

**STATE VISIT AS A FORM OF
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

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<p>Tiivistelmä-Abstract</p> <p>State visit is an official meeting between the heads of states representing their countries. State visit is an expression of the diplomatic relations between states and it differs from other visits in its ceremonial nature. The aim of this thesis is to look at how state visits to Finland are arranged and conducted with an emphasis on international public relations and intercultural communication. This qualitative study is based on sixteen semi-structured face to face interviews with professionals that have been participating in state visits to Finland. The programmes of 10 state visits to Finland are used as examples to illustrate the structure, programme and ceremonies of state visits.</p> <p>The findings of this study implicate that the purpose of state visit is to provide a forum of interelite communication, to promote a favourable image, to influence the public's and elite's opinions and to promote one's ideals, culture, current goals and policies. State visits consist of many official and unofficial communication fora and the language used in various communication events is selected according to the degree of formality of the event. Symbols, such as flags and decorations, the concept of time, body movements and the tone of voice have meaning as non-verbal signs and codes in state visit processes. Results also indicate that organisers realise the importance of understanding other cultures, although the rules of protocol are sometimes used to conceal perceptions and negative stereotypes from the visitor. Organisers are professionals and state visits are prepared thoroughly. The rules of protocol bear many national characteristics. It is important that protocol is not considered as fixed rules but can be separately agreed prior to the state visit. Participants of state visits use media and public interest, continuity of good relations and pragmatic matters as measurements for the success of the visit. State visit is a valuable form of continuous communication between the heads of states. It seems as though the objectives of state visits are understood and appreciated by the industrial and political elite but not by the public and that organisers may not have fully segmented their interest groups and perhaps more strategic planning of public relations is needed.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

State visit is a meeting between two countries represented by their heads of state. The purpose of state visits is to maintain and strengthen existing international relations, or to develop new ones between the states. State visit can be seen as a form of expression of the diplomatic relations between two states. Heads of state or governments meet on different occasions. Working visits, official visits, summits and conferences are held regularly and can be called up in a short notice. State visit is a formal occasion and it is planned months or even years in advance. State visit consists of official ceremonies, rules and rituals. Welcoming, farewell, and wreath-laying ceremonies, state banquets, hoisting flags and the exchange of gifts represent some of the universal characteristics of state visits. There can be several reasons for the organisation of a state visit. Following the elections, the new president usually visits the neighbours. A membership of an alliance may motivate visiting other member-countries. Trade relations and economic pressures for establishing new markets may give reasons for the head of state to travel. Moreover, the head of state may want to show to the electorate that he is discharging his duties properly. A holding of a state visit can contribute to these ends.

Meetings between heads of state are good examples of international public relations activity on the state level (Kunczik, 1997). State visits have mainly been considered as part of foreign policy-making and international diplomacy. State visits have become a platform for the promotion of national interest in the visiting country and for portraying a desired image. The fulfilment of the objectives of state visits can be measured for instance by the media and public interest, by contracts signed as well as by continuity of meetings between the two nations. The measurement can be difficult because a state visit does not necessarily have any concrete objectives but is considered rather regarded as a gesture of courtesy manifesting merely the good relations between the nations involved.

State visit incorporates several communication fora where the guests and the hosts meet both officially and unofficially. Many languages are spoken and the interactions are governed by the rules of protocol. The protocol and the rules of etiquette are based on commonly, often internationally, accepted forms of manners and gestures of politeness. Even though the protocol lays a framework and provides guidelines for the state visit, every visit is planned

discretely. State visit is a reflection of the cultural identity and its aim is to present one's country as favourably as possible to the guests. Brislin & Yoshida (1994:51) state that rituals create a sense of order and thus provide comfort and a sense of predictability for the people.

In this study, I attempt to view state visits as a form of intercultural communication and as a tool for international public relations between states. Hence, I have formulated the following research questions:

What is the purpose of a state visit?

Which cultural aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication are given significance in the state visit process?

What are the tools used to avoid miscommunication when conducting a state visit?

How is the success of the state visit measured or evaluated?

The research is divided in such a manner that it begins with the elaboration of the aspects of diplomatic activity and state visits as a form of diplomatic interaction. State visit is a topic not very familiar to many people. In fact, during the research, I often heard state visits to be referred to as "an occult science / salatiede." It is primarily due to the prevalent misconceptions that the nature of state visits is explained in the beginning. I will continue with an examination of the various concepts of public relations and intercultural communication which have been considered here to be significant in the state visit process when comparing it with the gathered data. The amassing of data for the study was carried out by conducting sixteen semi-structured face-to-face interviews with people who are presently, or have been in the past, closely involved in organising or attending state visits. The collected material was divided into thematic units, categorised and content-analysed in order to provide an analysis that corresponded to the research plan and answered the research questions.

2 ASPECTS OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY

Communication activity between states has always provided a fundamental framework in the maintenance and development of relations. From the earliest forms of diplomatic activity after the emergence of nation-states in the 12th century, the first diplomatic arms of representation of their sovereigns were established in major capitals in Italy and in the 14th century in England, France, Spain, and Germany. During the 16th and the 17th centuries diplomatic work had become a widely established practice. One of the principal tasks in the contemporary international relations was for the ambassadors to dispute over the precedence between the ambassadors and seating orders. The quarrels were often settled with duels and entire peace congresses were delayed for months due to the disputes over ceremonial issues (Anderson, 1993: 59-65). The order of precedence was considered to symbolise the prestige and status of the country and the power of the Sovereign. During the 18th century the problems between states mostly pertained to political, military and dynastic issues (Holsti, 1992:136-137). Ambassadors, their secretaries and technical personnel were obliged to maintain good relations and to inform home about what was going on. Appointments to a diplomatic post were mainly based on family influence rather than professionalism (Anderson, 1993:126-127). In 1815, the Congress of Vienna laid the foundation for modern diplomatic practice by ordaining a diplomatic ranking system to guide the ranking at ceremonials and political functions. The ranks included ambassadors and Papal nuncios, envoy's extraordinaires and ministers' plenipotentiaries, ministers resident and *chargés d'affaires*. Countries were organised on the French alphabetical order but the question of the precedence of diplomats of equal rank was not completely reconciled until 1818 in the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. It was there agreed that the precedence of diplomats of equal rank was no longer to be determined by the supposed power of the diplomat's government but rather by the seniority of the official (Holsti 1992:137). The principles of modern diplomatic intercourse, privileges and immunities are based on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations agreed on 1961. Finland ratified the Convention in 1970.

Today, communication activities are complex and multifaceted. Ambassadors administrate various issues and are expected to be professionals in economics, labour relations, political analysis, various propaganda techniques and culture. Due to the great advances made by modern communication and transportation technology, the heads of state meet regularly and personally to deal with the issues of concern instead of leaving

the work solely to the ambassadors. Holsti (1992:136-137) argues that the personal meetings between the heads of state are slightly problematic since many presidents and prime ministers are not trained to be diplomats. Consequently, they allow "*constitutionally responsible officials to make decisions on the basis of their broad authority and to bypass bureaucratic resistance or impediments to easy communication between governments.*" Manheim (1994:3-5) depicts four distinctive aspects of diplomatic activity: 1. government-to-government, 2. diplomat-to-diplomat, 3. people-to-people, and 4. government-to-people contacts. Government-to-government relations represent the most traditional practice of diplomacy such as formal messages between states. Diplomat-to-diplomat practices are more personal in nature and emphasise the importance of interpersonal relationships among diplomats, such as routine meetings between the heads of state at various summits and conferences. People-to-people contact is often considered as public diplomacy and can be characterised by various cultural programmes such as student exchange, media initiatives and so forth, anything to profile, explain and defend country's policies among foreign audiences. Government-to-people contact is also a type of public diplomacy. The contact incorporates all those government activities of communication that address a foreign audience in order to develop their understanding of their nation's ideas, institutions, culture, national goals and current policies. Public diplomacy has become to characterise those activities that were once described as propaganda (see also Barston, 1997:22-23).

2.1 Public Diplomacy

Signitzer and Coombs (1992:139-140) point out that the field of traditional diplomacy is shifting more toward public diplomacy. The actors of public diplomacy no longer consist of only the profession of diplomats but include various individuals, groups and institutions who are engaged in those international and intercultural communication activities which influence the political relationships between two or more countries. The authors point out a distinction between *tough-minded* and *tender-minded* schools of public diplomacy. The tough-minded school of public diplomacy uses persuasion and propaganda to influence the attitudes of foreign audience whereas the tender-minded school argues that the information and culturally orientated programs must bypass the goals of foreign policy and emphasise long-term national objectives. The goal is to reach a climate of mutual understanding. These schools are not good as a individual practices but should be synthesised.

Signitzer and Coombs (1992:140) make furthermore a distinction between political information and cultural communication. *Political information* comprises data administered by the political section of foreign ministries and embassies whereas the *cultural communication* is usually provided by the cultural section of respective institutes. Two types of cultural communication are identified. *Cultural diplomacy* is a formal sense of cultural agreements that

aims to present a favourable image of one's nation. *Cultural relations* emphasise information exchange in order to present "an honest picture of each country rather than a beautified one" without a specific advantage in mind.

Manheim (1994:7) divides intergovernmental interactions into political communication and strategic public diplomacy. As the political communication stresses the governments' use of information as a political resource, the strategic public diplomacy bears emphasis on more sophisticated knowledge of human nature, i.e. attitudes and preference structures, cultural tendencies, media-use patterns as well as knowledge of relevant organisational behaviour. Manheim (1994: 61) considers state visits as a good example of public diplomacy practices between states.

2.2 State Visits as a Form of Diplomatic Practice

State visit can be seen as the most distinguished form of expressing the good diplomatic relations between two states. Since the President of the Republic of Finland Mr. Martti Ahtisaari's term of Presidency in 1994, he has hosted some twenty (20) different visits to Finland by August 1998. Ten (10) of these visits have been state visits (Estonia, Netherlands, China, Belgium, Sweden, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Poland, and Argentina). President Martti Ahtisaari has made twenty-two state visits abroad by September 1998 (Sweden, Russia, Estonia, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Hungary, Namibia, Latvia, Iceland, Great Britain, Lithuania, Kuwait, China, Ireland, the Czech Republic, India, Italy, Poland, the Republic of South Africa, Ukraine, Greece) (<http://www.tpk.fi>).

Heads of state meet on different occasions. Working visits, official visits, summits and conferences are held regularly and can be called up in a short notice and usually entail a specific reason for their organisation. Sometimes heads of state wish to have a meeting in some neutral venue rather than their own countries. Finland has hosted quite a number of summits, the latest being the summit meeting in March 1997 between the President of the United States Mr. Bill Clinton and the President of the Russian Federation Mr. Boris Yeltsin (<http://www.tpk.fi>).

