completing a course independently, will be able to attain from the textbooks on his or her own. Another reason for examining only the material designed for student use is that getting the teachers' materials including recordings and such into one's hands would have required some special arrangements. I will now briefly lay out the organisation of the two textbooks, after which I will move on to explaining the steps of analysis of the cultural content of the textbooks in question.

### **4.2.1 Open Road 1-8**

The texts and exercises in the textbooks in *Open Road* are organised under specific themes. Under these specific themes one can find different texts and exercises, both listening and

writing tasks as well as oral exercises, which complement the texts. The number of themes varies from two to four depending on the book. Each book also contains sections called *Travel Guide* and *Highway Code*. In *Travel Guide* students receive information and tips about how they can develop themselves as language learners and how they can practise a specific area of language, for example writing or speaking skills. In *Highway Code* one can find information and exercises that have to do with grammar. Also, the books contain special information boxes that are marked as FYI (for your information) and they offer information about some specific area of English culture, for instance, a person or a place or an event, etc.. Each book is designed for a specific course, so that one book is used during one course.

The themes dealt in Open Road 1 include identity, love and looks, home and family and values and lifestyles. In Open Road 2 the students are presented with leisure and hobbies, music and youth culture, sports and travelling. Themes such as study and work are discussed in Open Road 3, which means that students get information about education, possibilities that they have after school, how to apply for a job and what to do if you do not have a clue what you want out of your life. In Open Road 4 the themes move around different societies around the world and students find out, for example, about living in the suburbs, arranged marriages, human trafficking and capital punishment. In Open Road 5 the main themes have to do with film industry and visual arts, literature and music, whereas in Open Road 6 the main themes deal with economy, technology and science. In Open Road 7 the theme of economy get a second look and students are also presented with the themes environment, society and culture. The final book of the series, Open Road 8, turns students' attention to oral skills and the rules of conversation, i.e. the students are presented with different conversational skills such as active listening, how to be polite and how to cope when communication breaks down.

#### **4.2.2 Galleri 1-7**

The texts and exercises in the textbook series *Galleri* have also been neatly categorised under specific themes, as they were in *Open Road*. Each book contains four to six different themes and one book is designed to be studied during one course. The books have four different sections in them: *Textgalleri* which contains different types of texts and stories and presents different cultural phenomena and persons to students, *Pratgalleri* which

contains different oral exercises, including pronunciation, and helps students to cope with various communicative situations, *Tipsgalleri* that contains ways to develop oneself as a learner and tools for self-assessment and *Testgalleri* that contains exercises which revise both vocabulary and grammar. In each book some texts or exercises have been marked by a small Swedish flag which means that these texts or exercises contain some information about Swedish culture or the Swedish way of life. There are also special information boxes that hold facts about people, places or phenomena.

In Galleri 1 the main themes include sports, food, education, music and freetime. In Galleri 2 students learn to talk about family-life and friendships as well as describe the people around them and where and how they live. Other main themes in Galleri 2 are work-life and education. In Galleri 3 students are introduced to such themes as culture and identity and they learn how to tell about their hometowns as well as to describe Finland and the Finnish way of life to foreigners. Questions about life, relationships, equality and diversity among people, for example, different generations are themes presented in Galleri 4, whereas Galleri 5 takes a closer look at the ecological and scientific side society by presenting such themes as our living environment, climate change and the advances that society has taken with the help of science and technology. Galleri 5 also discusses the effects of the media and consumption. In Galleri 6 the students can to find themes that touch upon arts, sports, travelling, immigration, etc. They are also encouraged to think about the concept of culture, what it means to them and what it can mean in different countries. The final book of the series, Galleri 7, concentrates on describing the life after upper secondary school. Therefore, themes such as finding a job and taking responsibility of one's own actions as well as a joint responsibility of the world we are living in.

#### **4.3 The method for analysing the content of the textbooks**

The method of analysis used in the present study is called a theoretically directed content analysis which lies between a theory based and data based content analysis (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 96-97). The reason for choosing this approach was that it fitted best the aims of the present study. Using a theory based analysis restricts the analysis of the data since the information gathered from the data has to go hand in hand with the existing theory or frame and everything that does not fit the theory will be left out (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 97-98). In data based analysis the frame or categorisation is formed afterwards

according to what has been found in the data (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 95). A theoretically directed content analysis approach also gives room for the data and the information that arises from it since the analysis process proceeds in its terms, i.e. the empirical data will be linked with the theoretical categories (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 117). The present study is more descriptive than qualitative since its starting point is in fact motivated by specific hypothesis derived from already existing research done in the field as well as the guidelines of the National Curriculum (Seliger and Shohamy 1989: 124, 129). The main idea, however, is that, as stated by Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 125), the results or the phenomena that descriptive studies describe are not manipulated even though the theoretical framework may be used in analysing the results.

In the analysis of the cultural content of the textbooks I chose to use a modified version of the categorisations of Byram (1993) and Karjala (2003) which were outlined in section 2.1.1. By combining these two categorisations I will attempt to make it easy to place the different cultural elements into their own clear categories as well as make the definition of culture as wide as possible, yet keeping the focus on the social aspects of human life. Since the definition of culture is considered wide in the present study, the content analysed in the books will also be somewhat wide. I have decided to focus mainly on the texts found in the textbooks which I will thoroughly examine. By texts I am referring to all the written material printed in the textbooks for educational purposes, including stories, articles, song lyrics, poems, small information-columns, etc. When it comes to pictures and illustrations, I will only mention the ones that are significant for the purpose of the present study, i.e. the ones that contain pieces of cultural information, for example, pictures of famous national characters, sights or symbols. By going through each page of the books I will get an overall picture of the sort of cultural elements they contain.

Analysing the contents of the books is, however, based on both careful examinations as well as scanning. For instance, all the so called main texts, i.e. texts that usually lead students to new areas of content at the beginning of each unit, as well as all the extra texts, i.e. texts designed usually for providing additional information of the same topic area as the main texts, for example, poems, song lyrics or short stories, and which are read and processed if there is time or if teachers find them worthwhile, will be thoroughly and carefully read. While reading the texts, I will take notes and summaries in which I will be highlighting the cultural aspects. When it comes to examining the exercises, there is not

enough room in a study of this scale to afford a thorough and detailed analysis of both exercises and texts. That is why I have decided to scan through the exercise pages of the textbooks and only mention those exercises where there was, in my opinion, some crucial information concerning culture included in them. Roughly the same idea lies behind the analysis of pictures and illustrations found in the textbooks. Since the textbooks contain a lot of pictures of which some can contain cultural information, for example, national symbols such as flags or money, there are still many pictures and illustrations which are irrelevant for the present study. Therefore, the same technique of scanning will be used with pictures and illustrations found in the textbooks and on the basis of the scanning, only the ones that carry some culturally specific information will be mentioned in the analysis section.

On the basis of all these summaries, lists and notes I will move on to categorising the cultural information by using the following categories:

- 1) **Population** containing individuals, social classes and ethnic minorities and everything that characterises the people living in the target culture area
- 2) **Social interaction** containing conventions of behaviour, verbal and non-verbal interaction, small talk, levels of formality and how one copes and interacts in common service situations in the target culture area
- 3) **Daily life** containing family life, relationships, education, work-life, daily habits, traditional cuisine and different ceremonies, for example, weddings or funerals
- 4) **View of life** containing what the people living in the target culture area value and belief in, i.e. religions, moral beliefs, superstition, taboos and mythologies as well as religious events and holidays
- 5) **Society and national identity** containing politics, media, social security, healthcare, law and order, national symbols and what is “typical” to the target culture or the people living in it, for example, various non-religious festivities
- 6) **Arts and sports** containing music, literature, visual arts, film and theatre, architecture, dance, national sports and famous characters within these cultural fields
- 7) **Technology and economic life** containing traffic, inventions, IT, energy sources and economy, including different industries and trademarks

- 8) History** containing important dates and happenings and persons with historic influence
- 9) Geography** containing climate, nature, famous sights, natural resources and natural catastrophes
- 10) Culturally unaccepted phenomena** containing racism, stereotypes, pollution, poverty, conflicts, crime, drugs, equality violations and physical or mental illness

As a result of combining Byram's and Karjala's categories for cultural content in textbooks I have come up with the ten different categories presented above which represent the various aspects of culture as widely as is considered necessary for the purposes of the present study. The first three categories represent the people living in the target culture-area and the way they interact with each other and the way they live their daily lives. The rest of the categories are also closely connected with both individuals and groupings, i.e. families, circles of friends or co-workers, etc., within the target culture societies. They all represent some cultural aspects which either affect the daily lives of human beings by being constantly present, for example, media, nature and religion or have actively and effectively formed the national and cultural identity of the people, for example, historic events. The final cultural category *culturally unaccepted phenomena* includes aspects of the target culture societies and people's lives that exist and are present in everyday life but that are often left out or not mentioned because people feel ashamed of them or feel otherwise uncomfortable talking about them. This category thus contains cultural elements that many people think somehow immoral, unjust or illegal.

## 5 ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL CONTENT OF THE TWO TEXTBOOK SERIES

In this chapter I will present an analysis of the cultural content of *Open Road* and *Galleri* by placing all the cultural information of the two textbook series under the ten categories presented in the previous chapter. I will proceed by first going through the ten categories from the point of view of the English textbook series *Open Road* and after that using the

same categorisation with the Swedish textbook series *Galleri*. Lastly, the analysis of the two textbook series representing two different languages will be cross-examined to find out any significant similarities and differences between the types of cultural content that they include. The findings will be more thoroughly discussed in chapter 6 where I will make some inferences, among these whether or not the cultural contents of the textbooks help students raise their cultural awareness, based on the findings of the analysis. The concluding comments as well as some suggestions for the future and further research will be presented in chapter 7.

## **5.1 The English textbook series *Open Road***

The textbook series is largely based on authentic texts, i.e. extracts and passages from different novels, newspaper articles and biographies as well as interviews and extracts from different websites that have been shortened or modified for the purposes of the textbooks. The textbooks also contain many poems and songs that on some occasions give an implication about the true nature of how the people living in the target culture environments think and feel and how they observe the world around them. The next sub-chapters illustrate the cultural insights that have been gathered from the eight textbooks of the textbook series *Open Road*.

### **5.1.1 Population**

The people presented in the textbooks come from different parts of the English-speaking world and they appear both in the texts and in the pictures and illustrations. They represent different age-groups as well as different social-, occupational- and national-groups, although, when it comes to nationalities it turns out that, as in the previous studies conducted on cultural content in English textbooks (see section 3.2.1), the two main varieties, the British and the American, are the dominant ones and that most of the people presented in *Open Road* come from either Britain or the US. It becomes clear that, for example, in Britain a typical Englishman today is actually only *half English* meaning that he has a multicultural background and knows, for instance, Hindustan and likes curry and cappuccino with his Marmite soldiers which is a typical English breakfast dish (Open Road 4: 18). There are many immigrants who are waiting for an asylum in, for example, Britain and their wait can be a quite long one (Open Road 6: 9-10). Some asylum seekers can

spend years in immigration detention centres and all they can do while waiting for a decision is to try and learn English, the language they will be needing if they are allowed to stay. An African asylum seeker, a 16-year-old girl, tells how she wishes that she was a British pound coin instead of an African girl because then everyone in Britain would be happy to see her and would welcome her with open arms. Also in America there are many different people with different backgrounds which can be seen, for example, by the fact that English is not the mother tongue of everyone (Open Road 3: 20). Having a multi-cultural nation does not, however, mean that the people living in the country would be aware of the different cultures. In Open Road 1 (15) a few Americans tell how an exchange abroad during their studies taught them to understand different cultures better. It is also commented in Open Road 1 (15) that most Americans do not have a clue where some of the products that they use actually come from. There is a story of a boy who spent his exchange in Finland and realised then that there are some familiar companies there that he had not been able to place before.

As for the different nationalities, there are, for example, stories of Americans (see, for example, Open Road 1: 15, 56-57, 65; Open Road 2: 9-10), Britons (Open Road 1: 22-24; Open Road 2: 29, 70-74; Open Road 3: 88-89), Canadians (Open Road 2: 36-37), Australians (Open Road 3: 30-31) and even a story of an Indian boy (Open Road 1: 8-9). The only time students' focus is drawn directly and consciously to the different varieties of English can be found in Open Road 8 (93) where seven different accents are presented, among these Australian, Nigerian, Jamaican and Scottish English. There are stories of youngsters and young adults (see, for example, Open Road 1: 15, 22-24; Open Road 3: 30-31; Open Road 4: 29-30, 43-44; Open Road 7: 90-91) as well as grown-ups (see, for example, Open Road 1: 65; Open Road 3: 89, 99; Open Road 5: 32-33) but none of small children or the elderly. In Open Road 3 (76) it becomes evident that there is a notable older generation in the States, the so called "*baby boomers*" and that their aging will set specific challenges for society. For instance, some occupations, such as health care professions and audiologists, will have to grow to meet up with the needs of the elderly. The different nationalities also come forth in the form of pictures: in Open Road 3 (36) there is a picture of an Aborigine playing a didgeridoo and an Indian woman dressed in a sari can be found in Open Road 4 (87). In Open Road 7 (89) there is a song by Willie Nelson that describes

cowboys. According to the song, cowboys are lonely, outdoorsy people who are proud, never home and hardly ever understood by their fellow men.

People living in American suburbs are described in Open Road 4 (43-44) as being quite average in every way. The poor are not really poor and the rich are not actually wealthy. Young suburban people do not care much for global issues and their world is centred around malls, golf courses and school. Nothing earth-shattering happens to people living in the suburbs and many teenagers are just waiting for things to happen. It is also important to feel that you belong somewhere, that you have roots and a childhood or background that others are able to relate to as well (Open Road 4: 44). When people go to parties or on dates they are expected to claim a certain kind of home, which is either rough or privileged, and to having been exposed to certain things such as alcohol or teenage suicide (Open Road 4: 44).

A modern man is described in Open Road 8 (89) as being, among other things, a multicultural, laid-back, fashion-forward, workaholic who multi-tasks and has a way with the digital gadgets and high-tech equipment. The general mentality among some people seems to be that they are always looking and waiting for something better and something more than they are not, however, likely to have. Thanks to credit cards people are able to spend more money than they actually could afford to spend and this leads to a situation where people constantly want more and more and, thus, are obliged to work and earn more (Open Road 6: 8). They dream of a better future but in some level understand that it may be impossible due to their background (Open Road 3: 17). In a way this reflects to the fact that there are some kinds of class-distinctions that prevail even in the modern society. This can, for example, be seen in Open Road 3 (78) where it is stated that people who graduate from law-schools in America usually end up doing their jobs with minimum wages and only the people who already belong to the "*high-powered lot*" are granted those "*fat-salaried law jobs*". The class-distinction can also be heard. In Open Road 3 (89) Rupert Everett, a famous British actor, tells how his "*very thick upper-class accent*" nearly hindered him from being accepted in drama school. In the song lyrics in Open Road 3 (17) the differences between people come forth quite clearly, for example, in lines like: "*She is a diamond, I am a stone. I come from nowhere, she's been to Rome. Her dad is lawyer and mine's not around. She has good manners, I'm rough all around*". Similar stories of different backgrounds can be found in the other textbooks as well (see, for example, Open

Road 3: 9-10, 78; Open Road 6: 9-10). In Open Road 3 (20) it is stated that in America the differences in people's backgrounds, for example, the fact that English is not the mother tongue or that people come from poor families, can be seen in schools, making the gap between student performances as well as different schools quite notable.

In Britain the class-distinction is perhaps the clearest when it comes to the English-speaking cultures, since Britain still has its Royal Family. The British royal family comes up a couple of times in the textbooks. In Open Road 3 (65) the Royal family is mentioned as being a popular discussion topic between foreigners and natives. In Open Road 6 (10) it is stated that the British one pound coin has a picture of Queen Elisabeth II. The same source also mentions the high authority that the Queen has and that her voice and the way she speaks are one of the reasons people obey her every order, not because she has her crown and sceptre. In Open Road 8 (47) there is a picture of the two princes, Prince William and prince Harry, and on page 48 there is an extract of an article on The Observer in which the status of the monarchy is discussed. At the beginning of the article it is stated that the Swedish press really love their Royal Family and that each Royal Family in Europe seems to keep making headlines. The article gives quite a negative picture of the British royals, describing them as Neets, i.e. Not in Education, Employment or Training, a coinage developed by Geoff Mulgan. The article brings out the fact that neither Prince Charles nor his current wife Camilla have any formal education and have never done an honest day's work.

### **5.1.2 Social interaction**

The politeness of the Anglophone people becomes quite evident on several occasions. In Open Road 6 (10) the taxi-driver asks "*Where to, sir?*" and the police-officer says "*Love the ensemble, madam, now let's have a quick look at your ID, shall we?*". Calling strangers by sir or madam as well as using tag questions helps to soften the message. The question of politeness and appropriate language use is also touched upon, for example, in Open Road 1 (19) where readers are presented with the concepts of written and spoken English, i.e. formal and informal English. There are situations where people might even be offended by the use of informal language by their conversation partners. When talking or writing to one's friends it is of course perfectly appropriate to use spoken language. All in all, the textbooks contain a lot of information about how to communicate in the target language in

different situations and contexts, for example, how to begin and end an e-mail (Open Road 1: 29) or how to conduct oneself on the telephone, where it is considered important to be polite when conversing with persons whom one is not acquainted with (Open Road 8: 24-25). The textbooks also offer some useful information that is particularly placed in the textbooks for Finnish students. For instance, in Open Road 1 (13) it is pointed out that there are no ä- or ö- letters in the English language, so when a Finn is talking to an Englishman he or she should bear this in mind when, for example, spelling a name that contains these letters typical for the Finnish language. It would be wise, according to the textbook, to replace these letters with *a* and *o* so that one's English-speaking companion does not get confused. The readers are also introduced with English idioms which colour the English language (Open Road 1: 44-45).

The emphasis is also laid on being a polite and active listener. In Open Road 1 (48-50) students are introduced with a variety of phrases that help to keep the discussion polite and how to show that you yourself are interested in what the other person is saying. It is stated that it is always better to sound overtly polite in English and this can be achieved with the help of nodding, smiling, keeping eye-contact and, most importantly, with the help of intonation. If one speaks with low intonation, i.e. too monotonously, it can be interpreted as a lack of interest and even rudeness on your side (Open Road 1: 49). Friends and family members can, of course, be very direct when talking to each other (Open Road 2: 100). Simply answering "no" when someone asks you to do something, for example, is considered rude and, therefore, the negative answers to requests must be softened in some way (Open Road 2: 100).