The foreign head of state can visit Finland while on a stop-over at the airport on the way to some other country. The President of the Republic of France Mr. Jacques Chirac met with President Ahtisaari for half an hour at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport in May 1998. Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh met with President and Mrs. Ahtisaari for couple of hours in May 1994, when the Queen was returning from Russia by ship and continued from Finland by plane to the United Kingdom. President Ahtisaari invited the Queen and Prince Philip for tea at his official

residence in Mäntyniemi, Helsinki, and the Queen personally presented an invitation to President Ahtisaari to make a state visit to the U.K..

Heads of state can visit Finland by participating in some cultural events in order to give the visit a more private nature. The Federal President of Germany Mr. and Mrs. Roman Herzog visited Finland in July 1995. They attended the Savonlinna Opera Festival together with President and Mrs. Ahtisaari and visited some sights in Turku, Naantali and Helsinki. A head of state can pay a private visit to Finland, to lecture at a university, to open an exhibition, to attend a sports event and so forth. It is customary, though, that during a private visit, the head of state makes a courtesy call to the President of Finland.

2.2.1 Conducting a State Visit to Finland

Some countries are more popular destinations to make state visits than others. Invitations for state visits can be sent out many years in advance and are renewed after a period of time. State visit can be seen as symbolic of the importance of the visitor. Governments can lobby for a state visit with the highest levels of ceremonies to take place rather than organising an official visit or a working visit without the glamour and prestige of the ceremonies. When the decision of arranging a state visit is made and the date has been agreed on, the actual planning of the programme begins. A state visit to Finland is administrated by the Office of the President of the Republic of Finland. All the programmes of the President of the Republic of Finland and the President's spouse are planned in cabinet sessions. Aides-de-Camps of the President led by the First Aid-de-Camp carry the responsibility of implementing the state visits. The Office of the President is assisted by the Protocol Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, security, Press Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, embassies and so forth.

Before the state visit, the advance-team of the visitors' country comes to Finland and the programme is negotiated in detail. The administrators of state visits usually go through every detail of the visit: timetable, composition of the party, titles, language, security, transportation, accommodation, division of costs, meals, exchanging decorations, press relations and publicity, gifts and any special requests that are considered important. Detailed instructions are drawn for every part of the programme. These instructions are called 'askelmerkit' an athletics term 'stepmarks' and comprise every activity in minutes.

2.2.2 State Visit Programme

State visit to Finland lasts usually two to three days and the programme of the state visit is constructed around the official ceremonies. In Finland, the official ceremonies consist of welcoming and farewell ceremonies, wreath-laying ceremonies at Hietaniemi cemetery, official discussions, and a state banquet at the Presidential Palace. The basic structure of a state visit

programme to Finland is divided so that separate programmes are drawn for the head of state, the spouse and for the official suite (ministers, high government officials etc.).

State visit starts usually before noon with the welcoming ceremonies in front of the Presidential Palace followed by the tête-à-tête discussions of some fifteen to thirty minutes between the heads of state and negotiations between the delegations. During the tête-à-tête discussions between the high guest and the President of the Republic, the spouses have an opportunity have their own discussions. After the negotiations a press conference may be held. All parties attend to the luncheon whereupon the visiting head of state lays wreaths at the Hietaniemi War Memorial and Marshal Mannerheim's Tomb. In the afternoon, the heads of state, the spouses, and the delegations pay separate visits to different locations of interest such as the House of Parliament, the City Hall, museums, the Opera House, universities, factories, and company headquarters. The first day ends with the formal banquet at the Presidential Palace. The second day is replete with visits, luncheons, meetings, business symposiums, lectures and perhaps press conferences and it is concluded with the evening programme hosted by the high guest. The visiting guest may also have some private programme during the state visit. This may consist of engagements with Finnish friends and acquaintances or just relaxation or meetings with the expatriates living in Finland. It is intended that the state visit extends outside of the capital. On the final day the state visit party travels to other cities and the visit ends there with the farewell ceremonies.

The host assigns a group of people at the disposal of the high guests. This group is called the Finnish Service d'Honneur and consists the Finnish Ambassador of the guest's country and some prominent members of Finnish industry, academics or representatives of the military that are versed or have interest in the country in question. Usually the Minister for Foreign Affairs follows the Head of State to the state visit. A Chief Counsellor, Counsellor or First Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland is appointed to serve at the minister's disposal. The Finnish Service d'Honneur meets the high guest at the airport, harbour or at the railway station and continues to be at his/her disposal throughout the visit.

2.2.3 Ceremonies and Protocol

Whether the communicative interactions between states occur between trained diplomats or between the heads of state, the governments inevitably represent different social, economic and political systems and are thus exposed to the possibility of misinterpretation due to cultural differences, ideological divergence or plain misunderstandings. It is to help in this respect that sets of rules such as protocol have been devised in order to facilitate the communication between states (Holsti,1992:137). Holsti (137) claims that although the rules of protocol may seem merely as the ceremonial leftovers of a bygone era, they still have a definite function in today's governmental

interactions and can be efficiently used to reduce little irritants that may emerge during the visits. State visit programme is planned around the official ceremonies and these ceremonies are ruled by strict forms of manners and behaviour. State visit is ruled by protocol. Protocol in this context means the sets of rules that regulate festive ceremonies and forms of manners:

"Protocol is a form of hierarchical order, the expression of good manners among nations, and just as politeness is one of the basic rules for everyday life, so protocol is the set of rules of conduct for governments and their representatives on official and on private occasions" (Freeman, 1997:242).

Protocol means awareness of good manners, politeness, dress code, forms of greeting, introductions and the knowledge of etiquette in general. The forms of manners are closely related to one's cultural background, national conventions, ethics and religion. The purpose of protocol is to help to overcome differences, to smoothen the interactions and communication in governmental events. This does not mean that these rules and codes are followed similarly in every country. Protocol gives a lot of leverage and it should be interpreted accordingly and not considered as fixed rules. By following the rules of protocol too strictly can cause difficulties and problems when conducting a state visit. The President of Iran postponed his state visit to France in the spring 1999 due to a dispute over serving wine at the state banquet. The high guest could not accept other guests drinking wine during the dinner because it violated his religion. French hosts refused to organise a dinner without serving wine, because wine and food are strong characteristics of French dining culture (<http://news2.thdo.bbc.co.uk>).

In almost every country, there is a separate protocol department which administers the protocol matters. In Finland the Protocol Department is a part of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and is led by the Chief of Protocol. The Chief of Protocol participates actively in the state visit process and negotiates together with the Aid-de-Camp of the President of the Republic all the details with their colleagues of the host country. Protocol affects every part of the state visit programme. Welcoming, wreath-laying, and farewell ceremonies observe a strict code and a minute programme. Every step is decided beforehand. Seating orders are planned for the meetings, dinners and luncheons according to the ranking order of the guests. Exchanging decorations and introductions are planned according to the rules of protocol.

2.2.4 Press Arrangements

The Department for Press and Cultural Affairs of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for the press arrangements during a state visit to Finland. Representatives of the press departments of both parties take part in the advance-team meetings and overall planning of the press arrangements such as familiarisation with the itinerary of the state visit, arrangements for photo opportunities, press conferences, and so forth are negotiated. Visiting

journalists are offered working facilities, PC's, fax machines, Internet, telephones etc. during the state visit. Journalists that are to follow the state visit in Finland must be accredited through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland prior to the visit. Representatives of the press are provided with the background material of the host's and visitor's country, curricula vitae of the members of the official delegation, and some photographs. Sometimes the heads of state give interviews to the press before the visit and features are broadcasted on television.

2.2.5 After the State Visit

There are no special meetings for critical feedback after the visit. The administrators usually have an other visit coming immediately at home or abroad. If any special comments or views are needed, they are shared between the organisers privately on a face-to-face basis. Sometimes the embassies are used to follow and to report on the specific plans and contracts that were concluded during the state visit.

3 PUBLIC RELATIONS

State visits are good examples of practising international public relations between nations. State visit can be seen as a stage on which to promote national interest and desired image in the host country as well as to further business and other interests. Public relations is an activity which attempts to develop the relationship and interaction between the organisation and its publics. Newsom (1992) identifies three important components of public relations practice: the environment, the public and the research. Public relations create a need to know the environment for PR-practice and about the publics which create that environment. Public relations can be seen as a process that involves various practices such as research, analysis, policy-formation, programming, communication and feedback from many publics (Wilcox, 1998:4). Related activities in PR such as press agency, promotion, public affairs, publicity, advertising, marketing and merchandising utilise the components of public relations practice differently (Newsom, 1992:6-9).

Grunig (1992:4-5) employs various terms to describe communication activities in organisations such as *public relations*, *communication management*, *business communication* and *public affairs*. Public affairs refers to external activities, such as the federal and state activities and government relations, whereas public relations or communication management pertain to broader aspects of organisational communication than just media relations and publicity. Governmental public relations activities are often carried out under other departments and offices such as the public information officer, public affairs officer, etc. Industries consider the governmental operations on local, state and federal level to have a major impact on their business operations (Wilcox, 1998:321). In Finland, the links between the government and the industries are the Finnish Trade Association and the Confederation of the Finnish Industry and Employers who actively participate on the state visit processes by organising business symposiums, talks, and lectures around the official state visit programme both at home and abroad.

Other PR activities in governmental relations are the political public relations which refers to work with election campaigns, lobbying which applies to people who represent certain specialised fields or industries that try to persuade the politicians, the state representatives and the government information offices that informs the public. Lobbyists also try to improve the effectiveness of governmental operations, provide feedback, and to educate the

administrators (Wilcox, 1998:322-334). According to Smith (1995:106), lobbying has four main ingredients; good advance intelligence, skilful timing, a mature realistic presentation of one's case, and a sustained pressure.

In state relations, especially in the case of Finland, the term public relations rarely appears. Ministers have special assistants or press secretaries and government officials in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs bear titles like information officer, press attache, cultural secretary and so forth. The development of terminology is considered an effective tool to reduce negative perceptions towards public relations. According to Newsom (1992:80-81) the increase of the research and evaluation of public relation practice makes the work more precise, helps to measure the effectiveness of actions and to find out how the goals were met. Future focus on public relations will be borne on credibility, accountability and responsibility. Credibility can be gained by the behaviour of the organisation as a whole which builds up the sense of unity and develops trust. The value of the PR-practice is difficult to measure. In the future it will be more important to specify the profits of the organisation that are incurred by successful PR practices. Thus public relation activities could be quantitatively measured and proven to be credible. The professionals in the field of public relations are responsible for upholding high standards in their profession and with credible actions and research develop trustworthiness of their organisation in the eyes of their clients, media, government agencies, financiers, other PR practitioners and so forth.