In Open Road 3 (51-53) students get information about how to conduct oneself in an interview that takes place in English. It is important to appear friendly, motivated and relaxed. The first impression counts a lot and that is why the form of the greetings and small-talk at the beginning of the interview are considered to be very important. It is also good to think about the possible questions beforehand so that one is ready to give intelligent and clear answers, as well as it is good to come up with a couple of questions that one can ask from the interviewer in order to show interest and motivation. In Open Road 4 (54) the emphasis is on the art of debate which is mentioned to have "*a long history in Anglophone cultures and is still an important part of university life in the UK and the US*".

### 5.1.3 Daily life

The average day of an average American or Brit consists of school, homework, chores, hobbies and work depending on whether this average person is of age or not. It is also decisive whether or not the person is single, dating or has a family. Singles can spend their free evenings, for example, by watching the Simpsons reruns on TV or take on new hobbies to meet new people whereas people with families usually spend their time after work by taking care of the house and driving their children around for their hobbies etc. (Open Road 1: 67; Open Road 2: 9-10, 53-54). Parents make sure that their children tend to their homework and many consider further education after high school to be vital, while others think that getting a proper job that helps you to get by is quite enough (Open Road 3: 9-10). In America, teenagers living in the suburbs live in "*inadvertent house arrest*" till they turn eighteen, and wait for their lives to start, spending time hanging down at the mall or at somebody's basement, waiting for the bus and going to school (Open Road 4: 43). Popular past-time activities include playing some sport or an instrument, listening to music, going to the mall or when your of age, going to clubs and pubs (see, for example, Open Road 2: 29, 53-54; Open Road 3: 10; Open Road 4: 44). American teenagers spend their time on the Internet, dye their hair, listen to rap-music and like sarcasm (Open Road 3: 20). They scrape and modify their licenses in order to get to bars where they would probably have gotten in without the false license (Open Road 4: 44).

Family life in English speaking cultures varies somewhat depending on which culture is being observed, since there are still some cultures where, for example, religion plays a more central role and thus divorces are not that common. However, there are many families that do break up as a result of the parents' divorce. According to Open Road 4 (82), 55 percent of all marriages in the US end in a divorce. Children can be hugely affected by their parent's arguing and the hate they express for each other (Open Road 1: 55). It might even result in situations where the child seeks for attention by doing drugs or behaving badly. Another story of a family where the parents have gotten a divorce and the mother has since remarried tells how difficult it can be to start over with a new mum or dad (Open Road 1: 56-57). In the story the step-father gets a cold shower from both of his step-children: the girl does not accept him and has no trouble in showing it as the boy hardly ever speaks to him. In the story, the children's mother was together with the man for a year

before they got married over a weekend trip to the children's surprise. As it is stated in the text, it can also be difficult for step-fathers and -mothers to show their feelings to their spouse's children (Open Road 1: 57). It is mentioned that the modern values threaten to bring down the importance and significance of families but in spite of how the world looks today family is still considered an important social institution (Open Road 1: 62).

Families can be tested by many more things than break ups and divorces. One of these challenges are financial difficulties. In Open Road 1 (65) an American best-selling author Bill Bryson tells about his childhood which was a happy one. The Bryson family dinners consisted almost always entirely of leftovers, since nothing was ever thrown in the bin. Both the parents had grown up during the Great Depression when everything had been scarce and thus, for example, whenever the family dined out they would take as many small ketchup, sugar, jam and butter packets with them as they could and carry them home in their pockets. The house where they lived was not big enough for all the children to have their own rooms so the brothers, born nine years apart from each other, shared a room which the younger brother gained for himself after the older one had moved out to go to college. The mother worked and, according to the writer, also took care of the house (Open Road 1: 65). This caused her stress. Another similar story can be found in Open Road 1 (67) where a family counsellor listens to one family's members complaints and troubles. The mother works 8 hours a day and on top of that has to do all the house work. Other complaints of the other family members include, for example, the father's complaint over his son's lack of motivation for school work as he sits by his computer all day long and over his daughter who brings home her boyfriends who behave as though they were at their own homes. Both of the children also have their own problems: the son wants to be left alone with his heartache over a relationship gone bad while the daughter feels that her brother has always been more important to her parents and that her future does not seem as rosy as her friends' who all have succeeded in getting an education and are heading for great careers. The trend these days seems to be that, instead of talking things through between the family members, all go and pour their hearts out to a complete stranger (Open Road 1: 67).

The theme of relationships is touched upon in Open Road 1 (22-24) where a group of British secondary school and upper secondary school students tell their thoughts about the subject. Being in a relationship is considered as a status symbol, especially among teenagers, and the relationships are based very much around looks, which means that boys

like to go out with girls who are attractive, not only in their point of view, but also according to their friends. It is also typical that youngsters do not necessarily know their other half's opinions or thoughts of life after being in a relationship a few weeks, even though these things are considered to be most important when one is deciding whether or not to be with someone. It also becomes quite obvious that during the early teenage years it is not considered rude or impolite to break up the relationship by sending a note or a text message to your girlfriend or boyfriend (Open Road 1: 23-24). If a relationship ends, it can affect teenagers' willingness to go to school because this would mean that they had to see their ex every day (Open Road 1: 67). The idea of what is romantic seems to vary according to sex: girls consider writing letters romantic while boys do not get the idea (Open Road 1: 22). Meeting the parents of one's boyfriend or girlfriend may not happen until absolutely necessary, i.e. until you have become "part of the family", either willingly or unwillingly, for example, by getting your girlfriend pregnant (Open Road 3: 9). Others may bring home their boyfriends and girlfriends every day, causing their parents to lose their nerves (Open Road 1: 67)

Education and schooling is a carrying theme in many of the textbooks' stories since many of the characters are young adults or teenagers who go to high school, college or university. This is why readers receive a lot of information about the different schools and their traditions in the English speaking societies around the world. There are pictures of Irish Catholic school-girls in their school-uniforms as well as American senior high school cheerleaders with their pom-poms out in the football field (Open Road 3: 18). Most information is provided by Open Road 3 (12, 22) where the educational system of the UK and the US are explained in detail.

### *Education in the UK*

There are different kinds of schools in Britain, some of which are state schools and some private schools where children go if their parents can afford to send them there (Open Road 3: 12). The leading private schools are Eton and Harrow which are often referred to as public schools. There is a picture of a British public school with boys in black robes in Open Road 3 (18). Another important fact is that children start their educational journeys at the age of five and spend the first six years in primary school after which they attend secondary school which takes five years to complete (Open Road 3: 12). Primary and

secondary school is compulsory to all children, after which they can choose between vocational school and sixth form which both take two years to complete. At the age of sixteen, while still in secondary school, British students take the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) exams which are nationwide exams that decide which school you are able to go to after secondary school. The exams are graded from A to F. If one wishes to pass them, one must get a C. Students usually take five to ten exams of the available 40 or so exams. After sixth form students can apply for universities (Open Road 3: 12). In Britain the applications for universities are sent in January followed by possible interviews and acceptance letters, of which there are two different kinds (Open Road 3: 113). Students applying to universities can receive either *a conditional* or *unconditional place*. A conditional place means that the applicants must get certain marks on their A-levels or they do not receive a place in the university. A couple of weeks before the beginning of the academic year a so called *clearing* is organised to fill those places that have not yet been filled (Open Road 3: 113).

The school subjects in comprehensive schools in Britain resemble a lot the ones we have here in Finland. Pupils have chemistry, computers, biology, home science, textiles, PE, etc. (Open Road 1: 22). There are also morning assemblies as there are in Finnish schools. What we do not have here in Finland, however, is something that is called *a roll call* (Open Road 1: 22). Another difference are the eating areas in the school yards where students go and have their lunch (Open Road 1: 22). In Indian schools the teachers are highly respected and they have authority, which is reflected, for example, by the habit of pupils needing to ask permission to move around in the classroom (Open Road 1: 8-9). In some of the former colonies of Britain there are still schools where the teaching takes place in English (Open Road 1: 8-9). In British schools, as well as in Australian schools, the discipline is also quite hard (see for example, Open Road 2: 27 and Open Road 3: 30). In Fleur Adcock's poem a girl who has dyed her hair blue is sent home from school since it was not considered appropriate. The girl's father contacts the headmistress and argues for her daughter's right to freely express her style and the girl is allowed to go back to school the next day (Open Road 2: 27).

*Education in the US*

In America schools are divided into public and private schools and in each of them there are three levels: primary, secondary and college (Open Road 3: 22). Children start school at the age of five. First they go a year in kindergarten, after which comes grade school or elementary school, i.e. the first year in primary school. Primary school takes eight years altogether and is sometimes divided into first through fifth grades and middle school, also known as junior high school. The secondary level of education which American teens enter at the age of 14 takes four years and the graduation from senior high school is regarded as the end of basic education (Open Road 3: 22). During the four years in senior high school students study mainly the obligatory subjects which do not include, for example, foreign languages (Open Road 8: 12). There are no periods in American high schools and no final exams. High school students do, however, complete their SATs at the end of their fourth year. Studying in high school is free, including most of the books as well, except for the school lunches which have to be paid for (Open Road 8: 12). There are also special names for high school students depending on which year they are in: first-year students are called freshmen, second-year students are known as sophomores, third-year students as juniors and the fourth-year students are referred to as seniors. After high school the Americans can apply for college, also referred to as university (Open Road 3: 22). At university the students study for their bachelor's degree for the first three to four years and under this period they are referred to as undergraduates (Open Road 3: 54). Students are expected to be active during lessons and to take part in discussions since the different exams and tests only cover part of the grades that the students get from their courses (Open Road 8: 12). After they have achieved their bachelor's degree they are free to choose between looking for a job or continuing their studies. If they study as postgraduates for one year they are able to get their master's degree and if they stay for another three years after that, they will get their doctoral degree (Open Road 3: 54).

When it comes to school success, it becomes evident that, for example, American students do not do so well in international tests like the PISA, for instance, as Finnish students do (Open Road 3: 19-20). In many American schools pupils are required to wear school-uniforms and, whether or not the children are able to get a higher education, depends greatly on the financial situation of the parents since education costs in the US. American children start school earlier than children here in Finland and they get a lot of

homework (Open Road 3: 19). In American schools pupils and students are divided into groups according to their talent, so that gifted students have their own groups and honour societies etc. On graduation day the student with the highest scores and best grades, the valedictorian, will give a speech. Other differences between Finnish and American schools mentioned in Open Road 3 (19) are, for example, standardized tests and tardy bells which means that after the bell has rung pupils are no longer allowed to lessons. American pupils are also less motivated and teachers do not have such high education as in Finland. Pupils require more guidance and adults hovering around them, and regardless of this the dropout rate in American high schools and vocational schools is around 25 percent. One reason explaining the poor success of American students in PISA is that about 8 percent of pupils in American schools do not have English as their L1 (Open Road 3: 20).

### *Education in Australia*

Open Road 3 (30-31) provides students also with facts about Australian upper secondary schools. In Australia students are required to wear their school uniforms in school and if a student has to wear different shoes to school he or she has to have a note from parents explaining why it was necessary to wear these shoes (Open Road 3: 30). Teachers spend a lot of their time keeping up the discipline, especially out in the eating areas where students eat their home-packed lunches since schools do not provide students with lunch. Whenever teachers turn their backs, there is a food fight going on and afterwards the teachers try to get the students to clean up after themselves, sometimes without a result (Open Road 3: 31). In Australian upper secondary schools students do not have a big final exam like students in Finnish upper secondary schools have. Instead, after each four periods they have an exam week which determines their grades alongside of ongoing projects and assignments (Open Road 3: 31). Another difference between the Australian and Finnish upper secondary school systems is that after each exam week Australian students get a two-week holiday. At the end of the last year there is, however, one big nationwide exam that takes two whole days and determines five percent of the final mark. These exam situations are carefully organised and controlled, for example, the students are not allowed to the toilets by themselves without an invigilator and everything that the students are allowed to bring with them into the exam halls are placed in a clear plastic bag so that they can be checked before the students enter the hall (Open Road 3: 31). Also, the distances between the desks in the

exam hall are carefully measured beforehand so that they are exactly one meter from each other.

When British and American teens start thinking about their lives after sixth form or high school it may lead to them moving away from their childhood homes, away from their home towns and into a life of independence and rental accommodation in a distant college or university city. However, some young adults may still have a chance to avoid paying rent and stay with their parents throughout college, providing that the schools are near. In this case they will have to decide whether it is time to take that step and move away or not (Open Road 1: 48). It might be that paying rent is the deciding factor to many youngsters and in that case finding a roommate might be the perfect solution (Open Road 1: 51). In fact, it is stated in Open Road 2 (19) that it is quite typical of young people in Britain to share an apartment with someone since it is so much cheaper to live like that and, that unlike in Finland, it is not considered weird or unorthodox to share a flat with a person of the opposite sex even if you weren't in a relationship. This is common for people of all ages (Open Road 2: 19).

When it comes to work-life the textbooks give information, for example, of which professions are considered meaningful and rewarding and which less rewarding, according to some Americans (Open Road 3: 75-76, 78). In general, people consider careers where they are able to help others rewarding. Also, jobs with comfortable and pleasant work environments, such as audiologists and librarians have, are considered rewarding (Open Road 3: 76). Some less rewarding occupations listed in Open Road 3 (78) are lawyer and salesperson as well as the more artistic careers, described as being "*the world's best hobbies - and worst careers*" because of the tough competition over scarce jobs and relatively low salary. The reasons why an attorney's occupation was considered less attractive are that the job requires a person to act unethically and it consists mostly of tedious research instead of the magical courtroom drama seen on TV (Open Road 3: 78). It is also considered important to find a career that one likes. In Open Road 7 (90-91) there is a story about a young man who, after graduating from university in Vancouver, tries out 52 different jobs in one year in order to find his dream job. He tried, among others, how it is to tend cattle which he finds quite a hard work with little pay, which means that one really has to like the profession if one wants to be a cowboy. In Open Road 8 (20-21) students can find four

advertisements of vacant situations, among these a vacancy for ticket sales and information assistant in Buckingham Palace and for a Pizza Hut delivery driver in Valdese, USA. All of the vacancies are looking for people with good communication and people skills who are eager to serve and are enthusiastic. In Open Road 8 (16) students are faced with a list of 16 American and British celebrities and their occupations prior to their singing or acting career. All of the previous jobs of these celebrities are quite common and not at all clamorous, for example, Jennifer Aniston worked as a telemarketer and Clint Eastwood as a pool boy.

Traditional foods and such are not presented in much detail. Instead, there is a recipe for Shepherd's pie in Open Road 1 (70) which is a British delicacy. In Open Road 3 (31) an Australian exchange student mentions that it is very typical for Aussies to have their Sunday morning tea with cakes and 'biccies' (Austr.Eng.), i.e. biscuits. The text also mentions some typical school lunches that Australian school kids carry with them to school in their lunch boxes. Among these are baked beans covered with tomato sauce, egg sandwiches and apples (Open Road 3: 31). One of the most famous American trademarks, Ben & Jerry's ice cream, is, however, introduced in Open Road 3 (98-99). The success story began in Vermont in 1977 where the first ice cream factory was started by two friends Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield. Every year on the day when the business celebrates its anniversary there are free cones served in every Ben & Jerry's scoop shop nationwide (Open Road 3: 99).

#### **5.1.4 View of life**

Religion does not seem to be a very central element of people's lives. Some people do pray before going to bed, but their prayers are described as being more of a habit that does not come from the heart and they do not experience any true communion (Open Road 5: 33). In some countries religion plays a more central role than in others. For example, in Ireland religion is connected closely to education and there are even Catholic schools (Open Road 3: 18). When it comes to more detailed information of the different religions found in the English speaking countries, the textbooks give the following facts: In Open Road 1 (81) the readers learn the name of the sacred books in India which is the Vedas. With their help it is possible to interpret some dreams. Hundreds of years ago it was believed that Gods talked to people through dreams (Open Road 1: 81). In Open Road 4 (71) there are prayers both from the Bible, The Lord's Prayer, and from the Koran.

### 5.1.5 Society and national life

In Open Road 1 (51) there is an illustration of a British town where there are museums, concert halls, university, churches, administrative buildings, railway station, pubs and castles as well as parks, rivers and private houses, many of which are two-storey terraced houses. In Open Road 4 (43-44) readers are familiarised with a form of living that is considered typically American: suburbs which do not resemble the Finnish equivalent for the word "*lähiö*" at all. The suburbs are residential areas that are situated around big cities. They are filled with single-family homes that all look the same and have small yards where people have their barbecues and wash their cars. Every family owns a car since public transport is very limited. Cars are used for commuting to work, taking kids to school and hobbies as well as getting to shopping malls which are not located within a walking distance. There are more people in America living in suburbs than in cities or in rural areas. Most suburban dwellers are white and middle-class (Open Road 4: 44).

Something quintessentially British is the pub culture. In Open Road 5 (6) it becomes obvious that Brits spend a lot of their free time in pubs, but compared to Finnish traditions, the Brits do not go to pubs merely to drink. On the contrary, pubs are places where the whole family can eat, drink, meet their neighbours and take part in pub quizzes which are a very popular pastime in Britain. The quizzes are usually quite difficult and it is said that "*only trivia experts are able to get very good scores*" (Open Road 5: 6). Some pubs are particularly famous for the quizzes and on quiz-nights there is usually a full house. The quizzes are entered by teams and there is a fixed entrance fee which then is summed up as a prize for the winning team.

The only holiday mentioned in the textbooks is Halloween. This typical non-religious holiday in America is a day when children go trick-or-treating, especially in the suburbs (Open Road 4: 44). Another phenomenon that is strongly connected to America, although present also in other countries with significant ranching and livestock cultures, like Canada, Mexico and Australia, is rodeo (Open Road 7: 94). It is said that each nationality has its own special flair for their rodeo shows. However, there are some main events that rodeos usually include, for example, bareback riding, bull riding and team roping.

In Open Road 6 (44) students are introduced to the power of the media. Mass media surrounds people with images and information at each moment of the day and the media also decides what it shows to people and from which perspective. That is why it is important that people learn to be critical towards the media. The media also helps people to understand other cultures and our own life as well as the lives of others, which is very different from before, the time when people did not have televisions, not to mention the Internet, and when they lived in the same little town without any connection to the world outside. In Open Road 4 (95) the British tabloids are introduced as having particularly colourful and inventive language in their headlines. The point is, of course, to get potential readers interested in the story and buy the magazine. Some of the techniques applied by the tabloids are the use of emotive language in order to appeal to the readers' ethical common sense or the use of patriotic jargon in order to create a sense of community with the readers. Sometimes the use of colloquial language is used in an attempt to reach out for the common man or "*the man on the street*" (Open Road 4: 95).

The societies and governments take care of the poor and less-privileged by providing them with free food from the food lines but, according to a Tom Paxton's song in Open Road 3 (63), this is very demeaning to some men with families. They would much rather take care of their families by doing honest work and they are praying for God to give them jobs. The insecurity over the future is also reflected in Open Road 3 (76) where it is stated that within some occupations in the US there is a threat of losing jobs overseas. For example, skilled engineers in China and India are willing to do the same jobs for 80 percent less than engineers in America, which has already lead to offshoring of technical work. Also, the more traditional professions, like librarians, are faced with the changes brought by modern society (Open Road 3: 76). Nowadays the trend is that people search for information by themselves with the help of different search engines, which lessens the need for librarians whose job has partly been based on just that: helping patrons to find and locate books and information. Another grim picture is painted in Open Road 3 (31) where they mention a health crisis in Australia. There are not enough doctors, nurses or dentists at the moment which means that anyone studying in medical school or nursing is very likely to get a job in the future.

In Britain there is a campaign called The Big Challenge which is intended to help young people, between 16 to 25, to take control over their lives by giving them financial

support in exchange for an idea that will help to improve the whole community in some way (Open Road 4 :107). With the help of the money they can realise their ideas and try to make their living surroundings better. There are some examples of applications sent to the Challenge fund which include, for example, an idea for the decreasing of knife and gun violence with the help of a music project in a deprived area of Roxbury (Open Road 4: 107). The idea is to get young people from the streets and involved in creating something in the form of music and acting, etc.

One way of keeping up with what is going on in the society is described in Open Road 8 (52). In Britain there is an official count of all people and households in the country, a census, that takes place every ten years. Some of the questions asked in the census are considered quite intrusive, for example, a question of whether a person is in civil partnership. If a person is caught of giving false answers, he or she is faced with a fine.

Politics is not discussed in detail in any of the textbooks. However, in Open Road 7 (84) there is a small information column where it says that in Britain there are 650 constituencies and that each of them has an MP, a member of the parliament, representing it. It is also stated that in the USA, each state gets two senators who represent their state in the Senate, whereas, the number of the members in the House of Representatives is apportioned according to the population of each state.

Open Road 8 (59) mentions that Americans have become quite famous for their law suits that seem absurd but have been generously awarded. One of the most famous examples is probably the McDonald's coffee cups that have been labelled "caution, hot contents" after a law suit was raised against the company when a customer burned his mouth drinking coffee at McDonald's. These ridiculous law suits have given raise to number of other equally laughable warning labels in the US.

Some national symbols that are mentioned or illustrated in the textbooks are the Union Jack (Open Road 6: 12), The Statue of Liberty (Open Road 2: 93), Big Ben (Open Road 2:109) and the Sidney Opera House (Open Road 3: 29).

### **5.1.6 Arts and sports**

The world of music comes up in the textbooks both in the form of song lyrics and in the text passages where various artists and bands are mentioned. In Open Road 1 (21) a song from the movie Grease starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John is presented to

readers alongside with a picture of the stars of the film. In Open Road 2 (36-37) there is a story of the winner of the Canadian Idol Melissa Crystal O'Neil who lost her friends after her win and had to go through the rest of her high school year as the object of hate and envy from her former classmates and supportive friends. The story also describes how TV-shows such as Idol shape up the contestants so that they can become almost unrecognisable in the eyes of those who have known them prior to the competition. Ozzy Osbourne is introduced briefly in Open Road 8 (36-37) in a discussion exercise where he is talking with his personal trainer. The hard and hectic life of a rock star, with a variety of tours and record company parties, becomes evident while the discussion proceeds. In Open Road 5 (80) students learn about the musical genre called *classic metal*. They also find out the names and songs of some famous heavy metal bands, for example, Metallica, Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath. One heavy metal song with its lyrics can be found in Open Road 5 (88): *Ace of Spades* by a British heavy metal group Motörhead. An example of how a music genre can affect people's lives can be found in Open Road 2 (29) where a British comedian Griff Rhys Jones tells a story of how he and his father clashed when he was young and rebellious. At this time punk-music and style were popular among youth and it encouraged young people to become rebels (Open Road 2: 32). Punk-music and the style that came with it made adults confused and a bit shaken by their offspring's looks. Griff's father never understood his son's long hair and became even more concerned after reading an article on how long hair makes youth degenerate. The father was also worried about his son being associated with criminals because of his punk style.

In Open Road 4 (62) there is a song by William Blake and Charles Parry called *Jerusalem* which is often sang in churches and schools as well as sports events and which has become the unofficial national anthem for England, while the official national anthem for the whole of Britain is *God Save the Queen*. *Jerusalem* tells about a legend of how Jesus visited England as a young man and in the song the English are urged to build a new Jerusalem, a paradise on Earth, in England. The song is sung, for example, at the end of the Proms, which is London's most famous summertime concert for classical music and it has also been the anthem of England's cricket team.

The textbooks present readers also with some famous actors and actresses as well as other influential characters in the world of film and theatre. In Open Road 2 (82-85) there is an extract of the book of two British actors Ewan McGregor, born in Scotland, and Charley

Boorman, born in London but who grew up in Ireland. The two men not only share the same profession but they also have a joint interest in motorcycles. In Open Road 3 (88-89) students get to know a famous British actor Rupert Everett who is described as possessing, among other things, a "*nasal upper-class twang*". Everett also tells his own views of the tedious sides of actor's career, which include all the award ceremonies, press and publication, premières and appearances on the red carpet (Open Road 3: 95). According to him, they take away most of the magic and mystery of film making. Open Road 5 (18-20) contains information of the development of one of the most famous fictional agents in the history of literature and film, i.e. James Bond, from the sixties, when the first Bond-actor Sean Connery created the cinematic interpretation of Ian Fleming's novel hero, to the present day. The character's development is described by Roger Moore who also played Bond in several movies. He sees the alteration of Bond's character from a charming and forthright hero to a ruthless killer who makes mistakes and is flawed as well as vulnerable depicting the change that has happened in society. In Moore's opinion (Open Road 5: 20), the world has become a darker place and Daniel Craig, who plays Bond today, has succeeded in bringing this sinister nature to the character and updated it brilliantly. Open Road 5 (27) mentions the British movie director Alfred Hitchcock who made 65 movies during his lifetime but won only one Oscar and held the shortest speech at the award ceremony, saying only "thank you". In 1976 the world was presented with a new term, *the blockbuster*, due to the enormous success of Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* that was released that year (Open Road 5: 27). In Open Road 5 (16) there are some examples of the types of TV-programmes shown in British Television. These examples contain, for example, talk-shows, documentaries, reality shows and films as well as news and reruns of sitcoms and soaps. TV-shows called *Jeeves and Wooster* and *Blackadder* are mentioned in Open Road 5 (68) as well as two British actors Stephen John Fry and Hugh Laurie who starred these shows.

In Open Road 8 (76) students receive information about one other form of the performing arts, i.e. pantomime, which is described as a very popular theatrical performance in the UK and other parts of the English-speaking world. There are pictures of different street artists in Open Road 8 (87).

The textbooks are, as mentioned in the beginning of section 5.1, filled with texts which have been taken from various novels and newspapers and thus, there are also many information-columns of the writers of the texts. This is one way to bring famous authors

into the knowledge of students. Open Road 5 (72) includes a sonnet by William Shakespeare as well as a picture of the famous English poet and playwright. Other English poets and their poems are introduced in Open Road 5 (74-75), among them William Blake, an 18th century poet, and Carol Ann Duffy, born in 1955. In Open Road 1 (57) students are presented with the text of Frank Portman, who today is known as a bestselling author, though has previously made a career in music as well. In Open Road 2 (30) a British comedian and writer Griff Rhys Jones is brought to students' attention. In Open Road 3 (10) there is information of an English novelist and journalist Nick Hornby whose books have also made into successful films. One of the absolute hits of the early 21st century are the *Harry Potter* books by a British writer J.K. Rowling and the films made on the basis of the books. There is a picture of *Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry* in Open Road 3 (18). Almost an equal success has been granted to Stephenie Meyer's vampire novel series *Twilight* which has also been turned into blockbuster films during the past decade (Open Road 5: 12).

Turning the cover of Open Road 5 students find a list of awards and prizes presented in the UK and the US. These prizes are from the fields of music, theatre, media and film as well as visual arts. Among these are the Oscars and the Emmys which are presented annually for achievements in the film and television industry, the Pulitzer Prize that is awarded in journalism, literature and musical composition, the Turner Prize which is Britain's most publicised art award, the Grammys and the Brit Awards that are presented for musical achievements and the Tony Awards which are granted for live American theatre. On the inside of the back cover of Open Road 5 there is a list of festivals and events that are organised in the UK year after year. These events contain concerts (for example, the Proms), outdoor festivals (for example, Notting Hill Carnival and Glastonbury) and sporting events (for example, Royal Ascot which is a horse racing meeting, Wimbledon that is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments and the FA Cup final which is an important prize in English football).

In Open Road 1 (10) there is a mentioning of a very popular sport, cricket, which is the national sport, for instance, in India where the sport is highly appreciated. An American football team Giants is mentioned in Open Road 1 (57). In Open Road 2 (52) a song by John Fogerty tells about a man who is desperate to get into the baseball field and make it in the game so that he can become the object of admiration like Joe DiMaggio or Ty Cobb. In

Open Road 3 (10) students find out about Highbury, which was the former and, according to the textbook, legendary home stadium of Arsenal F.C. in London. In Open Road 4 (96) there is a picture of a horse raise which is a popular sport in Anglophone cultures. A child's sporting hobby can also become the past time activity for the whole family. Open Road 2 (53-54) presents us with a story of an 18-year-old girl whose parents are her avid supporters who come and watch her swim and cheer her on the side of the pool.

Fashion and designing clothes and other accessories are one form of art, one could say. In Open Road 1 (34) a British designer Vivienne Westwood, the creator of the punk look, is mentioned in a text telling about shoes. It is also mentioned that the Brits are very conscious of animal rights, at least when it comes to buying products with animal fur on them. Manolo Blahnik admitted that his mules with silk and fur would never sell well in London (Open Road 1: 36).

Visual arts of the English speaking world receive very little attention in the textbooks. Open Road 5 (30-31) presents students with nine works of art that are all somehow connected to Britain either by the artist or the motive of the paintings or installations. Open Road 6 (18-19) students are introduced to cartoonist Bill Watterson who has created *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon strips. Students also find out that, unlike *Garfield*, *Spiderman* and *The Simpsons*, *Calvin and Hobbes* do not appear in coffee mugs, calendars or boxer shorts because Watterson has not sold the rights to his strip. There are two examples of *Calvin and Hobbes* strips in Open Road 6 (18, 80).

### **5.1.7 Technology and economic life**

The public transport system in the USA gets a harsh word from one of its residents in Open Road 1 (19) when she compares the public transport of her native country to that of France. As she puts it, the public transport "sucks" and that is why young Americans always take their own cars when they need to go somewhere. This fact is confirmed in Open Road 2 (81) where the poor state of the public transport California is mentioned as well as the fact that the roads are always jammed. Open Road 4 (44) states that there is limited public transport in suburban areas, which means that private cars are a necessity for parents who have to take their kids to school, go to work and do their shopping miles away from home. Open Road 6 (66) mentions that there are about 3 million miles of highways in the US and that the Americans tend to drive so close to each other on the highways that they only have

about 2 seconds to react to the movements of the cars ahead them, hence, Americans are called "the two-second drivers". This means that mass crashes are quite common. It is said that there are over 6 million injuries and 42 000 casualties reported on the American highways each year. In Open Road 1 (15) it also becomes obvious that not all Americans travel a lot. In fact, there is one story of a young woman who had not left her state until the age of seventeen and her first trip outside her home-state was to Europe where she spent her exchange.

The issues concerning traffic and transport of Britain are also discussed in the textbooks. In Open Road 6 (70) it is mentioned that most drivers arriving to London have to pay a road tolls. London traffic is also mentioned in Open Road 8 (40) where there is a story about how the traffic accidents dropped almost by half when the traffic lights and warning signs in Kensington High Street were removed and placed with a roundabout. Open Road 8 (39) mentions that environmentalists in the UK have started a movement called *Plane Crazy* in order to protest against air travel which is constantly increasing.

In Open Road 7 (79-80) students find out that most the most common energy sources in the US today are coal and after that nuclear power, both of which are argued against by many since of the pollution caused by coal energy and by the risks that nuclear power plants and waste can cause. The more environmentally friendly water and wind sources are not that popular in the States (see more in 5.1.10). The fact that people today are so entirely dependent upon electricity is discussed in Open Road 6 (34-35). If the world would suddenly find itself without power or electricity, the results might be quite catastrophic since everything runs by electricity these days. The advancements in technology have been enormous in the past century and almost everything today is run by a computer. It is discussed in Open Road 6 (27-28) that the technological advancements can make some things, that are impossible today, to become reality in the future. Examples of such things could be time travel and invisibility. Technological advancements and computers are not only seen as a utility since computers have also the more entertaining side to them. Computer games have become a popular past time activity and Open Road 1 (75-76) discusses more closely how it is possible that people who are the opposite of violent and aggressive can be so brutal in the games that they play. The result to this puzzling question is simply this: it is just a game.

The currencies of both Britain and the USA are mentioned in Open Road 1 (27) and in Open Road 6 (10).

### **5.1.8 History**

The fact that Britain has once been an empire with many colonies becomes obvious in few occasions, sometimes quite subtly, when, for example, the question of official languages is mentioned in the texts. In Open Road 1 (10) it is stated that India has been a part of the British Empire until becoming independent in 1947 and that English is one of the many official languages in the country today and used as a *lingua franca* side by side with Hindi.

The Apartheid system in South Africa and the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela are mentioned in Open Road 4 (29). Both topics are clarified in more detail later on in Open Road 4 (37). Apartheid is explained as an organised and government granted segregation and terrorising of people of mixed race, especially black people, by the ruling white minority in South Africa during the 1950s to the beginning of the 1990s. During the apartheid years black people were denied basic human rights and they were not allowed to take part in politics or have any say in matters that affected their own lives. Nelson Mandela, who sat in prison for almost 30 years, received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for his fearless dedication to put an end to apartheid. Mandela was elected the first black president of South Africa in 1994 when the country held its first democratic election (Open Road 4: 37). There is a picture of Mandela in Open Road 4 (37) along with, for example, Reverend Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks who were both significant in bringing an end to racial discrimination in America. There is also an extract of Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream" speech that he delivered in Washington on 28th of August 1963.

The first African American president of the United States, Barack Obama, is mentioned twice in the textbook series, both times in Open Road 4 (29-30, 35) where readers find out that he was an active supporter of the abolishment of the Apartheid system during his college years and rallied for the cause. The textbook also contains information about Obama's childhood and background. He had a white mother and a black father who got divorced by the time Obama was but one year old. He lived in Indonesia with his mother and her new husband until it was time for Obama to start secondary school. Thus, he was sent back to Hawaii, where he had been born and where his grandparents still lived, to finish his schooling.

Other historically significant happenings are mentioned in Open Road 7 (27-28) where some of the various wars that Brits or Americans have been a part of are presented. In Open Road 7 (101) it is also revealed that Britain suffered from a severe and dangerous epidemic of mad cow disease and that many died for the disease.

### **5.1.9 Geography**

In Open Road 2 (79) there is a map of the states of California and Nevada with their most famous sights and biggest cities, for example, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and San Diego. It is said that Beverly Hills is where the celebrities live, Rodeo Drive the place where rich people shop and that LA does not really have a clear city centre but instead it has spread out in every direction (Open Road 2: 81). The hot sun of the Californian sky is considered to be too hot for most light-skinned tourists. Famous sights are presented in the form of pictures: The Statue of Liberty in Open Road 2 (93), Big Ben and the sign of the London Underground in Open Road 2 (109), the Sidney Opera House, kangaroos and Ayers Rock in Open Road 3 (29).

In Open Road 3 (31) the students are briefly familiarised with Australian wildlife. They learn that it is very important not to leave any food out because it will attract ants, which are a big problem in Australian households, cockroaches and rodents. They also learn that the world's ten most fatal snakes can be found in Australia and people with small children need to be extra careful. Along with snakes, Australians are also surrounded with spiders and lizards (Open Road 3: 31). In the same text students also get to know Steve Irwin, a famous Australian wildlife-enthusiast, who made many daring nature-documentaries during his lifetime.

In Open Road 7 (9-10) students can read a story about two men camping in the wild. They are following the Appalachian trail in America. Before retiring to their tents the men eat their perishable foods and keep talking and smoking until very small midgelike creatures force them to their tents. They have found a camping site near a calm little spring in a grassy clearing in the woods. At night one of the men is woken up by a sound of breaking branches and is convinced that there is a bear outside. He wakes his friend who does not, however, share his concern over the source of the sound. On the contrary, he thinks that it is more likely to be a skunk or a deer than a bear and goes back to sleep, while his friend stays up thinking of a plan in case the animal decides to attack. The man afraid is

an English writer called Bill Bryson. Another description of nature can be found in Open Road 7 (17) where animals such as a fox, a rabbit and a bullfrog are mentioned and the nature is described as idyllic, peaceful and calming.

Some environmental catastrophes are presented in Open Road 7 (41-43, 46) in the forms of pictures and facts. There is, for example, a picture of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and stories about the world's first megatsunami that happened in Alaska in 1958 as well as the 1993 cyclonic storm in the US that caused severe weather and several hurricanes and tornadoes. Students also find out about the world's most endangered species (Open Road 7: 59). It is not, however, mentioned where these species live.

### **5.1.10 Culturally unaccepted phenomena**

In Open Road 1 (15) there are short descriptions of young adults who all have some kind of disability. One of them is visually impaired, one is deaf and one suffers from ADHD. They do not, however, seem to be negatively affected or otherwise left out by the rest of the world due to their disabilities. In fact, all of them have spent at least a short time studying abroad and are currently either studying or working.

There are also some stories of bullying that is going on in schools. In Open Road 1 (8) an Indian boy tells how he has been an object of jokes and laughter because of his name and that he is trying to escape this by changing school as well as name. In Open Road (4: 44) an American girl tells how her school has lockers big enough to stuff a nerd into.