3.1 Public Relations and Related Activities

Public relations usually consist of many activities which, in turn, partly explains the difficulty of determining the concept of public relations and the confusions in the employment of the term itself.

Press agency involves actions of planning and staging events and activities whose purpose is to attract attention to a person idea or product. Although the main purpose of a press agent is to attract attention, many professionals are also able to increase the awareness of its publics. *Promotion* can be identified as press agency but it distinguishes itself by emphasising also on opinion making when planning events to support a person, a product, an institution or an idea. The effectiveness of promotional campaigns depends on the efficiency of the practitioners in their usage of the various tools of public relations. Different fund-raising events serve as examples of the promotion. *Public Affairs* is a specialised form of PR which involves governmental and community relations. There is a difference between the terms of 'public affairs' and 'public information'. In government offices the public information consists mainly of publicity, i.e. information placed on publics through news media, whereas a public affairs practitioner of the government is charged with policy-making

responsibilities. Other PR related activities are *advertising, marketing, merchandising, and lobbying* (Newsom, 1992:6-9).

3.2 Publics and Public Opinion

Publics of an organisation can be a person or a group of people. The important aspect is that there is an involvement between the organisation and its publics. The role of the publics is active towards the organisation whereas audience can be seen as a passive group which is a recipient to something. For an organisation it is important to define clearly its publics. External public acts outside of the organisation. Internal public usually consists of the employees. Specified and priority or target publics are specific groups to which the attention of the organisation is focused. Organisation should consider all its publics as an individual and not guess their actions nor beliefs. Organisation should also define the priority of its publics (Newsom, 1992:139-140). Public relations field knows several tools to identify priority publics. This can be done for example, by giving a name to the publics (farmers). Public's can also be identified by looking for publics statistical characteristics such as age and gender, *demographics*. Also, defining public can be done by identifying its behavioural characteristics, such as attitudes and beliefs, *psychographics* (Newsom, 1992: 146).

Public opinion is something what most people think of a specific issue based not only on facts but also forth beliefs and perceptions. The organisation should be aware of the socio-economic issues that affect its public. These issues should be monitored beforehand so that the organisation could act in advance rather than responding to these issues (Newsom, 1992:154).

Lehtonen (1998:121) states that public relation practices are connected to three activities which pertain to actions between the organisation and its publics: journalism, marketing and advertising (see also Wilcox:1998).

1. Journalism: There are two aspects that differentiate public relation practices from journalism. Firstly, PR-activities can address a big audience with lots of media publicity, but at the same time organisation emphasises the information to its interest groups, such as financiers, employees or any other group which is interested in the affairs of that organisation. Secondly, even though the PR practitioner and the journalist focus their efforts according to the ethical rules of their profession, the journalist follows the changes of the society and reports them to the publics whereas the PR-practitioner's primary concern is to affect the information and attitudes of the publics (Lehtonen, 1998:121-122).

2. Marketing: The difference between marketing and PR is that the concept of marketing is used in business organisations and hardly in public organisations. Marketing focuses on different aspects of marketing a product.

Public relations are considered more as part of general strategies of the organisation. Image marketing does not provide precise information but an image of the organisation (Lehtonen, 1998:123).

3. Advertising: There is a difference between advertising a company's product and providing an informative news about a product. Advertisements are bought whereas publicity is free information about the organisation. It is important that these two can be differentiated which is not always very easy. According to Newsom (1992:8). PR-practices focus on establishing the credibility of the organisation whereas the purpose of advertising is to invoke demand.

3.3 Strategic Public Relations

Grunig and Grunig (1992:12, 291-292) divide the public relations theories into *positive* (descriptive) and *normative* theories. Positive theories are used to comprehend the problems whereas the normative theories are used to solve the problems and to point out how to practice public relations in an ideal situation. Normative models distinguish that organisational communication should be practised '*strategically*'. With strategic public relations practices the organisation develops programmes to communicate with internal and external publics that pose the strongest threats and opportunities to the organisation. These publics are also called stakeholders. Organisation's stakeholders can be the investors, customers, suppliers, employees, or the community. Government's interest groups could combine the tax payers, the voters, international and national industries, parliament members, other members of alliances and other governments. All these relationships between organisations and stakeholders represent dependencies and expectations, mutual respect and responsibilities to each other (Portway, 1995:214).

International interactions are every day life to governments and businesses. The organisation's publics have become global. Therefore, the relationship between the management of an organisation and its stakeholders is more important so that the development of management strategies and the sense of social responsibility would apply to even basic practices. Portway (1995:216) points out when presenting the active management of stakeholder relationships and the corporate community involvement that for organisations it is necessary to set objectives, to define strategic directions and investments, to identify activities and fulfil the objectives, to measure the success of the activities meeting the objectives, and to report to the relevant audiences about the progress in order to manage its social responsibilities as well as its business practices.

By setting definite objectives and developing indigenous strategies the organisations can actively determine what kind of activities it wishes to practice and why. By doing so it allows the organisation to respond more effectively to external requests that are inconsistent with its strategic directions. To maximise the impact, visibility and benefit, the organisation needs to define its primary focus and specific interest areas and the amount of resources the organisation is willing to employ. Communication and community activities gives the organisation a wealth of information about future social issues and concerns because the process of management of stakeholders relationships can be seen as interdependent.

Identifying the activities and fulfilling the objectives together with prepared strategies and knowledge of available resources helps the organisation's project selection and management. Partnership is a fundamental focus in organisation's strategic approach. It is through partners that we manage our major projects and reflect the success of our actions. Identifying the success of an individual project is easier than measuring and evaluating the impact of larger entities. Without clearly articulated objectives and strategies it is very difficult to measure and to evaluate the organisation's activities. Evaluating means that the organisation reviews its programmes and its stated objectives and draws conclusions as to how the objectives were met, what could have been improved and whether the actions made any difference. Measuring the goals refers more to the quantitative aspect of achievements and gives some indication of the outcomes of activities. Effective evaluation and measurement helps the communication between the organisation and its interest groups since it is easier to produce results and outputs rather than mere activities (Portway, 1995: 213-231).

3.4 International Public Relations

One aim of international PR is to establish or to maintain an already existing positive image of one's nation and to appear trustworthy to other actors among the world systems (Kunczik, 1997:74). Relations between nations are a complex ongoing process of exchanging people and information. Not only are nations related to each other in terms of trade, alliance or geographical location but also by tourism, student exchange, immigration, sports events, mass media and so forth. With the rapid growth of communication networks the world has become smaller and more reachable to a larger number of people. Kunczik (1997:ix) stresses the importance of the images of nations in international relations and presents an assumption that:

"...the behaviour of states is not the same as that of individuals. States are social systems whose behaviour as a rule directly corresponds neither the motives of their respective leaders nor to those of their population. Self-evidently, however, international activities always depend too, on personal relationships; for example it is indubitably

important whether the U.S. president and the leader of Russia get on well with each other at a personal level."

Public relations between nations is a very difficult form of PR activity because it is rather complicated to measure public relation processes between nations. Von Studnitz (1950) cited by Kunczik (1997:229) notes that *"In the old days one could win over an empire by marrying, today you can win peoples by a leading article"*. For nation states, PR practices mean planned and continuous distribution of information aiming at improving the image of the nation (Kunczik, 1997:12).

Some hypotheses are presented to guide research on PR for states in reflection of news. Firstly, the more country is depended on export, more it will focus on image promotion. Secondly, a state will more likely to start an image campaign in a region where its image is for some reason controversial. Thirdly, the more important the economic and/or political entity, the more likely will foreign countries campaign in there (Kunczik, 1997:25).

3.4.1 Image of Nations

There are various concepts that affect on nation's image. The historical aspect is important to the image building of nations. Kunczik (1997:3) states that many prejudices about nations are generations old and historical events remain decisive in a nation's image. The influence of fiction (films, novels, etc.) should also be taken into consideration. It is assumed that the conception of an image is the combination of its past and future expectations and the conception of the image at present (Kunczik, 1997: 46). The country of origin effect refers to the relation between the image of nation and its economy (Kunczik, 1997:68). Industries often want to relate the favourable image of their country to their products, brand, or company itself. On the other hand, country's unfavourable image can affect the products from that country. The Confederation of the Finnish Industry and Employers and the Finnish Foreign Trade Association are actively participating in the state visits both to Finland and abroad and it is quite common that the heads of state, when making state visits are accompanied by trade delegations.

Mass media influences the image building process of other countries by disseminating the information presented to publics. Many government officials base their images of foreign countries on mass media reporting (Kunczik, 1997). Governments use continuously media as a tool to promote the information they consider important to the nation. Kunczik (1997:16) argues that because credibility is an important aspect in the communication process, attempts are all the time made to avoid the impression of manipulation. Manheim (1994:125) notes that diplomatic practices provide a framework for management of national images but often the picture reflected from these practices in media is rather stereotyped.

3.4.2 Actors in International PR

Today's world has become truly international. Technology, products, labour, and ideas across the boundaries have become world issues and governments, organisations, and publics are actively conducting these exercises. Still, cultures, institutions, economic development and living standards are affected by different histories and social values. Even though global thinking has become a general standard in media, corporations and in the public's mind, it has to be noted that we continue living in a world of nation states (Byrnes, 1995:125)

It is hard to define the difference of international PR between states, non-governmental organisations (NGO), political organisations and multinational corporations (MNC). Kunczik (1997:27) argues that the economy can not be considered as a subsystem equal to others but rather it should be regarded as a basic social factor that influences other subsystems. Thus, according to Kunczik, economy and policy cannot be separated. People often overlook the importance of the MNC's active role in foreign policy and interactions with states. A rough classification of the actors who use international PR can be presented by using two dimensions: for-profit versus non-profit and public versus private. The examples of these dimensions are:

1. for-profit public: state owned companies
2. non-profit public: governments, NGO's , ministries.
3. for-profit private: MNC's.
4. non-profit private: foundations.

Other actors in the international field of PR are influential individuals; former presidents, politicians, press and PR departments of state offices, international PR agencies, voluntary campaigners, organised labour, and mass media. It is difficult to separate the actions of the PR activities of states and activities initiated by their PR departments. It is also hard to trace the link between commissioned PR activities and mass media. Some emphases on the PR activities can be materialised such as state visits by the heads of state, ministerial visits, trips for journalists organised by governments, sporting events, redistributing power of the MNC established in a new country and so forth (Kunczik 1997, Manheim 1994). Public opinion can also be considered as an actor of PR. Public opinion is a collection of views by people interested in an issue. There are not many issues that create thoughts that are agreed by all but public opinion on any issue is divided to many formations (Wilcox, 1998:209). Nation's population form various interest groups for selected topics. Governmental actions can be evaluated and criticised by the tax payers, industrialists, students, other governments and alliances. Kunczik (1997:96-97) argues that there is still not much information on how precise is the role the public opinion in foreign policy of a country but there is no doubt that reporting about one's country has become a normal practice for embassies, especially if the country's image is somehow questionable.