The question of exploiting animals is raised in many occasions. Once a traditional British upper-class past-time favourite, foxhunting, has nowadays been shot down by the modern Brits who are concerned over the rights of animals (Open Road 1: 36). The foul treatment of caged animals is discussed in Open Road 7 (19-20). The same source also tells about several studies and experiments that have been conducted and that the results have indicated that animals might in fact have a social side and that they may be capable of having feelings, which would serve as a reason to abstain from eating meat. Several animal species have also served people at times of war. Examples of this are given in Open Road 7 (27-28), among them the use of doves as messengers in World War I and the use of dolphins and sea lions that are trained to find and mark underwater mines, first used in 2003 in the Iraq war by the American Navy. The Americans have also used dogs, for example, in Vietnam to locate the enemy in dense jungles.

In Open Road 7 (33-34) students get a chance to read about the process that Fred Pierce, an author and environmental consultant, went through when he was writing a book about how difficult it is to dispose, for example, a mobile phone in an environmentally friendly way. He also wanted to find out where the cotton in his shirt or the coffee in his mug comes from and whether or not he should be ashamed of his purchases or if he had indeed helped to boost up the economy of some small community somewhere in Africa or South America. In the text students find out that over 15 million mobile phones are tossed every 2 years in Britain and that most of them end up in local landfills and, thus, all the toxins that these electronic devices contain are released into the ground. According to the new European directive on electronic waste all the electronic materials should be recycled. Also, there have been measures taken directly by mobile phone companies as well as some private entrepreneurs who have begun to take back used mobile phones and either find a new home for them or take them to pieces and recycle the parts (Open Road 7: 33). For example, a shop in Sussex promised to collect old phones and send them to Tanzania where the phones were sold to locals, with a higher price than what the phone had originally cost in Britain.

Themes such as nature reservation, natural catastrophes and pollution are discussed mainly in one textbook, Open Road 7. Open Road 7 (63) includes information of the major oil spill that happened in the Gulf of Mexico a few years back. The culprit was the British oil company BP. There is also a map of the countries of the world that tells us how much carbon dioxide each country emits per capita. Both Canada and the US as well as Ireland and Australia belong to the group of countries that emit most carbon dioxide while Britain, New Zealand and South Africa follow right after them. India, on the other hand, belongs to the group of countries that have the lowest emission rates in the world. There is also an extract of Matthew Glass's novel *Ultimatum* which is a fictional story that plays with the idea of what the situation might be in the world in 2033 (Open Road 7: 65-67). In the novel the heads of states are in Oslo and about to sign an agreement on climate change when the Chinese, who have become major polluters and emitters, start to demand that the Americans take more responsibility for the emissions since they feel that, even though the emissions have been taking place in Chinese soil, they are still America's emission, resulting from the cheap manufactures that the Americans have used in China instead of having the factories in the US soil. This situation, even though fictional, could very well be

how the future will look like if people continue to exploit the natural resources of our planet, as is pointed out in the song lyrics *Another way to die* by Disturbed (Open Road 7: 77). Furthermore, it is stated that if the US ever becomes serious about dealing with climate change, and still wanting to provide the same opportunities for its people to maintain the standard of living that they are used to, it will have to cut down on the use of coal power and start building new nuclear power plants which have not been built since 1980's (Open Road 7: 79-80). The problem is that people are not willing to pay more for their energy so that is why the more environmentally friendly options, solar and wind power, are not very popular. Also, there are some people and organisations, for example, the Greenpeace, that consider nuclear power to be dangerous and worry about the radioactive waste and therefore are against nuclear power (Open Road 7: 84). It is said that it is now a question of whether or not people really care about the climate change and what might become of our world if the emissions and greenhouse gases are not controlled (Open Road 7: 80).

In Open Road 8 (108) there is a story of Dambisa Moyo who wrote a book accusing Western countries for sending billions in development aid to developing countries where most of the money ends up in the hands of corrupt leaders. She questions the sensibility of such aid and suggests that instead of directing the financial aid to the governments of African countries, the European countries as well as the US would give the money as direct investments to the people.

Crime is touched upon in a few occasions in the textbooks. For instance, in Open Road 1 (86) readers find out that the former president of the USA, Abraham Lincoln, was assassinated. Open Road 4 (43) mentions the dangers of drive-by shootings that are not, however, that common in residential, suburban areas in America, but evidently happen in cities. In Open Road 8 (57) there is an abridged version of an article about how criminals, convicted for murder, rape or robbery, select their targets on the streets of New York. There is also a news item about a Charlton striker who assaulted a young man at a nightclub and was arrested (Open Road 8: 59).

Stereotypical descriptions of English speaking cultures are touched upon in, for example, Open Road 2 (10) where a British boy describes kite flying as a boring hobby in which only some poor losers are engaged in the middle of the grey, windy English countryside, flying a kite given to them by their eccentric uncle. This paints a rather negative picture of British past time activities. In Open Road 5 (17) there is an extract of a

documentary film that describes how homosexuality was dealt with in the 20th century Hollywood films. According to this extract, gays have been an object of ridicule, pity and even sometimes fear in the movies, which also affected the way audiences reacted. People, even the homosexuals themselves, were influenced by the image these films passed on (Open Road 5: 17).

Problems concerning children and young adults are raised on a few occasions in the textbooks. The question of teen-pregnancies is discussed briefly in Open Road 3 (9-10) where a fifteen-year-old American boy has gotten his girlfriend pregnant. Other problems among young people are presented in Open Road 4 (44) where the question of doing drugs comes up. It is said that everyone who "*did drugs and was relatively attractive*" was considered okay in an American school where Sloane Crosley, an American writer, went to when she was growing up in Westchester County. A problem that has found its way into, for example, British society are the child brides (Open Road 4: 81). The reason why it has become an issue are the immigrant girls who disappear from schools because they are sent to countries with lower marrying age by their parents. The habit of marrying as early as under the age of fifteen is sadly quite common in many developing countries and it has travelled to Britain with immigrants who come from cultural areas where it is not considered morally or legally wrong to marry one's daughter before she has turned eighteen. It is stated that marrying so early results in both social and economic not to mention medical problems (Open Road 4: 81). Another problem relating to the same topic, in a way, comes up in Open Road 4 (82) where the dowry system in India is mentioned. It is said that the dowry system can sometimes lead to discrimination against girls since they cost a lot of money to their family (Open Road 4: 82).

Another thing that has become a real problem in today's society and caused addiction is gambling which is compared to be as serious and compulsive as being addicted to drugs, alcohol or nicotine (Open Road 4: 86-87, 93). This phenomenon is predicted to become even more common in the near future thanks to online and computer games. The gambling and game addictions can cause personality alterations and social isolation as well as get people into serious financial troubles when every penny is spent on online poker or slot machines (Open Road 4: 87, 93). This again can cause the addict to steal, lie and, if it's a question of a younger person, drop out of school.

Racism is briefly touched upon in Open Road 4 (28) where a young boy of eight years old tells how he was called a nigger by some boy of roughly the same age as he when he was visiting Baltimore. This incident is the only thing that has stuck in his memory of his stay in Baltimore. Even a more gruesome theme is mentioned in Open Road 4 (29) where there is a story of campaign and demonstrations held by young students in America against the Apartheid system in South Africa and for the release of Nelson Mandela who was locked up in prison at the time. In the text the young Barack Obama gives a speech where he urges the crowds to choose their side in the battle that is going on behind the Atlantic Ocean. He emphasises the fact that this struggle is not about being white or black or rich or poor. It is a struggle between right and wrong and fairness and injustice (Open Road 4: 29). The Apartheid system is explained in more detail in Open Road 4 (37) (see section 5.1.8).

Next I will move on to presenting the results of the analysis of the cultural content of the Swedish textbook series *Galleri*. The findings have been similarly listed under the ten categories.

## **5.2 The Swedish textbook series *Galleri***

The analysis of the textbook series *Galleri* also revealed that, as their English equivalents, the textbooks have been based on a variety of authentic texts that have more or less been modified for textbook purposes. The fact that there are only a few made-up stories in the material provided by the textbooks encourages students to rely on the fact that what they read in the textbooks matches the reality and what they learn about the culture of the target language societies can be treated as being true, at least to some extent. Overall the seven textbooks contained information mainly of the Swedish and Finnish Swedish cultures but all the other Nordic countries have also been introduced and the people and some specific places and phenomena that represent these countries, i.e. Norway, Iceland and Denmark, have been taken into consideration. However, since the aim of the present study is to find out about the cultural aspects of the target language societies, the next sub-chapters will introduce the cultural contents of the Swedish and Finnish Swedish societies that can be found in the seven textbooks of the textbook series *Galleri*.

### 5.2.1 Population

All in all, the people depicted in *Galleri* are mostly young people, either teenagers or young adults in their early twenties. However, the textbooks also mention some older people, for example, parents or grandparents of some of the main characters of the texts (see, for instance, Galleri 2: 9, 18-19, 29-30; Galleri 3: 11, 58-60; Galleri 5: 38) but they do not go into much detail in revealing what kind of lives the older generations in the target language societies lead. In Galleri 4 (74) there is one short description of a typical elderly person. According to this description an older person is usually set in his or her ways, has difficulties with technological equipment and never misses a lottery. The thoughts and views of life of elderly people are also touched upon briefly in some texts (see section 5.2.4). The textbooks also introduce in more detail some famous characters from various age-groups who are experts in different fields of arts and sports (see section 5.2.6).

People in Sweden are characterised as generally being eager to please others and wanting to get along with others and that they are not as direct as, for example, Finns (Galleri 3:11). The word *nej* ‘no’ is rarely used in responding to, for instance, an invitation but every Swede knows that the more polite way of responding to a proposition is, for example, *vi får se* ‘we'll see’ and that it can be interpreted as *nej, tack* ‘no thanks’ (Galleri 3: 11). It may be more difficult for men to express emotions or show affection and approval to their children, at least according to a song *Mellan far och son* (Galleri 4: 89). Fathers can be very proud of their children but do not necessarily say it to them directly. Nature and the tranquillity of the country side is important to people, especially to those living outside the more hectic city centres (Galleri 5: 29).

A teenaged Medelsvensson, i.e. an average Swede teen, is most often named either Johan or Sara, depending on the sex of the person and has a sister or a brother, since most Swedish families have two children (Galleri 2: 63). The teenaged Medelsvenssons like pizza, tacos and soft drinks and their favourite free time activities include watching TV approximately two hours per day and when it comes to sports, teenage girls tend to prefer football as boys like ice hockey more (Galleri 2: 63). The average teenagers in Sweden have 7-8 hours of sleep per night and Swedish boys are approximately 180 centimetres long, whereas the girls' average height is approximately 167 centimetres. Another description for teenagers can be found in Galleri 4 (74) where it is stated that non-adults can be a bit reckless, have only a few things to worry about and that they like to party. The most

common last name in Sweden is Johansson. When an average Swede grows up he or she usually has two children, lives in his or her own house and owns a Volvo (Galleri 2: 63). After turning 18, a person can be called an adult in Sweden as in the rest of the Nordic countries. An 18-year-old can vote, take his driver's licence and go to a bar and drink alcohol (Galleri 4: 74). Alongside these privileges come responsibilities such as taking care of yourself, paying bills and possibly a rent. Being a grown-up does not, however, mean a life of boredom and endless responsibilities since a middle-aged person can be as young at heart as a 17-year-old (Galleri 4: 74).

The people in Sweden value education which can be seen, for example, in parents worrying about their children's homework (Galleri 2: 29-30) or the fact that most Swedish teens continue their education after comprehensive school (Galleri 1: 86). In Galleri 4 (19) one person interviewed on his religious beliefs and what he values in life says that one of the most important things in life is education and finding work. However, as it turns out, not everyone is as keen on working for their success as this young man. The popularity of reality TV and the opportunity of becoming famous offered by the different shows for regular people have affected the modern day youth and nowadays more than 40 percent of boys and girls between the ages of 15-24 in Sweden want to become celebrities when they grow up (Galleri 5: 52).

Equality between people, i.e. between races and sexes, is more or less stressed on many occasions in the textbooks (see, for example, Galleri 4: 59-60, 68; Galleri 7:68-69). On the question of having traditionally male and female occupations, the tide has slowly but decidedly been changing over the years and today the idea of a male nurse or a female plumber is not considered odd (Galleri 4: 68). Especially the younger generation of Swedes consider the stereotypical gender roles connected to certain occupations very old fashioned and believe that they are not as strong today as they were a few decades ago. The gender should not stand in the way of the individual when he or she wishes to fulfil his or her dreams and a maximal equality between genders should prevail when it comes to, for instance, how people are treated, how much they are paid and what kind of job opportunities there are available (Galleri 4: 68). Nevertheless, the Swedes tend to raise their children somewhat differently depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl starting with the way they dress boys in green or blue and girls in red or pink (Galleri 4: 68). People also have different anticipations concerning boys and girls, which can be seen, for example,

in schools where education is usually based more on the needs and interests of boys who also tend to get more attention from their teachers as girls stand quietly and obediently in the background (Galleri 4: 70). Despite all this talk about equality, there are still some concerning signs of inequality in Sweden, for example, women are paid less for the same jobs as men especially in high posts (Galleri 4: 70). It is also women who do most of the housework, which may well be a remnant of the way things were in the past when a woman's place was at home (Galleri 4:70). In addition to these statements of inequality between sexes, one might also suggest that there are some obvious class distinctions between people in Sweden, considering that Sweden has a royal family which is mentioned in a few of the textbooks. For example, there is a picture of the royal family in Galleri 2 (26) and a picture of the princesses Victoria and Madeleine in Galleri 3 (13).

There are almost nine million residents in Sweden (Galleri 2: 124). When examining the textbooks it becomes obvious that Sweden has many different minorities that have been formed over the years mostly by immigrants and refugees but also by indigenous people, called Sami, who have occupied the Northern parts of the country for generations (Galleri 3: 124-125). Today the Samis' livelihood depends mostly on tourism but many of them still live on fish or reindeer as well as other common occupations. Immigrants and their children form one tenth of the population in Sweden and most of the foreigners living in Sweden have moved from Finland in the 1960s in the hope of a job (Galleri 4:120-121). The pictures of the people in the textbooks mainly portrait Caucasian people, most of whom are probably Scandinavians with their fair hair. People look happy and healthy and are neatly dressed and their overall appearances radiate contentment and well-being (see, for example, Galleri 3: 24, 86, 110; Galleri 4: 30, 51, 70-72; Galleri 5: 15, 27, 76). There are a few people, who represent a different origin, in the pictures: for instance, in Galleri 4 there are pictures of Arabs (39, 120-121) and black people (5, 19, 71, 96, 100, 102, 112, 117, 121). However, not all of the pictures or the people in them can be linked to Sweden or Scandinavia, because the texts to which these pictures are linked tell about some Swedes or Finns doing volunteer work in African countries, etc. Nevertheless, the fact that Sweden has ethnic minorities and immigrant population is not questioned. For example, in Galleri 4 (16, 120-121) a Swedish girl tells about her encounter with an immigrant boy and the students also get more detailed information about the immigrant sub-cultures that have developed in Sweden, especially in the Rinkeby region near Stockholm where immigrants

have even formed their own version of the Swedish language by adding Arabian sounds and words to it making the language a bit more exotic than standard Swedish. One clear signal of immigrant population is the dish antennas in the balconies in densely populated residential areas because immigrant families usually want to keep up with the news and other programmes of their native countries (Galleri 4: 120). Another sign of the influence that immigrants have had on Swedish culture can be found in the world of food: every Ica super market in Sweden has shelves filled with exotic seasonings and foods and in the street view one can also detect small boutiques run by immigrants selling groceries of their native countries (Galleri 4: 120). The textbook also mentions veiled women and burkas, special clothing used by some Muslim women to cover up their bodies entirely only leaving the area around the eyes visible for others to see. The textbook also mentions that when a Muslim family flees to a non-Muslim country, such as Sweden, it can cause difficulties in the families if girls do not want to cover their hair with a scarf and thus go against their parents' wish (Galleri 4: 121).

The stories of immigrants who have come to Sweden are contradictory and not all of them are positive success stories. There does not seem to occur much racism, and immigrant families have assimilated quite well to Swedish society but, for example, unemployment among immigrants and refugees is a big issue (see, for example Galleri 4: 116, Galleri 6: 101-102). The route from Iraq or Somalia to Sweden or Finland is not, therefore, without its obstacles: one boy tells how he and his family had to wait for an asylum for 18 months and how the Swedish language was very difficult to learn at first (Galleri 4: 116). Sometimes, according to the boy, Swedes tend to think that immigrants just lay about and do nothing, but the boy says it is not their fault because apparently it is still difficult for immigrants to get a job. However, there are some success stories. In Galleri 6 (101-102) a Somali girl tells her story. She came to Finland with her family when she was just a little girl and she has gone to school in Finland and studies now in the university. She says that she is grateful to be able to go to school and wants to use her education to help developing countries in the future. She tells that she has not been a victim of prejudice in Finland and that she has not had any problems in getting jobs because of the way she looks or dresses. The hardest thing has been to live between the two very different cultures and to feel both a Somali and a Finn (Galleri 6: 101-102).

The Finnish Swedes i.e. Finnish citizens who have Swedish as their mother tongue is a category of its own. They are represented in the textbooks on almost as many occasions as the Swedes. Some of the famous Finnish Swedes introduced in the textbooks are Axel Smith (Galleri 2: 95), Mikael Forssell (Galleri 1: 25) and André Wickström (Galleri 3: 20-21). By reading the story of the stand-up comedian André Wickström students learn that Finnish Swedes have a very strong *vi andan* ‘we-spirit’, which means that there is a strong feeling of solidarity and belonging among Finnish Swedes, which, according to Wickström, might have formed over the years because of the fact that Finnish Swedes are a minority in Finland. According to Wickström, Finnish Swedes do not take themselves too seriously, which has to do with the self-irony that is characteristic of Finnish Swedes. In the same text it is stated that Finns usually know very little about Finnish Swedes and their culture and habits and base their opinions on a very stereotypical and clichéd image of rich people sailing around the Finnish archipelagos during summer times and cheering for Sweden in ice hockey (Galleri 3: 21). Wickström also describes Finnish Swedes as being more eager to compromise than Finns who tend to be very direct and blunt when expressing their opinions. The textbook also quotes two news items that have to do with Finnish Swedes and Finns living in Sweden (Galleri 3: 31). The theme of the first news item is happiness. According to some studies, Finnish Swedes live longer and have a happier life than Finns or Swedes. The result of these studies is explained by the strong social links between Finnish Swedes and the fact that they tend to have a lot of free-time activities. Finnish Swedes are active members in different clubs and associations, they sing in choirs and take part in co-operation between schools and homes, etc. (Galleri 3: 31). The other news item tells about how the supply of services available to Finns living in Sweden has become a matter of concern in Sweden and was discussed in a conference in Eskilstuna. Finns are the biggest minority group in Sweden and the majority of them live near Stockholm. For example, of the population of Eskilstuna a whole of 17 percent are of Finnish origin (Galleri 3: 31). It is stated that there are some municipal services available for Finns in their mother tongue, such as day centres for the elderly and pre-school as well as other schools where children can get their education in Finnish. There are also some TV-channels and radio programmes that broadcast in Finnish. According to the news item, the main concern now is to widen these services outside the region of Mälardalen, i.e. the region around Lake

Mälaren. Receiving services in their mother tongue is considered the right of the minority groups (Galleri 3: 31).

### **5.2.2 Social interaction**

The textbooks include many examples of how one interacts in common service situations, for instance, in a restaurant or ticket-office or how one greets a person for the first time or says hello to an old friend (Galleri 1: 136, 138,140). But like in various other countries, many of the daily conversations in Sweden can today take place on line in different chat-rooms or via e-mail, instead of the more traditional face to face discussions or even conversing on the telephone (Galleri 2: 29-30, 32-33; Galleri 5: 9). An example of this current trend is *Lunarstorm*, a web-page where people chat, create their own home-pages, hold a diary or blog and write comments on other people's guest books, etc. (Galleri 2: 32). This site is especially popular among young people since the average age of a person using the site is 18. It is said that an average Swedish teenager spends around 56 minutes per day on *Lunarstorm*. The norms and conventions of chat-room language or conversation are not presented in any detail but the fact that it is easier to be yourself and talk about sensitive issues with people you do not know intimately becomes quite obvious and is probably one of the main reasons why people have been drawn to their computers and logged into the different chat-rooms (Galleri 2: 33). Because your identity remains secret to your conversation partners you can share your deepest secrets without having to fear that the person who you have shared them with tells them to someone else. Another reason explaining the popularity of non-facial conversation is that one can try out different identities on line and it becomes easier to lie.

People in Sweden are not used to addressing each other formally and that is why even perfect strangers are supposed to avoid formal terms of address. Only 15 percent of the population would prefer that, for example, cashiers addressed them by using the plural *ni* 'you' (Galleri 6: 122). However, especially young people today use formal addressing quite often because they want to seem polite and correct and therefore the use of the plural *ni* 'you' is common among young people in service occupations and they address all age groups, i.e. people who are older, same age or even younger, formally.

People fight with each other, especially within families (Galleri 2: 9) or with one's boyfriend or girlfriend (Galleri 4: 39) but it is also important to be able to argue with one's

friends as well without having to worry about losing them (Galleri 2: 36). Showing affection or one's feelings in public is not frowned upon in Sweden like in some African or Asian countries (Galleri 6: 115). It also comes up that it is important to Swedes to keep the conversation going and to avoid silent moments because, unlike in Finland, they are considered to be awkward and this is why Swedes use more small-talk phrases and compliments than Finns (Galleri 6: 115). It is also stressed that these complimentary phrases, such as *Det här måste vi göra igen* ‘we should do this again sometime’, are not meant to be taken literally (Galleri 6: 115).

### **5.2.3 Daily life**

The everyday lives of Swedes and Finns, especially that of the younger generations, resemble one another, as is stated, for example, in Galleri 1 (9): young people go to school, have their free school lunches there and in their spare time they meet their friends or spend time in their hobbies. Swedish teens are described as being fashion-conscious, more so than their Finnish peers, and also the type of music people listen to in Finland is noted to be different than in Sweden (Galleri 1: 9, Galleri 3:11). Fashion and stylish clothes are important to Swedes because it is very important to give a good first impression and it is believed that if a person's clothes are boring it is a sign of a low self-esteem and shyness (Galleri 2: 65-66). Clothes can also be used to give a statement, for example, with a printed T-shirt one can express one's opinions and give a message to others who read the texts or see the pictures (Galleri 2: 65). It is, however, not important for everyone to bear meaningful messages on their clothing since for many people the most important thing is that the clothes they wear are comfortable (Galleri 2: 65-66). Many celebrities have become style-icons in their home country, for example, Darin, the Swedish Idol contestant (Galleri 2: 91). People in Sweden and in all the other Nordic countries take their shoes off when entering someone's home unlike they do in, for example, Britain or Spain or other European countries (Galleri 6: 115).

When it comes to hobbies and free time activities, there are no set favourite interests that most Swedes would share. On the contrary, the textbooks describe a wide variety of possibilities of which each individual can choose from according to his or her own interests. One can decide between reading comics, cooking, different sports, music, camping, etc. and there are no more so called gender-related hobbies. This means that it is not considered

unnatural that, for example, girls are into boxing or boys prefer cooking or dancing to sports (Galleri 1: 43, Galleri 2: 29, Galleri 4: 58-60). It is also reminded that there are many things which people do not traditionally consider hobbies as such but which are, nevertheless, ways in which they spend their free time. Some of these are, for example, keeping a diary, reading for pleasure, watching TV or talking with one's friends (Galleri 1: 121; Galleri 5: 9). The importance of these kinds of free time activities becomes evident when one considers the hectic lifestyle people in today's society tend to have. People are expected to be available and answer their e-mails and cells around the clock, which means that one has to have his cell phone with him at all times (Galleri 5: 9). It is difficult to let go off the constant demands and stress that work, school and even the free time activities create (Galleri 1: 121, 123; Galleri 5: 9). When it comes to watching TV, one woman makes an interesting point in Galleri 5 (9): people have created a new number one topic to discuss over breakfast tables at home or lunch hours at schools or in the offices, i.e. what happened in our favourite TV-shows last night. Commenting on shows and their plots creates a sense of togetherness between the viewers (Galleri 5: 9).

The free-time activities of adults are hardly touched upon, but the future of the elderly and their free-time activities are discussed briefly in Galleri 4 (82). The senior citizens in the near future are going to consist of the people who were young in the 1960s and thus their idea of nostalgic music, for example, is by no means ever green hits but rather rock'n roll. So the attendees of a rock festival in the future may very well consist of as many teenagers as retired people (Galleri 4: 82). It is also stated that this phenomenon creates stress to the communities and the state to develop new activities for this new generation of elderly people. The next generations' pensioners are also believed to be healthier and richer than the current generations' retired people, so they will have more energy and money to spend and probably will be expecting more variety of choices of how to spend their retirement days (Galleri 4: 82).

According to the textbooks, the family life in Sweden is quite similar to family life in any western culture today, i.e. the traditional families with a mother and a father and two to three children is not the absolute standard any more but instead there are many single parent households resulting from divorce or other relationship breakups or blended families with step-mothers, -fathers and -siblings (Galleri 1: 43, Galleri 2: 18-19). In Galleri 2 (18-19) three teenagers tell their stories and how they feel about having two homes after their

parents have broken up and moved to separate households. It is said that over half a million children in Sweden have gone through their parents' divorce and now live with either one of them and see the other parent only on weekends or more infrequently, and that most often it is the mother who has gotten the full custody of the child. The stories in Galleri 2 (18-19) are all quite positive in their tone and none of the children whose parents have gotten a divorce seem to be traumatised in any way. In fact, one of the teens tells that he wants to get married and start a family of his own when he grows up and hopes that he himself never gets a divorce. Another boy says that the only thing that actually troubles him sometimes about having two homes is that he often forgets his football shoes at his Mum's when he is staying the week with his Dad. For some of the storytellers the life they lead, having two homes, one with each parent, is normal for them as they do not remember how their lives were when their parents were still living together. However, if the child was at a much older age when his or her parents broke up, it could result in the child feeling guilty at the beginning for choosing one parent over the other, even if the decision was mostly based on practical reasons, for example, on which one of the parents lives closer to school, etc. (Galleri 2: 19).

As already stated in the previous paragraph, modern Swedish families are very versatile when it comes to their shape and size and partly because of this children and teenagers are raised by more people than just the parents. The grandparents, day care nannies and teachers as well as older siblings take part in upbringing children but, all in all, the general atmosphere is that children are allowed to experience things on their own. They are allowed to make decisions as well as mistakes, from which they are expected to learn, while the parents and other caretakers stand behind them, guiding them and directing them if the child happens to need them (Galleri 2: 9, Galleri 2: 11, Galleri 4: 71).

The theme of friendships and relationships is touched upon in many of the textbooks (see, for example, Galleri 2: 36-37, 39). The showing of one's feelings or being affectionate openly and publicly is quite common in Scandinavia and unlike in some African or Asian countries, it is quite acceptable to hold hands, hug and kiss in public (Galleri 6: 115). Sometimes the closest people you have in life are found in your family and sometimes among your friends (Galleri 2: 36-39). It can also happen that it is difficult to find people who would understand you in your immediate surroundings but nowadays the Internet provides a solution to that problem as well and it is said, for example in Galleri 2

(33, 36), that it is easier to find somebody to talk to on line. However, real friendships still seem to be considered, at least for the most part, to require actual human, face-to-face contact. Things that are considered to be important in friendships and relationships in general are honesty, trust and understanding one another (Galleri 2: 36). Boys and girls can be friends with one another and friendships tend to evolve throughout life so that childhood friends might become less important once people grow older and change through the years (Galleri 2: 36-37).

Romantic relationships between people, especially young people, are addressed, for example, in Galleri 4 (38-39) where youngsters between 16-19 years old answered a street poll in Gothenburg. The aim of the poll was to find out about the love lives of teenagers. It becomes obvious that dating is quite common among teens in Sweden since all but one of the interviewees are either in a relationship or just out of one and the one who is not in a relationship has recently fallen in love for the first time in his life. However, he is quite doubtful about ever having a respond to his feelings and believes that they will only remain friends. One of the respondents of the street-poll is in a long-distance relationship with a French boy whom she has met when she was staying in France as an exchange student and tells that being in a long-distance relationship is quite difficult. One of the relieving factors is that they call one another often. It is also stated that breakups can be hard and that it is not always possible to remain friends afterwards (Galleri 4: 39). One of the interviewees tells that he has dated before but that his current girlfriend is something really special and even though they sometimes argue, mainly because the girl gets easily jealous, the boy is excited about the relationship and says that he could never cheat his girlfriend. At least based on some of the interviews, teenagers in Sweden take their relationships quite seriously, they date only the people they really like and the word “love” is a big deal and is not said if the true meaning behind the word is not felt (Galleri 4: 39). There is also a poem by a Swedish poet Solja Krapu in Galleri 4 (56) that deals with the topic of love and relationships. In the poem the message is pretty clear: love is a powerful and vital feeling and that some people who are meant to be together may not end up together right away but as the poem states life can come in the way for a while but the main thing is that people find each other eventually.

The textbooks reveal quite a lot about schooling in Sweden, especially about upper secondary school education. After comprehensive school most Swedish teenagers choose to

start a three-year long upper secondary school programme, of which there are seventeen different kinds to choose from and most of these national programmes train students to a specific profession (Galleri 1: 86). It has been found that an average teenage girl in Sweden chooses to study the social sciences while an average Swedish teenage boy prefers the natural sciences, both of which have a national programme in Swedish upper secondary schools (Galleri 2: 63). Students have many subjects to choose from but there are eight obligatory subjects for all programmes. Exams and courses are evaluated by a specific four-dimensional scale and there is no matriculation examination in Sweden. Unlike in Finland the students get their diploma when they have successfully earned enough study-points and passed enough courses with good grades (Galleri 1: 86). The school-days in upper secondary school are long and they usually start at eight am., a bell rings to announce the beginning of each lesson, school lunches are free and between the lessons there are breaks (Galleri 1: 63). Most Swedish students are motivated and want to get good grades, although some test teachers' patience by texting, eating candy or chatting with the person sitting next to them during lessons (Galleri 1: 63).

The textbooks also contain information about the traditional upper secondary school festivities in Finnish and Swedish schools, for example, about the party that is organised by older students for first-year students when they start school, the day when third-year students celebrate the fact that they only have one hundred days school left, no to mention the party they hold when they finish school and dress up in costumes and sing songs about their teachers, etc. Other more dignified parties that students go through in upper secondary schools include the graduation day and the day during which second-year students become the oldest students of the school, after third-year students have been "kicked out". During this day second-year students dress up in evening dresses and dance a number of ballroom dances in front of the entire school and their families (Galleri 1: 63, 71). It is not, however, stated clearly whether these festivities, described above, are examples from Swedish or Finnish upper secondary schools. It is, therefore, up to teachers to find out, using other sources, if these traditional school festivities that we here in Finland are used to are also celebrated in Swedish schools. The way the Swedish upper secondary school students graduate is, however, quite different compared with what their Finnish peers go through. In Sweden third-year students get their special student hats already at the end of April, i.e. over a month sooner than their Finnish peers. At the beginning of June third-year students

enjoy an outdoors' champaign breakfast after which they head for the graduation ceremony where they are handed their diplomas and they place their student hats on their heads again. After the festive ceremonies the students run outside to the school yard to meet their families and loved ones who have gathered to salute them with self-made pictures and banners of their young ones as well as presents and flowers and balloons. Before the graduates head down to the city centre to party to the clubs together with their fellow graduates they make rounds about the city with their colourful and decorated trucks, singing and dancing while people cheer to them in the streets (Galleri 1: 86-87).

The higher education in Sweden is very well established and has long and honourable traditions and history (Galleri 7: 27). The oldest universities in Sweden can be found in Uppsala or Lund and they can be traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. There are 61 universities and polytechnics in Sweden today and each year there are over thousand Finnish exchange students applying for these academic institutions (Galleri 7: 27). A typical part of the Swedish student life in universities and other academic circles are the so-called student nations which mean special clubs for groups of students who traditionally come from the same region. However, today the hometowns play a less central role in the choice of a student nation while students get to choose their student nation more freely. Nevertheless, everyone has to belong to at least one nation (Galleri 7: 27). This tradition traces back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the meaning of the nations is to organise activities for students, rent apartments, give out loans and grants and hold a traditional ball. These student nations are run by students themselves (Galleri 7: 27).

As already mentioned in the previous section, Sweden has a multitude of immigrant sub-cultures from a variety of countries. The children of these immigrant families naturally tend to school and it is the right of each pupil to receive schooling in his or her mother tongue (Galleri 4: 121). However, the textbook states that because this type of schooling is usually considered to be an extra-curricular activity, i.e. the teaching takes place after the school day, it is very common that immigrant children do not attend these lessons.

Work and business life are touched upon in Galleri 7 (45) where differences between the Swedish and Finnish companies are laid before the students for them to compare. In comparison to how the Finnish companies are usually led by strong and powerful people who give out orders that the people working under them carry out even if they do not always agree with their bosses, the Swedish companies base their operation

more on co-operation. This means that all the decisions are made together and every move is discussed first, which means that in a Swedish company everybody is involved in the decision making and everyone shares the responsibilities. So, while the Finnish company head gives out orders and decides who does what in the company, Swedes figure out these things together and then decide who takes responsibility over which ever part of the project (Galleri 7: 45). In the Finnish companies it is considered normal to criticise the boss but still do what he or she tells you to do, while the Swedes try to avoid situations where criticism might come up. Also, the heads of the Swedish companies tend to lack the same kind of authority that their Finnish counterparts have. Another important difference between the Swedish and Finnish business world is that the concept of time used in a project is considered quite differently: in Sweden the more time a company puts into something means that the result will be of the highest quality because it has been considered thoroughly, whereas in Finland time is considered the measure of efficiency. This means that the less time spent on a project means that it has been done effectively (Galleri 7: 45).

Swedes like to drink coffee, or to be more precise, they like to take a break from an activity they are involved in, for example, work, studying or shopping and stop for a cup of coffee or some other drink with their friends, family members or colleagues (Galleri 6: 53). These coffee breaks are described as an essential part of Swedish culture and in many workplaces there are legislated coffee breaks for morning and afternoon. Another common feature of the Swedish population, as well as some other Scandinavians, is that people expect punctuality, i.e. that you have to be on time; not to come too early or, even more importantly, not too late (Galleri 6: 115).

According to an interview of Tina Nordström (Galleri 1: 49), a famous cook who has her own cooking-shows on TV, people in Sweden are highly interested in food these days. The food is usually very healthy and diverse, with pasta, rice, potatoes, salads, meats and vegetables, not to mention fruits and berries, and people are used to eating more than once a day (Galleri 1: 56-57). Some typical Swedish foods are, for example, Baltic herring, special sausages that have been made in Falun and different kinds of crisp breads (Galleri 1: 61). The breakfast in Sweden reminds of traditional Scandinavian breakfast, i.e. people usually enjoy a cup of coffee or some other hot drink with different kinds of bread and cold cuts. Yoghurt or processed sour whole milk with muesli or cereal also belongs to the

typical Scandinavian breakfast table as well as boiled eggs, cheese, sausages, porridge, fruit and tomatoes and cucumber (Galleri 1: 59). Swedish cuisine has become more international due to the increase of immigrants from other countries, which can be seen, for example, in the supermarkets where the supply of foods, vegetables and spices has become more diversified (Galleri 4: 120-121). The traditional Swedish food still belongs strongly to special holidays like Christmas or Midsummer that are discussed more closely in section 5.2.5.

#### **5.2.4 View of life**

There are some elements that have to do with superstition and mythologies in the books. In Galleri 2 (45) students are introduced to horoscopes which give an abbreviated description of the characteristics of people of a specific sign of a zodiac. In Galleri 4 (36-37) students find out about the ancient gods that the early Scandinavians, the Vikings who sailed the Northern seas between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, believed in and worshipped. The gods and creatures that affected people's lives were believed to be everywhere. The Vikings believed that the world was a very large tree and that every living creature lived on the branches of this tree. The gods lived in Asgård on the very top of the tree of life. The most powerful god was called Oden and he was the god of wisdom, war and death, hence, he was the god that people prayed before waging war. He had sons who were also gods: the eldest of them was called Tor and he was the god of thunder and he was also the most popular god among people. The different gods of the Vikings have also served as the inspiration for the Swedish names for the days of the week: Oden to *onsdag* 'Wednesday' and Tor to *torsdag* 'Thursday', etc.

In Galleri 4 (9, 16) students are led to consider the concept of happiness and well-being. It is stated (Galleri 4: 9) that people living in the Western world, who have all their basic needs fulfilled, i.e. have food on the table and roof over their heads and live without the constant fear of violence or war, cannot realise how lucky they are and, hence, do not consider themselves happy if they do not have something extra special going on in their lives. People living in a welfare society, such as Sweden or Finland, search for their happiness in the materialistic world: we have to have more and more in order to feel happy. This kind of thinking is questioned in the texts that attempt to urge students to think differently: to remember that the simple but vital things in life are the ones that really count,

things such as family, friends, home, health, security and nutrition, and that they should not be taken for granted (Galleri 4: 9). On the other hand, in the words of Sanna Nielsen (Galleri 7: 19), the fact that people in Scandinavian countries tend to have everything they need means also that there is certain contentedness and security in the air and people know that all the doors are open for them if they only wish to enter them.