3.5 Roles of Mass Media

Public relations practices between states are closely related to mediation of foreign policy. A great deal of communication between organisations and specified audiences should be and is direct but much of it reaches the audience indirectly through media. The media is very national while at the same time international, and with today's communication development news travel very fast (Byrnes, 1995:137). The term 'media' itself raises varied opinions because it covers an immense range publications and broadcast media (Haywood, 1995:175) Haywood (1995:175) argues that organisations often consider media as a 'messenger' and not consider as one group of its publics and also a channel of communication to other desired publics or interest groups. Therefore, in order to become effective in media relations the organisation should define its objectives and gain knowledge of how the media works and what are its interests.

Mass media plays an important role in politics. Kepplinger (1983) cited by Kunczik (1997:85) states that media which is usually considered as a force outside of the political system has now become a political force which not only acts but reacts in political issues and thus co-governs international affairs together with the policy makers. Mass media has power to raise up issues ignored by the politicians. Also media can be used as an instrument of international conciliation, mediation and even of conflict. Furthermore media can establish such international contacts that are not possible through diplomatic channels by providing information that enables or facilitates negotiations.

On the other hand many countries believe that media also selects the information unevenly so that their positions do not attract enough attention in the world or in a specific region. This kind of a situation can be regarded as an image crisis, so Kunczik (1997:86), *"The political elite of a state believes that they do not have a fair and adequate image in foreign country: that is, they believe that they are not given adequate and unbiased media attention."*

4 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In recent years, intercultural studies have become increasingly popular. People travel more and companies establish themselves in many countries around the world. Immigrants and refugees, tourists and students and any one who is stepping into an unfamiliar environment encounter intercultural interactions in their everyday life. When people move to a different environment, they learn new communication skills often through realising that they do not understand each other. Misunderstanding can result from language impediments, but also due to different customs, beliefs, and ways of life. The field of intercultural communication as a discipline covers many areas such as interpersonal, group and organisational communication. Governments can be considered as large international organisations. They have a similar structure as organisations, they both have set goals for their actions and they interact with different cultures when communicating with the representatives of other nations.

It is difficult to define what are the characteristics of culture that affect our communication. This is because the meaning of 'culture' is hard to define. There are numerous definitions of the concept of culture depending on the approach. Scollon and Scollon (1995:125) state that on one hand we talk about a large group of people who share common history, language and geographical locations. The problem in discussing about such large groups is the danger of over-generalisation, especially in the context of intercultural communication. Scollon and Scollon (1995:125) explain:

"Cultures are different level of logical analysis from individual members of cultures. Cultures do not speak to each other; individuals do. in that sense, all communication is interpersonal and can never be intercultural communication. "Chinese culture" cannot talk to "Japanese culture", except through the discourse of individual Chinese and individual Japanese people".

Culture comprises so many elements that there is no single theory that can comprehensively define. Many disciplines are looking at different elements that apply to culture. Almaney and Alwan (1982:5) identify three categories of elements that culture consist of. *Artefacts* represent almost anything. *Concepts* refer to our beliefs and value systems. *Behaviour* is the category that represents our actual practices.

Samovar and Porter (1994:12-14) mention six characteristics of culture that have a special importance in intercultural communication. Culture is *learned*. Our learning of culture proceeds through interaction, observation and imitation. Members of culture acquire their ways of thinking through behaviour. Culture is *transmissible*. The cultural symbols enable us to pass on the content and patterns of culture. Non-verbal cues as symbols such as

national flags symbolise our claim of territory or demonstrate our loyalty. Culture is *dynamic*. Culture is in an ongoing change and subject to fluctuation. These changes are visible and attached to the existing cultural value system. Changes occur as ideas and products evolve within a culture through discovering new practices (*invention*), borrowing from other cultures (*diffusion*) and through changes in culture (*cultural calamity*). Culture is selective. Assumptions and values have an impact to what culture selects to tell. Culture is *interrelated*. This applies to the complexity of culture. Culture is *ethnocentric* and can be most directly seen in intercultural communication. Ethnocentrism can be defined as an evaluation of how cultures conduct their daily actions.

It can be noted that communication and culture are interrelated and influence each other. As Gudykunst & al. (1988:17) state, "*The culture from which individuals come affects the way they communicate, and the way individuals communicate can change the culture they share.*" Communication is a need to interact with other human beings. When our conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional behaviour produces a perception, the behaviour becomes a message. When someone responds to that behaviour, a communication has occurred. Samovar and Porter (1994:7-10) point out two requirements which have to be met before behaviours can become messages. Firstly, behaviour has to be observed by someone. Secondly, the behaviour must elicit a response. This approach to communication focuses on individual's behaviour which engenders a response from another by the attribution of meaning to behaviour. Attribution relates to the past experiences and thus gives meaning to the behaviour that we observe. Samovar & Porter (1994:7-10, 1997:10-11) specify eight components that form communication. *Behavioural source* refers to a desire and a need to communicate, stemming from the need to be recognised, to provide information to influence other's attitudes and beliefs. *Encoding* applies to the internal activities by which the verbal and non-verbal behaviours are selected in order to create the message. *Channel* refers to the physical means that connect the source and the receiver. *Responders* are the intentional or unintentional observers of messages and somehow linked to the source of the message. *Decoding* can be related to the source's act of encoding because it is a similar internal process to create a meaningful experience. *Response* then applies to the decisions of actions about the message. *Feedback and response* are closely related. Response is a mode of action in relation to the message whereas feedback refers to the information about the effectiveness of communication. Furthermore, Samovar & Porter (1994:7-10, 1997:12-15) note that communication is *dynamic, interactive, irreversible* and take place in *physical and social context*. Quite often the physical surroundings are defined by the social context but both characteristics establish the rules that govern interaction.

Even though people have become closer to each other by the development of communication technology, alliances, and means of transportation, the world is still regarded as a collection of nation-states with clearly defined borders and boundaries on the maps. Often the different worldviews, beliefs and attitudes are referred to as national characteristics and different cultures are confined by

the borders of nation states. Scollon and Scollon (1995:123-125) point out two aspects when studying intercultural communication. Firstly, there is such a thing as cultural difference. Secondly, the difficulties that emerge when actors try to be culturally sensitive but actually only make matters worse. As a result, some professionals in the arena of international business consider intercultural communication studies futile in terms of international negotiations. Tayeb (1994:431) argues that the problem of the researchers of intercultural studies lies in the distinction of 'culture' from 'nation'. Culture as a combination of history, learned, shared values, attitudes and meanings constitutes too restricted a definition and could be replaced by the term 'national character'. Most of the contemporary research on intercultural communication, according to Smith (1992:40), is approached by comparing culture with management in different countries by equating nations with cultures. This approach can be defended by the fact that managers in one national culture operate under the same legislation, industrial relations, infrastructure and climate. When these members of nations share history it can be assumed that to a certain extent they share meanings to some event.

In this study the concept of 'state' has a noticeable meaning. State visit comprises the visit of individuals i.e. the heads of state whose personality, values, ideals and characteristics affect the state visit process. Nevertheless, the head of state represents the country and acts according to the national customs that are dominant in state visit processes.

4.1 Organisational Communication

Our society values organisations even though our Western culture emphasises the interest of the individual (Hofstede, 1991:49-78). National firms and international corporations market changes in their organisational structure and refer to their employees as a member of teams. Our everyday actions, education, hobbies, work and family-life are connected to various organisations when at the same time we are taught to stand on our own feet. This kind of complexity in our views of social reality causes the difficulty of defining terms such as 'organisation' or 'communication'. Pace & Faules (1994:2) offer their perspective on organisational communication by viewing alternative perceptions of the social world. They point out that organisation is often seen as a subjective or an objective matter depending on the approach. The subjective approach emphasises process and activities in organisation whereas the objective view regards organisation as something concrete and structured. Objectivists see organisations as units with goals and structure whose governing principles are determined by the environment. Subjective approach stresses the importance of behaviour and does not consider the structure as important. Subjective view emphasises more explaining structure, planning and goals rather than controlling them (Pace and Faules, 1994:7-11). An other aspect of the structuralist approach on organisation is given by Kreps (1990:5), stating

that organisation is a collective gathering of people with the same goals in an ongoing activity.

Dimbleby and Burton (1998:129) have listed several characteristics to help us understand how organisations operate. Organisations are generated for a purpose and are structured. They set goals and divide the work tasks. Furthermore, organisations co-ordinate the different sections and administrate resources. They practice communication within the organisation and with the outside environment. Communication in an organisation can be processed via official networks or through networks of friendship and social contact. Communication in organisations flows not only up and down but also horizontally and diagonally. Organisations develop indigenous norms and values and the forms of communication and organisational structure are designed differently. Organisations can be hierarchical or the structure can be designed in a more co-operative fashion (Dimbleby and Burton, 1998:130-134).

Communication as a process in organisations enables people to adapt their behaviours and to establish interpersonal relationships (Kreps, 1990:5). There are different levels of communication in organisations. *Intrapersonal* communication is the basic level of communication and refers to the interpretation of messages with ourselves. *Interpersonal* communication is a form of exchanging messages with someone else. Small-group communication applies to three or more people working together to achieve a common goal. *Multigroup* communication happens when interdependent groups operate to achieve mutual goals (Kreps, 1990:45). Key elements of communication systems in organisations are the people who have some kind of a relationship and who are interacting towards goals in their environment. Organisational communication forms *networks of interactions* that directs the flow of information. Effectiveness of these interactions depends on the accuracy of the messages when they reach their destination, whether the organisation members can receive needed messages at right times and whether they can avoid receiving too many messages. There are designated channels of communication in organisations which often follow the same pattern as the organisational structure. Timm (1986:97-100) points out that informal channels exist between every organisation member and these channels formulate according to the needs. Information flow is rather unpredictable.

Pace and Faules (1994: 67) refer to organisational culture as something that belongs to all members of the all kinds of organisations. "*Culture is not tool of analysis but an object of analysis.*" Organisational culture is not something concrete but rather the patterns that are created thorough the actions. Kreps (1990:124) states that culture gives a framework to the members of organisation that helps to interpret their activities.