Sweden is a Christian country and most Swedes belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church which co-exists with many other beliefs and religions (Sweden.se 2011). However, this fact is not mentioned in any of the textbooks, maybe because in practice Sweden is a very secular society and many people who belong to the church do not attend services or believe in God (Galleri 4: 19; Sweden.se 2011). Moreover, those who believe in God and practice their faith tend to do it privately since religion and everything that is related to it, for example, praying is considered to be a private matter not practised publicly in the streets, for instance (Galleri 6: 115). The question of faith is discussed in more detail in Galleri 4 (19-20) when four young people, two girls and two boys, one of them a Muslim immigrant, tell what they believe in, what their moral beliefs are built upon and what they consider to be the meaning of life. One of the girls depicts herself as not being a devoted believer but that she does think that everything in the world is steered by some invisible force, otherwise everything would be somewhat meaningless. She also states that her family and friends are what make her happy and that the meaning of life is to find happiness and treasure the small things in life that can bring you that wanted happiness (Galleri 4: 19). The oldest of the respondents, a 23-year-old male of Muslim origin, tells that the most important things in life are to be able to live in a safe country and to have a family, education and work. He tells that he believes there to be only one god who has created the world and everything in it. According to Muslim traditions he prays five times a day, does not drink alcohol or eat pork and tries not to argue with anyone. The meaning of life, according to him, is to live a good live so that you can have a good life after death (Galleri 4: 19). The youngest of the four interviewees answers that, in his opinion, the most important thing is to treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. He also says that he only believes what he can see and does not consider what the Bible says about heaven and hell to be true. The meaning of life, according to him, is not to make something of yourself but rather to live as good a life as you can and have a positive influence on others (Galleri 4: 20). The fourth person interviewed about her religious and moral views tells that nature is the most important thing

for her and that she thinks that people are not any better or more important than any other living creatures in this world that we live in. She is an active member in organisations that are concerned over the well-being of animals and she does not eat meat. The meaning of life, according to her, is to constantly develop one's moral views and ideas and to honour and respect life and all its wonders (Galleri 4: 20).

There are not so many occasions when the thoughts and views of the elderly are directly presented in the textbooks. However, there is a poem of an 82-year-old Nandine Strain that can be found in Galleri 4 (83) that gives students a glimpse of the way some older people may think about their lives and what wishes and hopes they have on the eve of their lives. The poem tells what the woman thinks of her life and how she would live it if she had a chance to do it all over again. The poem reflects a hint of remorse over the missed chances life has offered her, missed mainly because she has been too afraid to try and because she has taken everything in her life too seriously. She should have made more mistakes, taken more risks, danced more and eaten more ice cream. She should not have invented problems over small issues but rather let the small things be and enjoy life more. It seems that people, at least in the olden days, planned things ahead carefully, had dreams but then they just slipped away as the days, spent planning, went by (Galleri 4: 83).

### **5.2.5 Society and national life**

Sweden is presented as a well-functioning welfare state that, like its neighbouring countries, takes good care of its citizens by providing free healthcare and schooling to all and guaranteeing specific social benefits, for example, student and family allowances (Galleri 7:68-69). The negative sides of these allowances are mentioned in Galleri 7 (68-69) where, for example, the fact comes up that people are more passive because they do not have to try as hard to bring money to the table or to take as big a responsibility for their own lives as people in some other countries do. These kinds of benefits provided by the welfare state also cost money for the residents in the form of taxes (Galleri 7: 68-69). It is also stated in Galleri 7 (68-69) that people have faith in the authorities and that the crime rate is low. Students also find out about the monarchy in Sweden and how the Swedish royal family is linked to the other royal families in Scandinavia (Galleri 2: 26). Otherwise, neither politics nor the way the country is run are mentioned in any of the textbooks besides the fact that all

the Nordic countries are democratic societies (Galleri 7: 68-69). It is, however, mentioned that Sweden is a member state in the EU (Galleri 2: 124).

The different festivities are introduced in Galleri 2 (26-27). Even though Christmas is a religious festivity it has become quite secular celebration in Sweden over the years. It is considered the biggest family-festivity of the year and it is a time when people gather together with their families to eat and open Christmas presents around the Christmas tree (Galleri 2: 27). One of the highlights of Swedish Christmas happens at three o'clock when everyone in Sweden turns on their TV to watch Disney's Christmas episode *Kalle Anka och hans vänner* 'From all of us to all of you'. The traditional Christmas menu in Sweden contains ham, Baltic herring, meatballs, lutefisk and rice pudding in which some lucky diner will find an almond that has been hidden in the pudding. It is believed that whoever gets the almond will get married the following year. Another holiday that traditionally draws people together to celebrate is Midsummer (Galleri 2: 27). One of Sweden's national symbols, the maypole, is closely linked to this festivity. Each Swedish village has their own maypole that is put up at Midsummer and decorated with flowers, branches and ribbons. People gather around them to play games and dance and sing Midsummer night's songs. Another festivity that is usually celebrated together with the whole village or neighbourhood is May Day (Galleri 2: 26). Each village has their own enormous bonfire around which the whole neighbourhood gathers to sing songs and meet friends. At the scene there are usually various stands where they organise lotteries and sell sausages, sweets and all possible kitsch. Students tend to gather together to have outdoor picnics in the big university cities like Uppsala and Lund. Swedes also have their own special crab feasts which take place in the early autumn. These crab feasts are also popular among Finnish Swedish population in Finland and in these feasts people usually wear funny hats and adults drink schnapps and sing schnapps songs that are considered a part of nearly any Swedish festivities (Galleri 2: 27).

Another traditional Swedish festivity is called Luciadagen which is celebrated every year on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December. The day is celebrated in all schools and day care centres where each class or group selects their own Lucia among girls (Galleri 3: 39). Traditionally the girl has long blond hair. Lucia is dressed in white with a red ribbon on her waist and has a candle crown placed on her head. All the other girls in the class are *tärnor* who follow their Lucia in a parade. The boys are called *stjärngossar* i.e. so called 'star boys' who also

take part in the parade carrying stars. They sing different Christmas songs as well as a special Lucia-song. In addition to all schools and day care centres choosing their own Lucias and celebrating the day in schools etc. the tradition is that the whole of Sweden also gets its own Lucia every year. The nations Lucia is crowned in Uppsala's cathedral (Galleri 3: 39).

One special characteristic that the textbooks reveal about Swedes and their culture is that people like the word *lagom* ‘appropriate’ or ‘fitting’ and they tend to adjust their lives accordingly, i.e. one should not do or be or take either too much or too little but just the right amount. The best case scenario in life is when everything is just right (Galleri 6: 53). People living in smaller Swedish towns are described as friendly whereas people in bigger cities, and especially people living in specific parts, for example, of Stockholm, are depicted as busy and somewhat egoistic turning up their noses to others (Galleri 2: 95). Many townspeople may have stereotypes of people living in the countryside, for example, that they wear nothing but training overalls and that there is nothing to do there, but this usually turns out not to be true (Galleri 5: 29).

The media, i.e. TV, newspapers and Internet, are described as a part of the daily lives of Swedes. Some newspapers and tabloids are mentioned by name, for example, Hufvudstadsbladet which is the biggest Finnish Swedish newspaper, Aftonbladet and Expressen which are the two most popular tabloids in Sweden and Svenska Dagbladet and Dagens Nyheter which are the two biggest newspapers in Sweden (Galleri 5: 74-75). Moreover, there are about 300 free newspapers that come out regularly that compete against these newspapers (Galleri 5: 75). Since the 1990s the admiration of celebrities and the interest in them has grown thanks to the popularity of tabloids and the different reality TV shows that deliver new celebrities all the time. These TV shows have been criticised, especially by the older generation, for how people are pushed over their limits and humiliated on purpose and how the unscrupulous pursuit of one's own advantage is considered more important than the consideration of the feelings of others. Unlike their parents or grandparents, the younger generation considers these kinds of shows to be more of a game and therefore they do not take them so seriously (Galleri 5: 43-44, 52). Reality TV tends to test how far people are willing to go or what they are ready to do for money as well as what viewers are willing to watch (Galleri 5: 43-44). The tabloids are also criticised for their tendency to exaggerate things and go around the truth as well as their lack of

concern over morality, ethics or people's right to privacy simply because they want to sell more and more papers (Galleri 5: 72-73).

A part of every society is its image, the picture it gives to people living outside it. A part of this image is built by the view we get by walking the streets of any Swedish town or a city and by looking around us and observing specific characteristics of this view. It might be the people around us or it could be something specific about the atmosphere of the place, but as the textbooks state, these things are very hard to single out when trying to point out what is typical of Swedes or Sweden (Galleri 2: 92-93). However, there are some things that one can point one's finger to and these things are called trademarks and establishments. In a typical Swedish street view one can always notice these establishments: GB-glassgubben, which means the mascot for the Swedish ice cream-company, ICA supermarkets, which in many smaller towns have taken postal affairs under their wings, Pressbyrån, which means a small convenience store that has almost everything one could possibly need, pizza-places that are almost always run by an immigrant and have such low prizes that it is almost cheaper to eat out than to make a home-cooked meal, Sibyllas which are the predecessors of Swedish street-kitchens selling hot-dogs and French fries, Åhléns department stores which belong to each bigger city in Sweden, as well as, ATMs which always seem to gather long queues of people, which might suggest that there are too few of them (Galleri 2: 92-93). In Galleri 2 (95) the readers find out that the general atmosphere in the capital of Sweden, Stockholm, is much more international than that of Finland's capital Helsinki, at least to a Finnish Swede who has moved from Helsinki to Stockholm to work there. This is considered to be a direct and logical result of the fact that there are more cultures present in Sweden due to higher amounts of immigrant population. Otherwise, living in Stockholm resembles quite a lot of living in Helsinki except the fact that although it is common in both cities that people living in apartment buildings have the advantage of a joint laundry room in the building, it is not common for apartment buildings in Sweden to have saunas whereas it is very common in Finland (Galleri 2: 95).

The traditional national symbols such as the Swedish flag occur more often than once on the pages of the textbooks in various forms, for instance, painted in people's faces etc. (for example, Galleri 1: 5, 41; Galleri 2: 5, 124; Galleri 4: 5; Galleri 7: 5). Other national symbols that appear on the pages of the textbooks include, for example, the wooden horse painted with bright colours called *Dalahäst* (Galleri 1: 14), the may pole

(Galleri 2: 27) and Lucia (Galleri 3: 39). It is said that different national symbols such as the Swedish flag or a picture of the royal family are important to Swedes, especially to those who have moved abroad: they want to have these small objects around to remind them of their home and roots (Galleri 3: 11).

### **5.2.6 Arts and sports**

The vast majority of people introduced in more detail in the textbooks are representatives of either Swedish or Finnish Swedish celebrities who have something to do with sports or arts, i.e. music, films, literature or visual arts. Galleri 1 introduces such important persons in the sporting field as Mikael Forssell, a Finnish Swedish football player who tells how his childhood hobby, in which the whole family has been involved, turning into a profession (Galleri 1: 25) and Carolina Klüft, a Swedish long jumper who has been taught that it is not about winning but about doing one's best (Galleri 1: 40-41). In Galleri 2 the march of the athletes continues when Finnish Swedish and Swedish sports heroes such as Emilia and Erica Nyström from Finland and Daniel and Henrik Sedin from Sweden are introduced to the readers, both twins successful in their own sports; the Nyström sisters in beach-volley and the Sedin brothers in ice hockey (Galleri 2: 38-39, 42). An interview of Eva Wahlström, a Finnish Swedish boxer, can be found in Galleri 4 (59). In her interview Eva tells how she came to choose such a masculine sport and emphasizes the importance of letting everyone choose their own paths in life and that gender should not be considered a hindrance when planning one's future. In Galleri 1 (41) students find out about the special sporting event called Finnkampen that Swedes and Finns hold every year and where they compete against each other in track and field. The event is organised every other year in Sweden and every other year in Finland since 1925.

Over the decades Swedish novelists have succeeded in writing books that have been best-sellers all around the world. The textbooks present them in various information columns that usually reveal the writers' background information as well as their most known work and more often than once students get a chance to read passages of these world-renowned writers' works. In Galleri 1 (72-74) students get to know the fairytale queen of Sweden, Astrid Lindgren, who used many extracts of her own happy childhood in creating her fascinating stories of Emil of Lönneberga and Pippi Longstocking, among others. Other Swedish writers who have published some well known classics are presented

in Galleri 6 (69), namely, Johan August Strindberg and Selma Lagerlöf. Strindberg is described as being the most famous Swedish writer of all times and that he had a great influence on the development of the modern theatre (Galleri 6: 69). Students also find out that Strindberg had very problematic relationships with women and was married three times. Selma Lagerlöf is most famous for her book *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* and she was the first woman ever to be a member of Svenska Akademien, an organisation whose purpose is to protect and promote Swedish literature and language, as well as the first woman ever to win the Nobel prize in literature (Galleri 6: 69). In Galleri 2 (28-30, 52-53) students are presented with more modern writers, such as Sara Kadefors who writes books, plays and manuscripts for TV-series and films and whose penmanship students get a glimpse of in the form of a passage of the book *Sandor slash Ida*, as well as Anders Jacobsson and Sören Olsson who are famous for their Bert-series which tells about a young Swedish boy and how he himself experiences all changes, both emotional and physical, that come along with growing up. Students are presented with a passage of the book *Berts bekymmer* in Galleri 2 (53). In Galleri 4 (106-108) students get to know a Swedish author Henning Mankell who is most famous for his detective stories. It becomes obvious that people in the Nordic countries not only love to read gruesome detective stories but that there are also many writers in the Nordic countries who are capable of writing horrible murder stories that sell thousands of copies also outside Scandinavia (Galleri 6: 55-56). It is supposed that one of the reasons why Scandinavians enjoy detective stories so much is that in reality the Nordic countries are very peaceful and well organised countries with relatively low crime rates and this is why people feel the need to write and read about corrupted police forces and politicians committing terrible acts of violence (Galleri 6: 55). It is also stated that these detective stories, which quite often become international best sellers, are important tools in shaping the image of Scandinavia (Galleri 6: 55). One of the Swedish crime novelists, Stieg Larsson, is introduced in Galleri 6 (56) as one of the most successful writers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His *Millennium* trilogy was published first after his death in 2004 and it became an immediate success and the books have already been turned into films in Sweden (Galleri 6: 56). His books tell a story of an abused young woman who has lost all faith in the justice system and takes matters in her own hands. Another famous Swedish crime novelist presented in Galleri 6 (67) is Liza Marklund, introduced as one of the most successful Swedish detective writers, who has also had her books published

overseas. She has also dedicated her life for helping women and children in distress. One of her best known books, *Gömda*, tells the story of a battered woman who flees the country for her abusive ex-husband (Galleri 6: 67). In Galleri 6 (67) students also receive information about Jonas Gardell who was brought up in an upper-middle class family, went to upper secondary school and decided to become an artist. He opened an art gallery which did not reach the public's interest and so he decided to write instead. Today Gardell is very much loved by his Swedish audience and he lives together with his spouse Mark Levengood, a Finnish Swedish journalist and writer, and their two children (Galleri 6: 67). The only Finnish Swedish novelist presented to readres can be found in Galleri 3 (60-62) where students receive information about Tove Jansson whose most famous characters are undoubtedly the Moomins (a short cartoon clip, Galleri 3: 66).

It becomes obvious that Swedes love their music, and in Galleri 6 (53) it is stated that Swedes love to sing and listen to songs, especially schlager songs. As was stated before in section 5.2.3, the textbooks give an impression that Swedes and Finns have a differentiating taste in music, i.e. at least in the field of schlager music, which in Finland tends to have a quite melancholic tone (Galleri 1: 9, Galleri 3: 11). TV-programmes which have something to do with music always attract the greatest number of viewers in Sweden. Galleri 1 (97) introduces Sweden's biggets annual music festival Hultsfred that is arranged in Southern Sweden and in Galleri 6 (53) students find out about two things related to music that most Swedes are crazy about: *allsång* which means community singing, i.e. people get together to sing songs and *melodifestivalen* which is the song competition where Sweden decides which song will compete in that year's Eurovision song contest. The TV-show *Allsång på Skansen* is one of the most popular shows in Sweden and people can take part in it by either going to Skansen or buying the songbook beforehand and singing the songs in their own home, on the sofa while watching the programme on TV. In Sweden music is also present in shops, restaurants and bars where different kinds of rhythms are supposed to influence people's moods in different ways, for example, to get people to buy things or relax themselves in good company with tasty food and beverages, etc. (Galleri 2: 75). The textbooks also contain information about many artists who have made their way into people's hearts through the power of music. Many of today's most popular artists have reached the public eye with the help of various talent or song contests that are aired on TV, for example, the Swedish pop icon Darin who became a celebrity when he took part in the

Swedish Idol in 2004 (Galleri 2: 91). The textbooks present both internationally famous stars as well as some singers who have only made it in Sweden and perhaps in its neighbouring countries, for example, a famous rap-artist and actor Markoolio who was born in Finland but moved to Sweden and started his career there (Galleri 1: 93-94). More world-renowned musicians introduced in the textbooks are bands such as The Cardigans (Galleri 1: 96) and Abba (Galleri 1: 99-100). There are also pictures of famous Swedish artists in Galleri 1 (108), for example, Carola Häggqvist, Europe, Roxette and Tomas Ledin, but these artists are not introduced with any additional information, although, some artists' songs have been introduced along the courses, for example, a song by Tomas Ledin in Galleri 2 (11), a song by Lisa Nilsson in Galleri 2 (58), a song by Jill Johnson in Galleri 2 (106) and a song by Kometfabriken in Galleri 3 (27).

The film industry in Sweden is a very strong and successful business (Galleri 6: 51). Throughout the years various directors, actors and movies have won different international awards (Galleri 6: 51). The most famous Swedish director Ingmar Bergman became internationally known in the 1950s and he has been known to have had a great influence on other directors around the world (Galleri 6: 51-52). Other directors mentioned in Galleri 6 (51) were Jan Troell who started his career as a photographer, Lasse Hallström who has made a career mainly in Hollywood directing such big films as *Gilbert Grape* and *Chocolat*, and Roy Andersson who has had both ups and downs in his career and had to take a 20-year break in directing. The younger generation's directors such as Lukas Moodysson and Josef Fares and their most famous works are also mentioned (Galleri 6: 51). In Galleri 6 (51) students are also presented with pictures of famous Swedish actors and actresses, for example, Helena Bergström, Stellan Skarsgård and Lena Olin.