4.2 Intercultural Communication between Nation-States

Like any formal group, a nation can also be identified as an organisation with specific goals and formal communication forms between the leadership and the rest of the population (Singer, 1987:201-202). Preston (1997:33) offers three basic elements of the idea of state. Firstly, states can be seen as politico-legal entities. Secondly, state is a community of people, sharing in some way a common culture. Thirdly, the nation-state refers to the nation that is organised as state. The concepts of state, nation, and nation-state can be considered as resources for people to understand their circumstances. Preston (1997:35-36) argues that the idea of the nation-statehood is a historical and a cultural artefact that is preserved by mechanisms such as flags, parades, national anthems and so forth.

Singer (1987:201-202) claims that two distinctions separate states from all other groups. Firstly, states have no law above them. Secondly, states see themselves as being the "*sole legitimate repository of force*", vested with the exclusive power to use force on groups, individuals and other nations. On the other hand, a nation can be viewed with the same terms as any other formal organisation. Nations often consist of many subgroups that can be identified in specific issues and contexts. These subgroups usually communicate better with the same subgroup from an other country than they do with different subgroups in their own country. According to Singer (1987:201-202), to improve the communication between nations certain elements should be identified. A country should be able to identify its national perceptions, values, identities, the concept of power and the different groups that comprise that nation. The better knowledge the nation has about its national characteristics the easier it is to identify these characteristics of other nations and thus improve the communication.

Communication between nations can be divided into two categories (Singer, 1987:214): 1. Official communication between one government to another or between international organisations. 2. Unofficial communication between and among individuals, groups and organisations. Singer points out that still about two decades ago the relations between governments were thought to be solely in the hands of governmental representatives. It has since been realised that the communication that has the greatest influence on the relations between nations transpires via other channels than formal diplomatic channels. Groups, individuals and organisations communicate from one country to an other (Singer, 1987:214-215). This is also pointed out by Keohane and Nye (1972), cited by Singer (1987:214-216), who distinguishes between governmental relations, the traditional view of *international affairs*, and unofficial communication i.e at least one member is not a representative of a government in *transnational interactions*.

Singer (1987:216) propounds important points to consider in transnational communication. Firstly, there is much more transnational interaction than traditional communication of international affairs. Secondly, these transnational interactions may have a greater importance than the official government-to-government communication. Thirdly, official or unofficial communication between nations tends to occur in predictable ways i.e. most international communication transpires between top-level countries, less between top-level and middle level countries and even less between those at the bottom and those at the top level. Top-level countries here refers to the major powers of world politics and economy; U.S.A., China, Japan, Russian Federation, some Latin American countries, U.K., France, Germany and so forth.

4.2.1 Interelite Communication

Singer (1987:208) identifies the elite of a nation by dividing the most important decision makers into sectors. Those actors with most decision-making power and most influence over people are called the primary elite of the government sector. Sectors that apply to every country are secondary and tertiary governmental elite and bureaucratic elite. Other sectors of elite the country can identify are political, military, industrial, religious, intellectual sectors, etc. These sectors can be viewed as a pyramid at the top which resides the primary elite i.e. the people who wield most power within that sector.

The communication between the elites of the countries does not occur at random. Most groups of a country tend to communicate primarily with the members of the same group in an other country. This applies to entrepreneurs, politicians, military, culture and so forth. This means that even if the elite does not share similar national values, beliefs nor language they share their functional group values, beliefs and language (Singer,1987: 222).

4.3 Culture and Perception

The organisers of state visits are usually career diplomats and other professionals of the government who co-operate with various foreign and national interest groups such as media, industry, public and so forth. On the other hand, the elected heads of state are not necessarily professional diplomats nor experienced actors in international relations but experts of some other fields. Nevertheless, the official delegation and the organisers of the state visit process are usually familiar with the generally accepted rules of behaviour and equipped with the knowledge of diplomacy and foreign politics. The process of state visits is governed by the participants' as well as their nation's values, worldviews, religion, language, etc. Perception means the process through which the individual selects, evaluates and organises stimuli from the external environment (Singer 1987, Samovar and Porter, 1994). The data of this research

can be considered as perceptions as the interviewees have given me one side of the views of state visit processes.

Through perceptions a person experiences the world. The 'world' consists of symbols, things, people, groups of people, ideas, events, ideologies and even faith (Singer 1987:9). There are three major socio-cultural elements that give meaning to our perceptions: Our *belief/value/attitude systems, worldview* and *social organisation* (Samovar & Porter, 1997:115-116). Adler (1997:71) states that perceptual models are neither *innate* nor *absolute* but selective, learned, culturally determined, consistent and inaccurate. In the approach of discourse systems Scollon and Scollon (1995: 127-154) have limited the aspects of culture to represent the groups with significance in the discourse between groups. They do not claim that other aspects of culture would not be important but find 1. *ideology*, 2. *socialization*, 3. *forms of discourse* and 4. *face-systems* as the major factors in intercultural communication. Ideology refers to our beliefs, values and religion whereas socialization signifies the process of learning 'culture'.

Forms of discourse refer to the functions of language. Communication has an informative and a relationship function. Also, there is a difference among cultures to what degree the relationships are thought to be freely negotiated or given by the society in a fixed form (Scollon and Scollon, 1995: 138-140). Language and culture are closely related. In an intercultural environment the use and proficiency of foreign language can improve the impressions the parties have of each other. Even if the parties possess good language skills the lack of knowledge of each other's cultures may cause problems (Vasko, Kjik, Salo-Lee, 1998:10,112). Language is the primary medium for transmitting beliefs, values, norms and worldview of a culture. Language works in comparable way. Inferences are drawn based on the language used and the knowledge participants have about the world. Successful communication is based on sharing assumptions of what the other means and making the a priori assumption that misunderstandings are inevitable in communication (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:12-13). Group harmony and individual welfare denote to our ability to solve issues individually and/or in group situations.

Face systems as an aspect of culture are important because they refers to the way a cultural group organises relationships among the members of that group. Face systems are also called social organisation. Scollon and Scollon (1995:129) point out that many scholars identify the word 'culture' and the concept of 'social organisation' as synonyms.

4.3.1 Interpersonal Politeness and Power as a Communicative Style

An essential element of all communication is the identity, the concept of face. Much of the interpersonal communication is based on assumptions of self and other and on the analysis of the relationships among the participants. The paradox of face is that on one hand the actors have a need to be involved with other actors and show this involvement. Involvement is also called 'solidarity politeness'. An example of involvement can be the strategy of listening and showing interest. On the other hand, some degree of independence is needed. Independence can be shown for example, by using formal titles and it emphasises the individuality and minimal assumptions. Involvement is also called negative face. This paradox occurs simultaneously in any communication (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:36- 37).

Any communication is based on a shared symbolic system. This sharing is already a form of involvement. Therefore selecting a language in international negotiations is a very important aspect in, for example, government relations. Selecting a language is also a form of a negotiation face of participants. Scollon and Scollon (1995:40) elaborate:

" If negotiations are conducted among participants using different languages (but of course, with translations), this is a situation of lesser involvement or of higher independence that if negotiations are conducted using the same language. There fore it is a question face relationships to decide whether discussions should go on in separate languages mediated by translators or whether they should go in common language."

When negotiators are using a native language of one of the participants , it can cause a problem of balancing of involvement to the side of a native speaker and will give the other participants a sense of limited independence. On the other hand, using separate languages may also cause a feeling of too much independence between the participants (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:40).

Three main factors that are involved in face systems are power, distance, and weight of imposition (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:41-47).

1. Power (+P,-P): vertical disparity between participants. -P can be identified by people with equal ranks. This is used in state visits or communication between close friends. +P refers to a manager and secretarial position where the participants are in different hierarchical position.

2. Distance (+D, -D) refers to a level of contact between participants. Government officials in different nations may have equal power but are distant, thus refer to +D. Close friends can be identified -D because of the closeness of their relationship.

3. Weight of imposition (W+, W-) refers to the importance of the topic between the participants. When the weight of imposition increases the use of independence strategies increases. When the weight of imposition decreases the use of involvement strategies increases.

Three politeness systems can be observed in various contexts. These are called deference politeness system (-P,+D), solidarity politeness system (-P,-D), and hierarchical politeness system (+P, +/- D).

Deference politeness system, (-P,+D) refers to the situation where the participants are considered as equals but treat each other as distant.

Solidarity politeness system (-P,-D) refers to a high level of involvement and no feeling of either power or distance, for instance, friends having a conversation.

Hierarchical politeness system (+P,+/-D) refers to the difference in positions of the participants. This is rather familiar in government, official and business situations.

4.4 Non-verbal Processes

Non-verbal communication is a major component of our daily lives. We use hands, facial expressions together with speech. Some non-verbal expressions have become generally accepted, such as hand-shaking, bowing, smiling and so forth, although in some cultures these non-verbal gestures can have different meanings. Dimpleby and Burton (1985, 40-42) state that non-verbal communication has several characteristics and is a complicated mixture of signs. Non-verbal communication is as important as verbal communication and it is ruled by conventions. Non-verbal communication pertains to people's perception of others and to the idea of feedback. It also has a major influence on first impressions and helps to develop relationships.

Signs are non-verbal cues that elicit certain responses. According to Anttila (1972:13), there are three types of signs. *Icon* refers to something with physical reference between the sign and the referent, such as a photograph. *Index* applies to the relationship between the meaning and the form, such as crying, which manifests our inner feelings. *Symbol* include a learned relation between the form and the meaning. Symbolic non-verbal communication is common in state visits. For example, dress code, white tie with decorations, symbolises the most festive way to dress up for the event. Also flagging out during the state visit symbolises the ownership of that territory (see also Burgoon & al., 1996:15). Some non-verbal cues apply specifically to some nations or cultures so it is important to notice that same gestures and expressions do not mean the same everywhere.

There are several non-verbal codes. These non-verbal codes we use to interpret our interpersonal behaviour in everyday life, often without thinking about it. *Kinesics*, our body movements, *proxemics*, the use of space, *physical appearance*, clothing, body types and artifacts, *haptics*, the behaviour of touching, *paralanguage*, characteristics of spoken language e.g. intonation, and the *concepts of time and silence*.

Kinesics refers to our visible body movements such as facial expressions, eye contact, and gaze. It is also called body language and it refers to actions we use with or without verbal processes. Kinesics is closely related to our cultural conventions and they represent the structure of our own society. Body language helps us to understand other people's feelings, emphasis, and intentions (Trenholm & Jensen, 1992: 190). The concepts of body language are often referred to when for example television performances of election campaigns are evaluated, i.e. how the candidate's body language corresponded to the issues he/she defended.

Facial expressions are perhaps the most important channel of non-verbal communication and can be used to substitute verbal expressions. We can use facial expressions, such as nodding and laughter to emphasise our verbal processes, but also we can produce unintended signs such as disappointment. Facial expressions can be misunderstood. Laughing can be interpreted as a sign of joy and happiness in one culture whereas in some other it may signify to shame or insecurity and misinterpretation can cause problems. Eyecontact and gaze refer to the messages we send with our eyes. With eyecontact we monitor and regulate other people's conversation around us (Trenholm & Jensen, 1992:186-190).

Proxemics, the use of space, refers to our personal space and distance, things like seating and the physical setting of rooms and so forth. Use of space is a culturally bound virtue. When we are comfortable with the setting of our environment we also interact better. *Territoriality* refers to the legal or assumed ownership of space. Variety of signs and marks are used to mark territories such as flags and fences. Personal space refers to the imaginary area that surrounds us and is considered private (Trenholm & Jensen, 1992: 181-184).

Physical appearance deals with issues such as body types, dressing, and personal artifacts. In every culture there are ideals of physical beauty and physical features, such as skin colour, beauty, style of hair and the body shape are paid a lot of attention. Clothing has been considered as an expression of social status. Clothing indicates the nature of the occasion and people can identify themselves to a certain group by wearing clothes that are common in that specific group (Trenholm & Jensen, 1992:185-185).

Paralanguage, vocalics, refers to the non-verbal elements of voice we produce when we talk, for example the loudness of the voice, interruptions, the

rhythm of speech, laughter pauses and silences (Ruben & Stewart, 1998). In some languages, paralanguage is more important than in others. For example, in French, the rising intonation signifies even though the spoken sentence grammatically is not a question.

The concept of time as a non-verbal process refers to the philosophy of past, present and future and the importance or lack of importance of time. Andersen (1994: 230), refers to the chronemics as one of the most studied and discussed non-verbal code in the intercultural field and states that the different perceptions towards time orientation without any other non-verbal codes can raise dramatic misunderstandings in interpersonal behaviour. State visit follow a strict minute programme to the extent that in Finland the organisers count minutes: "The High guests arrive at 12.34.p.m." But as one Ambassador told me in our informal discussions, in some countries the proceedings of the state visit programme depend on the favours of gods.

The concept of silence refers to those characteristics of silence that are given meaning in communication. In intercultural communication, silence is valued differently in various cultures and it is seen as a component of communication (Lehtonen: 1990: 33). Silence can be seen, for example, as a characteristic of a person who does not want to interrupt a conversation or, on the other hand, as a person who does not follow the conversation at all.

4.5 Barriers in Intercultural Communication

We all see the world differently. Situations and environment are interpreted according to our worldview, beliefs and understanding of our social organisation. There are several ways of identifying the factors that affect on our problems in communications. Barna (1994: 337-345) states six reasons for misunderstandings between people when communicating and calls them *Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication*: assumption of similarities, language differences, non-verbal misinterpretations, preconceptions and stereotypes, tendency to evaluate, high anxiety, and culture shock.

Assuming that there are enough similarities instead of differences between people can cause problems in communication. Assuming similarities does not only concern the visitor but also the host. The natives can easily assume that when the foreign person dresses similarly and have some knowledge of the common language, his/her non-verbal codes, symbols, thoughts and feelings are also easily identified. Frankel (1965) writes, cited by Barna (1994:338-339): "*Tensions exist within nations and between nations that never would have existed were these nations not in such intensive cultural communication with one another.*" Often the information gained of other cultures is based on second-hand information and thus may not be applicable to all situations. Barna (1994: 340) suggests, as a better approach, studying the culture, political structure, history, art, literature

of the country which can then provide a helpful framework for on-site observations.

Knowledge of languages and non-verbal misinterpretations are barriers in communication. When we travel and try to speak foreign languages at least we are aware that we can be misunderstood but at the same time we should observe all the non-verbal signs and codes that we are familiar with such as symbols, gestures, body postures and such. With languages, especially with the ones that are related to each other, there can be problems with words that are spelled similarly but have different meaning in the respective languages. Even if this concept of faux-amis causes more amusement than a real barrier, it can also result in uncomfortable misunderstandings (Lehtonen, 1990:8-9). People organising state visits are usually highly educated people working for the Office of the President, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, other governmental institutions or trade associations. These people are trained to interact at all times with people from other cultures. The literature on international diplomacy stresses the mastery of foreign languages as one of the main virtues of diplomats working in the international arena (Macomber, W., 1975, v. Blücher, W, 1953, Busk, D., 1967).

Stereotypes cause miscommunication because they are usually based on over-generalisations we have assumed of others based often on second-hand information. The tendency to evaluate other's actions, to approve and disapprove, can also be seen as a bias that affects our communication. Stereotypes are our predictions of others, but also of ourselves. These predictions are based on the cultural or sociocultural information we have of others (Dahl, 1995:17). Stereotyping often occurs when different groups are treated as each other's opposites. Scollon and Scollon (1995:155-156) declare that stereotyping simply equals the word 'over generalisation'. The difference of these terms is that stereotyping usually refers to ideological aspects. Over generalisations give characteristics to each member of the group. These characteristics can have a positive or a negative value and can be used as arguments to support social or political relationships respected by the members of the groups. The basis of stereotyping is often based on rather accurate cultural observations. This causes problems because it hinders us to see equally important aspects of character or behaviour and limits our understanding of different groups. Both positive and negative stereotyping holds up successful communication and analysis to major areas of difference (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:161).

High anxiety or stress develops when we interact in a strange environment and are afraid of being misunderstood. If the demand of making many adjustments to prevent differences in behaviour carries on over time so that the stress is constantly present people can be affected by the culture shock (Brislin & al.1986:17).

Having elaborated relevant aspects of international relations, public relations and intercultural communication, the following discussion will delve into the process of gathering and analysing the data of the study.

5 CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH

This study is a qualitative, multiple case study and uses face-to-face interviews as a research technique. The basis of the qualitative research is that it describes the real life and attempts to study the object holistically (Hirsjärvi & al., 1997:161). Generally, the purpose of the qualitative research is to find and reveal the facts rather than to state already existing propositions. Tesch (1992:59) grades different methods of qualitative research into four categories based on the researcher's interest in the topic. In qualitative research the attention is given to the features of language, finding regularities, comprehending action or meaning and reflection. This typification of categories can be seen as a continuum where the method of research moves from the structured form to a more holistic form of research (Hirsjärvi & al., 1997:166). This study intends to examine the conducting of a state visit and to reflect it on the aspects of diplomacy, public relations and intercultural communication.

5.1 Research Questions

In this study, I will examine how a state visit to Finland is orchestrated and conducted with an emphasis on intercultural communication and international public relations. In order to achieve the goal, I interviewed 16 people who had been participating in state visit processes due to their careers, such as the Aid-de-Camp to the President of the Republic of Finland, Chief of Protocol, other officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors accredited to Finland and so forth. My primary question, when I started this research was the purpose or the objectives of the state visit. Other questions varied during the research process and changed many times. Eventually, the following research questions were formulated based on the material from the interviews and my initial interest:

1. What is the purpose of a state visit?
2. Which cultural aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication are given significance in the state visit process?
3. What are the tools used to avoid miscommunication when conducting a state visit?
4. How the success of the state visit is measured or evaluated?

With these four research questions I pursue to obtain both general and detailed information of the importance of state visit as a form of intercultural communication and of the extent to which the state visit is seen as a tool for public relations. The first question will clarify the importance and objectives of a state visit. All interviewees were asked this question and to share their perceptions of the objectives of the state visit and what they thought the purpose of a state visit was as a form of diplomacy. The second question refers to the intercultural aspect of communication of state visits. I wanted to find out which characteristics of verbal and non-verbal communication become salient in the state visit process. The third question deals with the ability of the participants to act in intercultural situations and the tactics they employ to minimise misunderstandings when organising a state visit. The fourth question refers to the various aspects that are used to evaluate and/or measure the success of the state visit.

5.2 Generating Data

Sixteen (16) semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews with participants of different state visits to Finland constitute the major source of data of this study. I had prepared a list of questions to cover different areas of the state visit process. Questions were categorised as follows:

1. Purpose and objective of the state visit
ex. " What is the importance of the political substance of the state visit?"
2. Verbal and non-verbal communication
ex. " What factors determine the choice of the official language for the state visit?"
" How much the differences of the concept of time affect the state visit process?"
" What kinds of gifts are exchanged during the visit?"
3. Miscommunication at the state visit process
ex. " What is the importance of the rules of protocol?"
" What tools are used to avoid misunderstanding when conducting a state visit?"
4. Image building and PR
ex. " Are the Finns good at creating positive images?"
5. Media and public interest
ex. " What factors affect the media and public interest (royal, neighbours, political weight) ?"

In these categories I had a series of questions that guided me through the interviews. I selected these questions by discussing about my research theme with an ambassador who had formerly been appointed as the Chief of Protocol and who helped me to formulate most of the research questions. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to select different questions I found important with various interviewees. Not all the questions were suitable for all participants. Many respondents had made extensive lists of their own and started the interview with the aspects they considered important. I have categorised the interviewees into three groups according to their role in the state visit process:

1. Host organisers: Office of the President of the Republic, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
six (6) participants
2. Supportive bodies: Translators, Press Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, House of Parliament, The Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers
five (5) participants
3. Representatives of guests: Ambassadors of Argentina, Belgium, Estonia, Poland and Sweden
five (5) participants

The interviews were carried out during the summer and fall 1998 mainly during my internship at the Protocol Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Helsinki. The interviewees were selected according to the following criteria: Firstly, host organisers and supportive bodies had all participated several state visits to Finland and abroad and had an extensive knowledge on state visit practices. Secondly, four of the representatives of guests had been posted as ambassadors to Finland during which their heads of state had made a state visit to Finland. One representative of the guest had not participated in a state visit to Finland but had been posted previously as a Chief of Protocol and could thereby be considered as a valuable source. All participants were closely related to the international activities between nations and not only equipped with an extensive command of languages but also had spent time abroad and travelled greatly.

The interviewees were first addressed by person, telephone, and/or letter. Arranging the interviews was very time-consuming due to the busy working schedules of the participants. Also it was possible to have only two to three interviews per week after I noticed that most interviewees preferred that the discussions were not recorded. I wrote notes during the interview and immediately after the discussion, wrote down what had been discussed based on my notes. All participants agreed to be interviewed, but one intended representative of the guests was unable to receive me due to extensive

travelling and was therefore excluded from the data. Two (2) host-organisers were interviewed twice due to their busy timetables. Before the interview the participants were provided with the basic information of the issues the interview would cover. All interviews were carried out at the offices of the participants' workplaces.