Other famous Swedes who were mentioned include the Hollywood starlet Greta Garbo, actress Ingrid Bergman, Raoul Wallenberg, the diplomat, Dag Hammarskjöld who was the general secretary of the UN, Ingvar Kamrad, the founder of IKEA and the scientist Carl von Linné (Galleri 6:52).

### **5.2.7 Technology and economic life**

Information technology and the Internet are very much present in the everyday lives of Swedes. For example, family members and friends send e-mails to one another (e.g. Galleri 2: 18), people become friends and find others who share their interests and ideas on line

(e.g. Galleri 2: 29-30). In Galleri 2 (29-30) there is a passage of a book, *Sander slash Ida*, that tells about two young people who get to know each other through the Internet and find comfort in each other. The boy in the story has no real friends around whom he could call and he has a very busy father who drowns himself in his work and does not really understand his son. There seems to be this gap between generations when it comes to the use of the Internet and social media: for the older generation it is unheard of to have friends who you do not talk to face-to-face and who you only meet in the cyber space, whereas it is quite normal for the youth of today to communicate freely and have strong attachments with people they have not actually met. It is also stated in the text that the family has only one computer which is shared by the father and the son for their individual purposes: for work-related businesses as well as study purposes and communication (Galleri 2: 29-30). Not all are in favour of the Internet, as can be detected in Galleri 5 (18) where a writer of an article accuses the Internet for stealing our free time and damaging our relationships. According to the writer, the real life passes you by if you spend your days by the computer.

Every person in Sweden seems to have a cell phone these days, and people expect to be able to get in touch with you whatever the hour of the day, which can be quite stressful (Galleri 5: 9). Other nuisances introduced by the growth in number of cell phones are bad reception areas and calls that you get from unwanted callers, for example, from telephone operators or people selling you things over the phone (Galleri 5: 19). Phones can also be important for keeping up long-distance relationships (Galleri 4: 39). Another important electronic device that can be found in almost every household in Sweden is TV (Galleri 4: 120, Galleri 5: 9). TV acts as the deliverer of both news and entertainment and can therefore be considered a free time activity (Galleri 4: 120, Galleri 5: 9, 55-56).

The question of commuting and traffic is discussed on several occasions in the textbooks. People in all Nordic countries are described as being polite road users and to show consideration to others on the road is held in high regard (Galleri 5: 40-41). For example, if someone wants to pass you on the road, you are expected to give way to this person who in return will "thank you" by flashing his turn signal. Drivers are supposed to respect the pedestrians above all in the traffic and give them the opportunity to cross streets at zebra crossings (Galleri 5: 40-41). One should also respect traffic lights at all times. It is stated that having a car and a driver's licence is a given in Sweden and in a way a driver's licence is a symbol of freedom (Galleri 2: 63, Galleri 5: 38). However, it is expensive to go

to a driving school, and that is why many Swedish youngsters get their driving instruction from either of the parents and thus save a lot of money (Galleri 5: 38). The public transport system contains trains (Galleri 2: 134) buses and underground (Galleri 2: 131) which evidently work well since no evidence to the contrary is presented. However, some people prefer cycling to taking a bus in bigger cities, for example, in Uppsala because riding a bike not only helps to keep you fit but also saves you money since you do not have to buy tickets. It is also stated that cycling can be a faster way to get from place to place in city centres because it is easier to move around on a bike in traffic jams not to mention that it is more ecological (Galleri 5: 27). The transnational transport system comes up in some of the textbooks which mention families where the parents live in different countries, for example, a father who has moved to France because of his job and how he travels to see his children every other week (Galleri 2: 19) or a secondary school student who has moved from Sweden to Finland to live with her grandmother and to study and who frequently visits her family back in Sweden by boat across the Gulf of Bothnia (Galleri 2: 9). These examples imply two things: firstly, that people can afford commuting between countries and, secondly, that the traffic communication functions and makes all this possible.

### **5.2.8 History**

Students receive information about some of the basic facts of the history of Sweden. For example, it is stated in Galleri 6 (52-53) that Sweden was a significant power in Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and that Sweden reigned over Finland until 1809 and that the country has not been at war since 1814, which means that it stayed neutral in both of the World Wars. Students also find out about some individual events or incidents that have happened in the past. For example, the sinking of the vessel Vasa on her maiden voyage just as she had set sail in 1628 and how she was lifted from the depths 300 years later (Galleri 6: 52).

Historical characters are hardly mentioned in the textbooks. However, one famous character with historic influence mentioned in Galleri 5 (124) is Alfred Nobel who invented the dynamite 1863 and succeeded in getting a patent for his invention in 1867. In his testament he gave his fortune to be used in a foundation named after him. The foundation gives out several established prizes each year on the day Nobel died, i.e. on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December and one of the most famous and distinguished of these prizes is the peace prize (Galleri 5: 124).

### 5.2.9 Geography

The textbooks give information of a number of Swedish cities and provinces throughout the courses. The first time students eye the map of Sweden found in this textbook series is in Galleri 1 (15) where they find a drawing of Scandinavia and each country has their capitals marked down. In this map of Sweden there are also a few other big cities marked on the map, for example, Gothenburg, the second largest city in Sweden (Galleri 4: 38), and Malmö as well as the largest island Gotland and the biggest lake Vättern. In Northern Sweden students can also see drawings of *fjäll*, small mountains, and in the centre of the country they have drawn a king, which tells students that Sweden is a kingdom (Galeri 1: 15). Beside the capital Stockholm, which is the biggest city in Sweden with more than 800 000 residents (Galleri 6: 52), there are also some other cities or places that the textbooks take a closer look at. For example, Uppsala which is the fourth largest city in the country, and it is said to be historically significant because there one can find the oldest university of the whole of Scandinavia as well as a 16<sup>th</sup> century castle and the biggest cathedral that can be found in the Nordic countries (Galleri 6: 53). In Galleri 2 (103) readers are introduced with a few additional facts about Stockholm alongside of a selection of pictures of its famous sights. These facts include the year in which the city was founded, which is 1252, as well as the fact that the city is built on 14 islands and capes. Students also find out that there are 117 districts within the city and that the city's highest building, 158 meters, is Kista Science Tower. It is also stated in Galleri 3 (31) that Stockholm is situated close to Lake Mälaren which is the third biggest lake in Sweden. In Northern Sweden one can find the biggest ski centre on the north side of the Alps called Åre where there is snow on the ground from Christmas to Easter (Galleri 6: 53).

The textbooks also contain information about some famous Swedish sights, landmarks and symbols, for example, in Galleri 2 (102-103) students are introduced with pictures of the famous sights of Stockholm. Among these are pictures of the Old Town, the Royal palace, the famous sports-arena Globen and the country's biggest amusement park Gröna Lund as well as a few museums and squares.

In Galleri 5 (114-115) the various Nordic and international markings indicating if groceries and daily goods are organic, ecological or fair trade products are presented to

students. Otherwise, the textbooks do not put emphasis on protecting nature, even though, it is mentioned that nature is important to Swedes (Galleri 5: 29).

### **5.2.10 Culturally unaccepted phenomena**

The textbooks present Sweden as a peaceful and well-functioning welfare society where people with different cultural backgrounds co-exist in harmony. The only mentioning of stereotypes among different cultural groupings can be found in Galleri 3 (21) where André Wickström states that Finns tend to have a very stereotypical and clichéd image of Finnish Swedes (see 5.2.1). Poverty does not seem an issue and it is stated that the state takes care of its less fortunate and lower income households by supporting them with benefits (Galleri 7: 68-69). People living in Nordic countries even leave their native countries to go and help the needy by doing volunteer work, for example, in Africa (Galleri 4: 97). However, there are also examples of those who, despite the benefits, barely make it with their bills and rent and still managing to put food on the table (Galleri 5: 87). These persons describe themselves as living below the poverty line since they are not able to buy all the things they want, but have to stick with the daily necessities. The model provided by a consumer society challenges especially those who have children: parents have to work long hours to earn enough money so that they are able to buy things to their children in order to make up the fact that the child has to be alone or in kindergarten while the parents work (Galleri 5: 87).

Terrorist attacks and natural catastrophes have not occurred on Swedish soil but are mentioned in Galleri 5 (55-56) as the attacks on the twin towers in New York and the disastrous tsunami of 2004 are taken as examples of shocking news items. Both of these events brought up a lot of discussion and people had a need to help those who had lost their homes or loved ones. One news reporter for Huvudstadsbladet tells how she arrived to Thailand after the tsunami and how deeply moved she was by what she saw and the stories she heard the locals tell. She also states that the event made her realise how lucky she is and that she should not complain about the little things (Galleri 5: 55-56).

However, there are still some illegal and immoral things that happen in Sweden that are presented in the textbooks, even though in Galleri 7 (68-69) it is stated that Scandinavia has quite low crime rates. For instance, in Galleri 5 (27) there is a mentioning of bikes getting stolen a lot in Uppsala where biking from place to place is very common. One

suggested solution to the problem would be to buy yourself a cheap bike so that if it gets stolen it will not annoy as much. More grim illegalities are presented in Galleri 4 (104) where there is a story of a girl who studies law at the Stockholm University and at the same time does volunteer work at a local prison. She works as a support person for both prisoners who have either killed someone or been condemned for violence and their families. All of the criminals she deals with are young, which has made the job even harder, because it is difficult to understand why a young person has ruined his life by committing such a heinous crime (Galleri 4: 104). Murder also comes up in Galleri 5 (55-56) when the most memorable new items are discussed and the murder of Sweden's foreign affairs minister Anna Lindh is taken as an example. The brutal attack happened in a department store in Stockholm in 2003 in the middle of the day and the incident touched many because Anna Lidh was a young woman, with small children and a very popular politician among Swedes (Galleri 5: 55-56). Anna Lindh is not the only politician who has been murdered in Sweden. In 1986 the prime minister Olof Palme was shot in the middle of Stockholm (Galleri 5: 62). The textbook also mentions other crimes committed in Sweden, some of which are armed robberies (Galleri 5: 64). Also among the more negative facts about Sweden is that the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco has become more common among young people in Sweden (Galleri 6: 32). Girls smoke cigarettes whereas boys tend to use snuff.

### **5.3 Comparison of the two textbook series**

I will now compare the results of the two textbook series *Open Road* and *Galleri* presented above in order to make observations about the similarities and differences in the cultural contents of the textbooks. This will help us to see which of the cultural categories are emphasized in *Open Road* and in *Galleri* and which categories receive less attention in these textbook series. The comparisons will be presented by each cultural category at a time following the same order as in the previous sections.

When it comes to the cultural category of *population*, both of the textbook series concentrate on describing the lives of youngsters and young adults and hardly mention the elderly or children except, for example, when describing how the ageing population sets certain demands for the future and how society has to prepare for that. One of the differences, however, is that there are more middle-aged people telling stories about their childhood or teen-age years in *Open Road* than in *Galleri* whose stories are almost

inclusively from the present day. This means that with the help of *Open Road* students learn more about how things were in the past than they do by reading *Galleri*. The globalising world and the increase in travelling as well as immigration become evident in both textbook series and students find out that both Sweden as well as the English speaking countries, mainly Britain and the US, are becoming more and more multicultural. Thus it is difficult to define, for example, what a "typical" Swede or American looks like today. The increasing multiculturalism also has its effect on many aspects of society which have been clearly and informatively brought up in *Galleri* but left out in *Open Road*. The different English speaking nationalities as well as the different minority groups in Britain and the US receive very little attention since neither Scots, Welsh, Latinos nor American Indians are mentioned in the textbooks while Sweden's minority groups the Sami and the largest minority groups living in Sweden, the Finns, as well as the Swedish speaking minority in Finland, the Finnish Swedes, are introduced and students receive information about how all of these minority groups live in Sweden and in Finland and how their existence has been taken into consideration in Swedish and Finnish society. The fact that Britain, and to some extent also the US, still has some kind of a class system, even though the distinctions between classes are more subtle nowadays, becomes apparent in *Open Road* on several occasions. It also becomes evident that people in the English speaking cultures have aspirations for something more than what they are born to. Both textbook series mention the Royal families of the target culture societies, i.e. the British and the Swedish royal families. The difference is, however, that in *Galleri* the Swedish royal family is presented in a positive tone with pictures of smiling princesses whereas in *Open Road* the British royal family is presented with more criticism. This reflects well on the general opinion that prevails in the countries in question since today Britons tend to be more anti-monarch than Swedes. In both Swedish and English speaking societies people seem to be under constant stress of demands and obligations, such as school, work, families and sometimes even one's free time activities can create the feeling of stress in one's life. The fact that education is considered important becomes evident in both textbook series. Otherwise, students receive much more detailed information about how the people living in the target culture societies are in general, i.e. how they think and feel and act in different social situations from *Galleri* than from *Open Road*. All in all, the cultural category *population* is much more emphasized in *Galleri* than in *Open Road*.

When it comes to information about how to conduct in different social and communicative situations both textbook series give many illustrative examples, for example, of common service situations or of how one conducts in telephone. In the cultural category *social interaction*, *Open Road* does, however, give more detailed information and emphasizes how important it is to speak politely in the English speaking cultures, which comes up on several occasions in different textbooks, whereas, in *Galleri* students find out that Swedes, on the other hand, are not very formal even in the company of those whom they do not know personally. *Open Road* places also emphasis on the fact that there are two kinds of English, formal and informal English, and that it is very important to know when to use them for there is a risk of offending the person you are conversing with in case your language use is too informal. Both textbook series also give information about how important it is to be an active and polite listener in a conversation. In *Galleri* this fact comes up in the form of a list of words and phrases with which one can indicate that one is listening. A similar list can also be found in *Open Road* but, in addition, there are many additional occasions where being an active listener comes up, from which one can interpret that knowing how to act in different social situations with a native English speaker is considered an important skill and part of culture.

The cultural category *daily life* is the one that received most room in both textbook series. The theme education was discussed in depth in both *Open Road* and *Galleri*, though, the educational systems of the different English speaking countries are more thoroughly examined. All in all, it is again *Galleri* that gives more variable and detailed information of, for example, how people spend their free time or how they dress and what they like to eat or drink. Other important and widely discussed topics in both textbooks are family life and free time activities. Work life is touched upon in both textbooks but quite briefly. Neither of the textbook series deals with any special ceremonies that typically belong to people's lives, for example, weddings or funerals.

The fourth cultural category was called *view of life* and this was one of the categories where the two textbook series varied the most since *Open Road* nearly left out the entire category, only scratching the surface of religion or other beliefs in a couple of pictures or citations of some prayers, completely ignoring any ancient mythologies etc., while *Galleri* takes a more closer look on both the current situation as well as telling about the gods of the times before. The Swedish textbook series also takes this category beyond

the discussion of religion and what people believe in. It also tells students what people living in Sweden regard as valuable and meaningful. This is something that has been left out in *Open Road*.

When observing the fifth cultural category *society and national identity* one can see that both textbook series deal with such topics as the media and the welfare state, meaning, for example, how the state takes care of its citizens and how people in general feel about the different benefits and supports. *Open Road* then focuses more on describing the living environment of, mainly, Americans, whereas *Galleri* sheds some light on the different festivities and how people in Sweden tend to celebrate those as well as gives information about the typical objects, images and establishments typical to a Swedish town and its street view. Neither of the textbook series gives any relative information about healthcare or law and order, since the latter is only mentioned in the context of people doing crimes and serving time for that, which can be interpreted so that there is some sort of a justice system in both Swedish and English speaking cultures. Another topic that hardly comes up in either of the textbooks series is politics. In *Galleri* the occasions where any heads of state or politicians are mentioned are only a handful. A few pictures of the members of the Royal family and some news items of politicians who have been murdered in Sweden and that is that. *Open Road* gives a little more information about the political systems of both Britain and the US since the parliamentary systems and how MPs and members of the senate are selected are explained in a small information column in one of the textbooks. But the actual power relationships between, for example, the President of the United States and the Senate or the Royal family and the parliament in Sweden are not explained at all and thus, the students do not actually get a clear picture of who runs these countries and who bears the greatest responsibility for, for example, internal affairs or who runs the foreign politics, etc.

The cultural category *arts and sports* is well presented in both textbook series. Both *Open Road* and *Galleri* give examples of famous athletes, musicians, actors and writers in the respective countries. In both textbooks there are extracts of novels, short stories and poems as well as song lyrics, cartoon scripts and, in *Open Road*, some famous paintings. However, as an art form, the one that gets the least space in both textbook series, is visual arts which is only mentioned in both textbook series once and quite briefly and the focus is on cartoons rather than paintings. *Open Road* seems to put more emphasis on films and actors, containing interviews and extracts of biographies of famous movie stars, while

*Galleri* emphasizes the world of music more. In *Galleri* the theme music does not concentrate merely on telling about famous musicians or bands but there are also facts about what music means to Swedes in general and how music relates to their everyday lives, for instance, in the form of music festivals, community singing and TV-shows that involve music and song. The fact that it is common that people become famous singers through TV talent-shows today is mentioned in both textbook series. Famous writers throughout the history of Swedish literature are mentioned in *Galleri* as well as the representatives of the most current trend in the world of literature, the crime novelists who have put Swedish literature on the bestseller lists all over the world. In *Open Road*, apart from the occasional information columns of some American or British writers, the theme literature is not emphasized a lot. When it comes to sports, both textbook series present it as a popular past time activity in its various forms and mention some big sporting events. In addition, students can find interviews of different Swedish and Finnish Swedish athletes in *Galleri*, while *Open Road* includes no such stories. In *Open Road* there is a list of different cultural events that take place annually in Britain. The English textbook series also gives some detailed information about fashion which can be considered as an art form. Both textbook series lack in information about architecture, apart from some pictures of famous sights in Stockholm or Sydney, for example.