Usually the interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes and were conducted in English (5) or in Finnish (11) depending on the interviewees mother tongue. The interviews in Finnish were translated into English. Only three of the interviews were recorded. The rest 12 were written according to my notes. All interview transcripts were sent back to the participants to be verified and corrected. It was also clear to the participants that all the approved material could be used in this thesis. All participants were well prepared and interested in the topic to the extent that some respondents started the interviews by presenting their ideas about the topic supported by notes and various documents such as state visit programmes, news paper articles and other material concerning state visits.

Some of the data was generated from the state visit programmes and preparation files. The structure, ceremonies and programme of the state visit are adopted from the programmes of ten state visits to Finland between May 1995 and May 1998 and the few examples from the following state visits are used as examples to illustrate some concepts of the state visit practice:

The President of the Republic of Estonia and Mrs Lennart Meri,
May 16-18, 1995

Queen Beatrix of Netherlands
June 1-3, 1995

The President of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zemin and
Mrs Wang Yeping
July 15-18, 1995

King Albert II of Belgium and Queen Paola
June 5-7, 1996

King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden
August 28-30, 1996

President of Greece, Constantinos Stephanopoulos
October 8-10, 1996

President of the Republic of Iceland Mr Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson and
Mrs Guðrún Katrín Þorbergsdóttir
August 25-28, 1997

President of the Republic of Latvia Mr Guntis Ulmanis and
Mrs Aina Ulmane
November 4-6, 1997

President of the Republic of Poland Mr Aleksander Kwasniewski and
Mrs Jolanta Kwasniewska
May 18-20, 1998

President of the Republic of Argentina Mr Carlos Menem
May 29-30, 1998

President of the Republic of Tanzania Mr and Mrs William Mkapu
August 17-20, 1998

The preparation files usually consisted of the correspondence between the organisers of the host country and of the visiting country about the development of the proceedings of the visit. The detailed information about every ceremony and travel location was also filed. Information about ceremonies consisted instructions of each ceremony and travel location in detail. In Finnish this data is called "*askelmerkit*", an athletics term "*stepmarks*". Other ceremonial information covered seating orders, menus, decorations, gifts, flagging, etc. Preparation files also included some press releases, thank-you notes, car orders and so forth. The preparation files were situated at the archives of the Protocol Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The archive was rather unorganised and incomplete but it provided valuable information for my study. All this material is categorised as "*for official use only*" by the Office of the President of the Republic and by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and thus not used as reference material of this study but merely to illustrate the concept of the state visit and to give some examples of the state visit programme.

5.3 Analysing Data

Sixteen (16) semi-structured interviews were content analysed. (Hirsjärvi & al,1997, Mason, 1996). According to Frey & al.(1992:163-164), the following aspects should be considered when reading textual analytic studies. Firstly, texts should be appropriately selected to serve the purpose of the study. Secondly, the method should be selected to produce valid data. Thirdly, the selected texts should be complete and accurate. Fourthly, it should be decided whether the texts were to be analysed by counting or by selecting samples and whether the selection of the samples is conducted at random or not. It was the intent of this study that the selected interview material would be complete and accurate and serve the objectives of this study.

Krippendorff (1980:21) states that content analysis is "*research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context .*" By using content analysis valid inferences can be drawn "*about the characteristics of producers and receivers of messages and of the context in which a message is produced.*" In conducting a content analysis the messages or texts are identified as units. Frey & al (1992:196) identify five different units which can be used in content analysis: 1. *physical units*, such as books, TV programmes, 2. *syntactical units*, such as words or metaphors, 3. *referential units* refer to the characteristics of the nuances the individual expresses, 4. *propositional units*, are used to support a specific candidate or item, and 5. *thematic units* refer to specific topics and themes.

In this study the interview data is reorganised as thematic units (see also Cools, 1998:54-56) because of its suitability in providing an interesting analysis of the state visits and because I have conducted the interviews by covering general topics and themes of the state visits rather than any specific notions. I want to stress here that the interviews of the 16 respondents reflect their perceptual view of this topic. The respondent's remarks are coded so that the Roman numerals I-XVI represent the interviewees and the numbers correspond to the comments. I have analysed the data from the interviews in eighteen (18) thematic units. The analysis of responses to specific thematic units is based on the general concept the interviewee had stressed with the comment rather than any specific word included in the remark. The following thematic units were identified:

1. Personal relations between Heads of state
ex. "*Friendship is more important than the substance in diplomatic relations. Diplomacy is not international politics but promote friendship. State visit is the best instrument to promote that friendship.(V.1)*"
2. Manifestation and continuity of good relations between states
ex. "*In a way state visit is a relic but it promotes the bilateral relations.(I.15)*"
3. Image building in the host country and in the visiting country
ex. "*State visit also has external information value.(VI.3)*"
4. Political aspects of the state visit
ex. "*Political power counts. State visit can be loaded with heavy political substance. The purpose of the state visit: substance, image, PR.(IV.10)*"
5. Specified reasons for conducting a state visit, such as trade relations, membership of an alliance, geographical location
ex. "*New President of Poland starts state visits with neighbouring countries.(III.11)*"

6. Use of official, unofficial languages or mother tongue during the state visit

ex. " *Selecting an official language for the state visit depends on what language does the high guest speak/understand.(IV.11)*"

7. Official and unofficial fora of communication of the state visit

ex. " *President Ahtisaari usually accepts business delegations to make courtesy calls at his residence. This is greatly appreciated amongst the business people. (VIII.8)*"

8. Miscommunication during the state visit process

ex. " *The more one learns other languages the more one realises that our aspirations are same. (V.6)*"

9. Symbolism of dress code, decorations, flags, gifts and seating order in a state visit process

ex. " *When the King of Sweden visited the House of Parliament, the Speaker of the Parliament had the gift (which she had received earlier from the King) at the table. The high guest laughed and said that the vase had been taken out and polished from dust.(XI.9)*"

10. State visit programme in minutes, duration of state visits, participant's perceptions towards time

ex. " *Good timetable is a key element to the state visit.(V.10)*"

11. The significance of kinesics (body movements) and paralanguage (tone of voice) in communication situations during the state visit

ex. " *...translator does not tell a joke but translates it.(XIII.9)*"

12. Perceptions of self and of others

ex. " *Finns as hosts are very flexible and used to sudden changes.(IV.4)*"

13. Meaning of protocol when conducting a state visit

ex. " *Protocol is needed as a fixed principle of how to act...(IV.6)*"

14. Professionalism of the organisers as a tool used to avoid uncertain situations during the state visit

ex. " *The know-how of organising comes from experience. You can not learn it from the books nor at schools.(I.13)*"

15. Advance preparations as a tool to avoid uncertain situations during the state visit

ex. " *The guests can follow the ceremonies from the video beforehand so that they get some idea how the ceremonies are proceeded here in Finland.(I.16)*"

16. The media and the public interest of the state visit as a measurement

of successful state visit

ex. " *The interest of the public of the welcoming ceremonies in front of the Presidential Palace depends on weather. (III.12)*"

17. Continuity of good relations between nations and achievement of concrete results due to a state visit

ex. " *...if not concrete results then some continuity, promise of progress in co-operation. (XVI.11)*"

18. Pragmatics such as being on time, receiving a decoration and so forth as measurement of a successful state visit.

ex. " *We can measure differently how well the visit succeeded: being on time, publicity, meals, receiving a decoration.(XI.10)*"

These eighteen (18) thematic units generated five categories of main themes.

1. *Relations between nations* refer to different objectives that are given significance in the state visit process, interelite communication, nation's image, international affairs and transnational. interactions (Thematic units 1 to 5).

2. *Communication fora of a state visit* refers to official and unofficial communication events during the state visit process, use of languages during the state visit process, the form of negotiating face, levels of independence/involvement (thematic units 6-8).

3. *Non-verbal signs and codes* denote here the symbolic non-verbal communication such as dress code, flags, gifts and photographs and some non-verbal codes such as the tone of voice, body movements and the concept of time (thematic units 9-11).

4. *Tools to avoid miscommunication* signify the different methods that are used to prevent misunderstandings between the participants of the state visit process, such as the rules of protocol, preparations, and the desired characteristics of professional organisers that are given importance among the respondents to help to conduct a successful state visit (thematic units 12-15).

5. *Measuring and evaluating the success of a state visit* refers to respondents notions of the aspects of a successful state visit such as the nature of media interest, the public interest, favourable outcome of the state visit programme, and success of the organisers in practicalities (thematic units 16-18).

In the following chapter I will present the results of this study based on the analysis of the interview data.

6 RESULTS

This study will concentrate on the different cultural and public relations aspects of the state visit process to Finland. In order to present valid information, the semi-structured interviews were processed with respondents who possess a high knowledge of state visit processes. Remarks were appropriately selected and counted to correspond the topic and themes, and then identified according to the thematic units.

A summary of the number of remarks in different areas is presented in Table 1. Each of the five categories, 1. relations between nations, 2. verbal communication, 3. non-verbal signs and codes, 4. tools to avoid miscommunication, and 5. measuring and evaluating the success of a state visit, are presented in this order. Even though I show how the remarks have been distributed in each category the emphasis of this study is to view state visits as a processes examine the aspects of intercultural communication and public relations that are given significance by the respondents. Perhaps, the number of remarks in different categories can illustrate the assumptions the interviewees had on different topics. It should also be noted that some of the respondents remarks apply to other state visits than those ten visits I have used in this study as examples. I found that information also relevant to this study to illustrate different aspects of the state visit processes.

1. Relations between nations	2. Communication fora	3. Non-verbal signs and codes	4. Tools to avoid miscommunication	5. Measures of success
Interelite comm. 29	Use of languages 41	Symbols 31	Perceptions 31	Media & public interest 19
Nation's image 29	Fora of comm. 25	Concept of time 15	Protocol 20	Continuity 9
Intl. Affairs 14	Miscomm. 16	Kinesics & paralanguage 10	Professionalism 12	Practicalities 12
Transnat. Int.act. 12			Preparations 19	
Total remarks 84	Total remarks 82	Total remarks 56	Total remarks 82	Total remarks 40

Table 1.

There were several comments by the respondents that could have been allotted into at least two different categories. I have used every remark just once

based on my understanding of the concept that has been stressed by the remark. For example, when asked about the objectives of the state visit the respondents, noted on one hand, that the promotion a national image was considered an important factor. One way of promoting a good image were the positive appearances in national and international media. On the other hand, one measurement of the success of a state visit was the level of media interest given to the visit. I have chosen the category for the comments based on my understanding of the larger context the respondent had stressed during the interview. I also have included those comments in these numbers that the respondents asked me not to use.