When it comes to the cultural category *technology and economic life* both textbook series have two dominant topics: traffic and technology. Both *Galleri* and *Open Road* discuss the state of the public transport systems in the respective countries (in *Open Road* most of the examples given come from the US or Britain) and one can detect both similarities and differences. In both Sweden and the US it is very common that people have their own car and having a driver's license is almost a given. The biggest difference between these two countries seems to be the state of the public transport system which seems to be working well in Sweden and, in contrast, getting a lot of critique in the US. So in Sweden the reason why people own their own cars is not because the train and bus traffic, etc. were not functioning properly but because a car is symbol of freedom, whereas in the US you need a car to get by in your everyday affairs, like travelling to work, taking the kids to school and going to the supermarket. Another combining factor concerning traffic are traffic jams that occur in the big cities of both Sweden, the US and Britain. The way people behave in traffic is again described as being slightly different in the US than in Sweden: in

America people drive very close to the vehicle ahead which causes masses of accidents each year while in Sweden the drivers are expected to show respect to other road users, give room for those who wish to pass and, most of all, watch out for pedestrians. Another major theme inside this cultural category in both textbook series was technology. Cell phones and computers, not to mention the internet, are a very essential part of the everyday lives of most native English and Swedish speakers. The fact that everything in society is run by computers and that we are dependent upon electricity is brought up in *Open Road*. Television is also mentioned in both textbook series as being a very common and popular source of entertainment and that almost every household today has a TV. Topics such as energy sources and economy are left out in *Galleri* but briefly mentioned and discussed in *Open Road*.

When it comes to actual overviews or more accurate reports of significant historical happenings of either the English speaking cultures or Sweden, both of the textbook series have chosen to include very few accounts of such between their covers. This means that both textbook series lack information in the cultural category of *history*, *Galleri* even more so than *Open Road*. In *Open Road* the main focus relies on the gruesome history of South Africa and its apartheid regime. In addition to that there are a few accounts of other grim historic facts, such as wars, epidemics and racial confrontations. A few persons of historic influence are mentioned in *Open Road*, for example, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Barac Obama. In *Galleri* the historic facts are narrowed down to a minimum, stating only that Finland once belonged to Sweden and that Sweden did not take part in either of the World Wars. The story of Alfred Nobel contains some historically important facts, but otherwise *Galleri* chooses not to include any other Swedes of historic influence in its texts.

The facts about the ninth cultural category *geography* are limited to facts about some major cities. However, in *Galleri* students receive much more geographical facts than in *Open Road*. The biggest lakes, the highest peaks and the largest cities of Sweden are presented as well as the amount of people living in Sweden, the name of the capital and some of the most famous sights in the biggest cities of Sweden. There are pictures of the most famous sights and national symbols in both textbook series, but the difference between *Galleri* and *Open Road* is that the pictures and the maps are nearly the only source of information about geography provided by *Open Road*.

The final cultural category *culturally unaccepted phenomena* received more space in *Open Road* than it did in *Galleri*, though both textbook series do take the more sinister aspects of the target language cultures into account. As stated *Open Road* takes up many different cultural aspects that are somehow connected to the darker side of human beings, such as criminal behaviour, addictions or racism as well as discusses the problematic issues that have wider consequences, such as pollution and war. *Galleri*, on the other hand, concentrates merely on crime and substance abuse, painting Sweden as a harmonious society where people co-exist without major conflicts or catastrophes.

## 6 DISCUSSION

In this chapter the results of the previous chapter will be more thoroughly discussed. The observations made of the two textbooks series' cultural content will also be reflected on by taking into consideration the guidelines of LOPS which was one of the starting points for the present study. The results of the present study will also be compared to the results of the previous studies conducted in the field that were reviewed in sections 2.1.2, 2.2.2 and 3.2.1. I will also consider whether or not the cultural content of *Open Road* and *Galleri* help students in raising their cultural awareness, i.e. in becoming more sensitive and empathetic toward other cultures and whether it helps students in developing their intercultural competence, i.e. in becoming aware of the cultural differences that may lie between one's own and the foreign culture.

### 6.1 General observations

In the face of the results reported above one would have to say that the Swedish textbook series *Galleri* has more variety and depth in its cultural contents than the English textbook series *Open Road*. This observation is based on the fact that there are more examples, facts and detailed and variable information gathered under almost each cultural category, except for the final category, in *Galleri* than there are in *Open Road*. Another general observation is that the two textbooks series clearly emphasize different cultural categories. For example, *Open Road* places high emphasis on the category *daily life*, especially on education, whereas it gives almost no information whatsoever about the category *view of life*. The

English textbook series also emphasizes categories *culturally unaccepted phenomena* and *arts and sports*. The rest six categories receive almost the similar amount of attention but the general feeling is that the cultural information placed under these categories is somewhat fragmented and students only get to see the surface of these cultural elements. *Galleri*, on the other hand, emphasizes the following cultural categories: *population, daily life, society and national life* as well as *arts and sports*. The cultural categories *history, geography* and *culturally unaccepted phenomena* received the least room in the Swedish textbook series.

As mentioned in section 2.1.1 the term *culture* is in the present study considered to include all the traditional aspects of culture such as arts, history and geography but more importantly the everyday life, habits, beliefs and values of people living in the target culture area are seen as key aspects of culture. Bearing this in mind it can be stated that the Swedish textbook series gives a much wider picture of the first five categories that describe these aspects of culture that have to do with the everyday lives of people and their thoughts and feelings and such. Especially, when it comes to the category *population* the English textbook series has a lot to improve when compared to its Swedish counterpart since in *Galleri* the target culture population is described in much more detail. The emotions, feelings and opinions of Swedes and Finnish Swedes are more thoroughly depicted than the views and values of the English speaking population. Here we also come across with one of the issues that was discussed in section 2.1.1, namely, that of the more complex and fragmented status of the English language and its target cultures. It became evident that, as shown in the previous studies conducted in the field (see section 3.2.1), the two most dominant cultural varieties that received most space in the English textbook series were British and American. On the third place in the race of the English target cultures came Australian culture and the rest of the target language cultures that were mentioned, i.e. Indian, South African or Canadian, had such a minor role in *Open Road* that students do not stand a chance in receiving any deeper understanding of these cultures with the help of the textbooks. In a way it is understandable that the textbook writers chose not to make the cultural diversity of the English language societies available for their readers, since there is always the possibility of creating a cultural mess of all the different variants and ending up with the students learning very little about everything instead of concentrating on the two major cultural variants and getting to know and understand them better. However, I do

think that by excluding all the so called smaller varieties, if one dares to call, for example, India 'a small variety', the textbook writers have deprived the students from the true comprehension of the cultural richness of the language that they are learning and thus neglecting the goal of teaching students to tolerate and appreciate cultural differences and raising their cultural competence. Now it is again up to the teacher or students themselves to find out more about these cultures by using other sources than textbooks.

What could be considered quite strange in a way is that the fourth cultural category *view of life* received a lot more room in *Galleri* than it did in *Open Road*, even though Sweden could almost be considered an atheist country today and, for example, Americans traditionally combine religion to almost all aspects of their society. The fact that *Galleri* took up religion and view of life on several occasions without actually mentioning any specific gods or religions as such was, in my opinion, a better solution than to leave out the entire category since it leaves students with the idea that religion is in no way part of the lives of, for example, Britons, Americans or Indians, which, in reality, is not the case.

One of the reasons for why *Galleri* seems to have more clearer and illustrative examples of different aspects of Swedish culture could be that the texts in *Galleri* are mainly based on interviews than fiction and readers do not have to infer or read between the lines as much as is the case with some of the texts in *Open Road*. In *Open Road* there are many points where it might be advisable for the teacher to explain some facts further or to point out certain things relating to culture and cultural differences since they may not be evident or clear to all students. By including some diversity in the text types in *Open Road*, for example, by adding more interviews of locals etc. the textbook series might have succeeded better in providing a deeper understanding of what people living in the target cultures think and how they really feel about different aspects of life. Also, taking on different subjects and themes when dealing with different cultures, for example, in the case of South Africa, where all the examples had something to do with apartheid, would have been advisable.

Another major difference between the two textbook series is the tone of the textbooks in how they describe different cultural elements. *Open Road* takes up many cultural elements, for example, the state of the public transport system or the status of the royal family, with a bit of critique and there are many occasions where some cultural aspects are described as being something negative according to the native speakers of

English. For example, the fact that people loath the idea that they would have to be financially dependable of the state and they would rather go to work but there is none. Also, the final cultural category which contained all the aspects people consider negative about their culture and society had far more hits in *Open Road* than it did in *Galleri*.

In both textbook series most of the people introduced in the textbooks are relatively young. This is understandable in a way, when one considers both the intended readership of the textbooks as well as the guidelines of LOPS which emphasizes the lives of young people in the themes it suggests for language courses. The textbook writers may have had in mind that students who are themselves between sixteen to nineteen years old are more likely to be interested in and motivated by stories of people who are of the same age as they are and perhaps in the same point in their lives. In this way it is easier to identify with the characters in the textbooks and make comparisons between the students' own lives and the lives of the characters in the textbooks and thus stimulate the growth of intercultural learning and understanding.

As for the guidelines set by LOPS for the teaching of English and Swedish in upper secondary schools, one of the starting points for the present study, it can be said that both textbook series have been designed according to the guidelines and the themes suggested in LOPS have been included with a somewhat different emphasis. For example, *Galleri* does not discuss work life, media or environmental issues in such depth whereas *Open Road* left very little room for economic life, free time and relationships. Another important goal listed for both subjects in LOPS (2003: 84, 100-101) says that special attention should be paid to the differences in communication between L1 and L2 and to the cultural factors that explain these differences and that students should get an opportunity to learn how to communicate by the norms that are peculiar to the target language and its culture. This goal was taken into account in both textbook series quite well and students received many opportunities to test different phrases suitable for different social situations. In *Open Road* students also found out about the fact that in English speaking cultures it is highly important to be formal when talking to strangers and that being an active listener is considered polite and important in discussions.

It was interesting to see how in both languages the textbook designed for the course that, according to LOPS (2003), is supposed to emphasize culture (*Open Road* 5 and *Galleri* 6) focus on the more traditional forms of culture, the so called high culture, i.e. music, film

industry, literature and visual arts. This in part reinforces the old-fashioned way of seeing culture as containing only these traditional high culture elements, leaving out the essential aspects of culture, i.e. how people live their lives in the target culture societies, how they act in everyday situations, how they dress, how they feel and what they believe in. This information is scattered around in the other textbooks and it is more subtle and it is possible that students do not pick out these cultural elements if teachers do not point them out or at least draw students' attention to them. The reason why arts and sports remains such a dominant cultural category might also have something to do with the fact that it is a category that is easy for textbook writers to compose as well as for students to grasp. It is easier to write about famous actors and athletes than to describe, for example, how the important historical events have affected the way the nation and the people are today, especially when considering that the space that each theme and topic gets in a textbook is quite limited. The fact of the matter is that the information about the celebrities or about the famous films, novels, etc. is more easily available for textbook writers than the everyday life of, say, the average Australian, South African or Finnish Swede. It would require a lot more field work and interviews, etc. for textbook writers to be able to describe the everyday lives of the natives, and this is not always possible. The downside with writing about celebrities is, however, that the information can quite quickly become outdated when something new and important happens in these people's lives, not to mention the fact that the people appearing in the spotlight or on the front page of the tabloids change as the years pass by, which means that someone interviewed for a new language textbook might not be a hot topic in a few years' time.

## **6.2 How has the cultural content of the textbooks changed over the years?**

By comparing the results of the present study to the earlier studies done in the field one can detect certain differences and development in the cultural content of the textbooks but at the same time one can also state that some things have remained the same. Before I present some of the most obvious differences as well as similarities between the results of the present study and some previous studies, I must point out that, since some of the previous studies presented in the earlier sections were conducted by using textbooks that are designed for different educational levels or by using different cultural categories, making comparisons is not all that simple.

The most striking difference is that both *Open Road* and *Galleri* have given much more space to cultural elements that have to do with the everyday lives of the people living in the target culture countries instead of merely concentrating on the arts or geographical facts, as, for example, was the case in the textbooks studied by Hälikkä or Hanttu (see section 3.2.1). Both of these previous studies were conducted over 20 years ago which means that during these past two decades the cultural contents of foreign language textbooks has developed into the direction guided by the foreign language teaching and learning theories, giving room for what Rissager called *the micro level* of cultural content (see section 2.1.2). Another major difference, especially when it comes to the English textbooks, is that neither *Open Road* nor *Galleri* concentrate on presenting the target language cultures from the point of view of a tourist. In fact, that was not the case at all. In the previous studies, for example, the ones conducted by Aho and Pohjanen, the textbooks contained almost exclusively cultural information that was designed for encouraging students to travel to the target language countries and teach them how to survive in different tourist-related situations (see section 3.2.1).

The results of the analysis of the cultural content of *Open Road* and *Galleri* showed that despite the development that has occurred there are still some elements that have stayed the same. For example, in the case of the English textbook series, the fact that the two main varieties British and American still dominate the pages of the textbooks leaving very little room for the other target language cultures has not changed over the years. This was also detected by Aho as well as by Seppänen who interviewed Finnish teachers of English about the teaching of culture (see section 2.2.2). Also the fact that art in its different forms is still strongly present in both English and Swedish textbook series, although it has given room for other cultural elements, is a shared factor between the most recent textbooks and their equivalents from twenty years ago. The way the textbooks have been organised, i.e. different texts under different themes and chapters, has not changed and thus there are still cultural elements presented in various statistics, information columns etc.

### **6.3 Do the textbooks help students to raise their cultural awareness and develop their intercultural competence?**

When teaching students intercultural competence skills as well as when raising their cultural awareness it is important that there is room for students to reflect on what they

learn and find out about the foreign culture and make comparisons with their own culture (see sections 2.2 and 2.3). It was also stated in LOPS (2003) that one of the major goals in both foreign language education as well as in L2 education is that students become aware of the differences between their native culture and the culture of the people whose language they are learning (see section 2.2.1). Bearing these facts in mind it can be stated that, since both textbook series mainly present characters who represent the same age group as the students studying these textbooks, both *Open Road* and *Galleri* aim to make it easier for them to identify with the textbook characters and their situations in life, so that comparing the cultural differences might thus become easier as well. Many of the themes discussed in the textbooks are very closely related to the everyday lives of young adults as well, for example, themes such as education, combining work and school, free time activities and relationships. This facilitates the development of intercultural competence as well since it is easier for students to see the similarities and differences between their native culture and the foreign culture in situations that are familiar to themselves, whereas it can be more difficult to notice what combines or separates two cultures in issues such as politics or economy which might be slightly less familiar to students aged between 16-19.

When one reflects on the fact which textbook series gave students more opportunities for raising their cultural awareness, one would have to say that the Swedish textbook series came in the first place. In *Galleri* there are several occasions where students are directly and clearly guided to notice some of the differences between Swedish and Finnish culture, for example, by comparing the business life and the way companies are run in these two countries. In some of the interviews and other texts people tell how in Finland some things are done like this and then again in Sweden the same thing is done like that, etc. Students are also tested on their knowledge of Finnish Swedes and their culture in *Galleri 3* (29) by a multiple choice test. There were no similar passages or tests in *Open Road* and thus students need to be able to make connections between their native culture and the English speaking cultures on their own unless teachers take the time and steer their students' attention to these cultural differences.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Conducting the present study turned out to be time-consuming but highly interesting. The fact that I was teaching Swedish at an upper secondary school at the same time presented me with the challenge of combining work and writing my study but it also gave me an insight of the way the material could be used in practise since I was using *Galleri* in my lessons and saw how students responded to the textbooks and what they thought of the cultural elements and how much they understood etc. As in all studies where there is only one pair of eyes going through the data and only one mind making the decisions and drawing the line between what should and should not be included in the analysis, there is always room for errors or misinterpretations: something is given too much space or something that should have been taken into account is left out. The analysis of the contents of the textbooks has been done as objectively and systematically as possible, however, work of this sort is always subjective, and thus, if someone else was to examine the same material, the results might be somewhat different. It might be interesting to see the same material analysed by using a different categorisation, maybe even the kind that would allow a quantitative approach, i.e. that the different cultural elements might be counted and then cross-examined to see how many hits there were on the category view of life, for example, compared to, say, history or geography. This kind of research might be best done as a team work or by narrowing down the material to a couple of books instead of the whole textbook series.

One of the most positive results of the study was that, despite some of the restrictions in the cultural contents of the textbooks, both textbook series had given a much more central role to people and their everyday lives than what has been seen in textbooks before, according to previous research. The more traditional way of seeing culture merely as arts and sports and celebrities that have sprung up to people's awareness through these fields has gradually given way to the common man and his views of the world, although both textbook series do include several information columns and interviews of famous athletes and writers, etc. The other step forward from the results found in earlier studies is that the cultural knowledge provided by both *Open Road* and *Galleri* is not merely about teaching students how to survive as tourists in the target culture societies but that there is a genuine attempt to provide information about the natives and their way of living. The goal

of developing students' intercultural competence could more clearly be seen in *Galleri* than in *Open Road*, and this goal and how to include it in the textbooks continues to represent a challenge for the future textbook writers.

The present study clearly showed that even though the guidelines set by LOPS are taken into consideration while designing the materials for language learning and teaching, they are still guidelines. This means that many of the decisions of what is considered important and what is left out are up to textbook writers. This again results in the fact that even though the guidelines for culture teaching were quite similar for both English and Swedish, the outcome, i.e. the actual cultural content of the two textbook series varied a lot.

All in all, the Swedish textbook series *Galleri* showed more progress and had followed the latest trends in language teaching more compared to its English counterpart. *Galleri* also provided students with more detailed information about the target culture population and their everyday life and offered chances for them to raise their cultural awareness. The cultural content in *Open Road*, by contrast, was more fragmented and surface-level. Moreover, it became clear that the writers of *Open Road* had not yet dared to take the leap and leave more room for other target culture varieties since the dominant role in the textbooks was again given to British and especially American culture.

As for future research topics I would encourage researchers to continue with the analysis of the cultural elements found in foreign language teaching and learning materials in order to find out which cultural aspects are emphasized and which are left to an inferior status. It would also be interesting to look into the reciprocal relationship of the different cultural areas, i.e. how much space is given to, for example, Finnish Swedish culture and how much to Swedish culture in *Galleri* and, similarly, how much information is given about the different English speaking cultures in *Open Road*. Furthermore I would urge researchers to look into the ways in which textbooks try to help students raise their cultural awareness and improve and develop their intercultural competence. It might be interesting to see, for example, listings or categorisations of different types of methods or tasks used in textbooks for the purpose of developing students' cultural competence.

Textbooks will most certainly change in the future. It may even be that the traditional textbooks with pages and covers will someday become history and give room for electronic databanks or e-books. However, one thing is certain: we will continue to need some sort of teaching and learning material in language learning and teaching. I would

therefore urge the textbook writers and material planners of the future to take on the challenge of providing students with materials that will increase their positive curiosity to other cultures and thus help them in their future lives by giving them actual, truthful, real-life accounts of real people living in the target language cultures so that they will be able to travel and work abroad and meet foreigners with sensitivity and courage.

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