6.1 Relations between Nations

With the question, what is the purpose of a state visit, I wanted to find out different objectives that were given importance in the state visit process. Some respondents started the interviews by explaining the purpose of the state visit before I had asked that particular question. Questions related to the objectives of state visits resulted in eighty-four (84) remarks, which I categorised under the thematic units (1-5) and reorganised as aspects of interelite communication, nation's image, international affairs, and transnational interactions. The remarks of the respondents were divided accordingly:

Interelite communication	Nation's image	International affairs	Transnational interactions
(personal relations, manifestation of good relations, continuity)	(country's image profiling industries, history)	(political substance, summits & conferences, national interest)	(trade, alliance, geographical location)
Total 29 remarks	Total 29 remarks	Total 14 remarks	Total 12 remarks

Table 2.

State visits were seen as a forum to manifest good relations between the two nations and between the heads of state and to try to maintain a continuous interaction between the states. Promoting a countries' good image together with the high guest's personal image both abroad and at home was considered as one of the main objectives of the state visits. Another reasons for organising state visits was to discuss political issues and address national interests on a more bilateral level. Nation's geographical location, membership in alliances and trade interests were considered as sufficient reasons for arranging a state visit.

6.1.1 Interelite Communication

Interelite communication refers to those objectives of a state visit that promote personal relations and communication between the primary elite i.e. the high guests and the delegations or other participants taking part in the state visit. It also emphasises the expression of good relations and continuity of good relations between the two states. These issues were given twenty-nine (29) remarks, amongst the respondents when defining the purpose of the state visit.

State visit was seen as a forum to promote and develop good personal relations. It was pointed out that even though the heads of state meet each other regularly in different summits and conferences, good personal relations are needed. Good personal relations were seen important in opening channels of communication, to promote mutual interests such as trade issues, and to organise impromptu discussions whenever necessary.

" Even though bilateral visits will probably be outnumbered by the multilateral summits, meetings and conferences, state visits are still needed to develop good personal relations.(IV.1)"

" Friendship is more important than the substance in diplomatic relations. Diplomacy is not international politics. Its Raison d'être is to promote friendship. State visit is the best instrument to serve that friendship.(V.1)"

"Reason for state visit to Finland was that the King of the Belgians visits all new EU-member countries but also due to good personal relations with President Ahtisaari. The King of the Belgians visited Finland before any other new member country because of a personal and private interest in Finland.(V.2) "

"State visits are normally short, only a couple of days. Personal contact has become important. Perhaps more than signing some contract or a pact. Important is the interchange not what they sign. The President of the Republic of Finland and the President of Argentina knew each other and liked each other. They had good relations.(XII.1)"

Interviewees accorded importance to the manifestation of good relations as a component of interelite communication. State visit was seen as a universal model of an official event to show at the highest level the good relations between nations. One respondent said that the state visit formula is a relic (I.15) but gives a right framework to promote the bilateral relations .

"Vierailujen tasolla voidaan osoittaa, mikä painoarvo suhteiden kehittämiseksi halutaan antaa" / "The quality of the visit can indicate importance given on developing bilateral relations.(VII.1)"

"The media coverage of the visit helps the countries to show that the relations between the two countries is good. Through media, Finnish people got up-to-date information about Poland.(III.1)"

" ...The state visit is not that much a personal meeting but more importantly a show of respect to an other country. (XVI.1)"

The remarks also stated that forming personal relations between the members of official delegations promoted continuity of communication, personal and PR value. Also, making contacts after the state visit became easier, *"just pick up a phone.(III.2)"* Continuity was also seen as a part of the foreign policy making and a form of diplomacy. State visits were seen as a component of continuity of relations between states in different levels, not only between the heads of state, *"countries do not start building up relations with state visits".. "State visit is a part of continuous dialogue between nations (heads of state, ministers, parliamentary delegations, trade, culture...).(IV.2)"*

" State visit is just a part of a continuous co-operation between countries. Before the president travels there are usually some ministerial visits. After that comes state visit or similar where the head of state or government is the high guest. After that comes follow-up visits, for example ministers, high government officers, experts, business delegations and so forth. After that the head of state makes a counter visit and so it continues.(VIII.1)"

Remarks of continuity also referred to old relations between the members of the delegation in their respective careers, *" High guests from the middle and eastern Europe are usually old acquaintances. They have been ministers , MPs earlier. It is easier to communicate with them because we know them (IX.1)"*, as well as the formation of new relations between newly elected presidents, ministers and other high government officials. *"State visit is a forum where the newly elected heads of state or governments, prime ministers and other cabinet members can develop good relations...(III.3)."*

6.1.2 Nation's image

The remarks of the respondents on various reasons for conducting a state visit resulted in comments on promoting the favourable image of the host's as well as the visitor's country. Image building was differentiated in comments so that importance was laid on the country's image as a prosperous, industrialised, and liable business partner. State visit was seen as a useful platform to raise the public's level of knowledge and awareness of other countries. Interviewees commented that understanding the history of the visiting and the host country was needed in order to build up or maintain a desired image. Twenty-nine (29) comments stressed on the presentation of a favourable image of the country as a reason to conduct a state visit.

It is quite common that the state visit programme extends outside of capitals so that the high guest and the official delegation get a chance to develop a broader picture of the host country. The Finnish hosts consider this very important not only for the guests who can experience more but also to the Finnish public who can thus get a glimpse of the important visitors if they so desire. *" Visiting other cities than Helsinki (Turku, Tampere, Oulu, Jyväskylä) is usually a part of the programme. Selected city/cities depend on the interest of the high guest and what these cities have to offer. This is also important to the Finnish public.(I.2)"* Organising a state visit was considered as one of the best tools for portraying a favourable image of Finland. The hosts could present all what is best in Finland. *" ...secure structure of nation...we can have a demonstration in front of the House of Parliament at the same time with the state visit, architecture, positive attitude of hosts, organising ability (straight, ascetic, reliable).(XI.4)"* It was assumed that the high guests remembered the image the hosts had created rather than the political substance of the state visit.

Building a nation's good image by organising a state visit was also considered important to business and trade. State visits were regarded as a good opportunity to present and profile the industries and the expertise in certain fields in a more detailed fashion.

" In 1990's the state visit can be seen as a instrument to go global. There has been a definite need of this kind of help to promote the Finnish business. State visit gives a chance to the Finnish industry to show that it is reliable partner and has come to stay and to develop a long term relationship abroad.(VIII.2)"

State visits were seen a suitable forum to bring the politicians and the business people together in various cultural functions that were organised during the state visits as well as at meetings and business symposiums. The representatives of industries have also sponsored various events of the state visit programme and thus become a part of the state visit organisers. The awareness of the nature of the political culture of the visiting or of the host country was also stressed.

" ...the Federation of the Finnish Industry and Employers sponsored a music evening for 850 guests in Chile during President Ahtisaari's visit to Latin America in 1997... in this case the Finnish musicians performed both Finnish and Latin American music. One of the Latin American song had a special political importance and performing it was not appreciated by all the audience...the situation was not dramatic but it reminded us of how much knowledge we should have.(VIII.3)"

For the Finnish industries the main goal of participating the state visit was not finalising the trade contracts but to strengthen good relations, to ensure continuous co-operation and to *"show that we are the leader in the fields of certain industries.(VIII.4)"*

Referring to the history of relations between the participating countries was seen as a consequential factor when promoting a desirable image of one's country and its publics. Knowledge of historical background was considered to help to comprehend each other. It was noted that today when the communication technology is so advanced, it is important that we know what is going on in the visiting country at present and by being aware of the historical factors we not only understand what the others are doing but why they are doing it. One respondent defined a nation *"as a group of people combined of what they did in the past and what they are going to do in the future.(XII.2)"*

6.1.3 International Affairs

International affairs refer to any political aspect of a state visit, for example, remarks on politics, power, constitution, summits, conferences, national interest. A total of fourteen (14) remarks, emphasised the international affairs. It consisted of comments on the political substance of the visit, on conferences and summits as fora of heads of state to meet. The respondents also considered the state visit as a forum where different topics of national interest could be introduced.

Remarks on the amount of the political substance of the state visit were compared with the amount of political power enjoyed by the high guest. Political substance as an objective of a state visit was stressed and was given most attention as an aspect of international affairs. The political power of the high guest was related to the constitution of the visiting country and it was considered a factor that moulded the state visit programme.

"Political substance of the state visit depends on how much the high guest has political power.(XIV.1)"

"... countries like Germany, Italy and some monarchs carry the interest of state visits in general level and put more emphasis on trade, tourism, and general issues. Whereas the countries where the heads of state possess the political importance and weight (Poland, France, Russia) more importance is put on the official negotiations. "When political negotiations start, the monarchs usually exit but the president of the republic actively participates in the discussion.(I.3)"

"The King of the Belgians is entitled to participate in person-to person and in official negotiations if he so chooses.(V.3)"

The summits and conferences and other international meetings were considered as more important fora of communication to the heads of state than the state visits. On the other hand, it was also noted that the monarchs appreciated state visits over summits and conferences because they lacked in political weight that was needed in those meetings. Also, it was not seen very important any more to load the state visit programme with heavy political substance due to the increased development in communication technology and

greater possibilities for the heads of state to meet and to deal with issues that are considered important at that time.

" Ennenvanhaan kun maat olivat kulkuyhteyksien vuoksi etäämmällä toisistaan, niin valtiovierailuihin pystyttiin kasaamaan monen vuoden ongelmat ja tulevaisuuden toiveet, jotka sitten korkealla tasolla pystyttiin hoitamaan. Nykyisin asiat voidaan hoitaa puhelimella, internetillä sun muulla. Ongelmat voidaan hoitaa, silloin kun ne tulee eteen."/ "The importance of political substance has suffered through the increasing development of high technology and different channels of communication. Today, the important issues between the states can be handled quickly via different channels of communication whereas before issues were collected for a long time and then negotiated at the highest level.(II.2)"

"Conferences, summits, EU council meetings are more important to presidents than to monarchs. There is a constitutional difference.(IV.3)"

There are so many international meetings, conferences and summits which are organised around a specific substance. The heads of state and governments, the prime ministers and the foreign ministers meet with each other regularly so there is not that much need for political context during the state visit.(XVI.2)"

With state visits the heads of state can show to their publics that they pay attention to foreign politics. The remarks reflect national interest as a reason to organise a state visit. This meant different ways of improving the balance of interest between the host and the visiting country.

6.1.4 Transnational Interactions

Transnational interactions refer to the objectives of the state visit that were found from the areas of trade, alliance, and geographical location. Twelve (12) remarks considered these aspects prominent.

Respondents considered the trade delegations to be important especially when they were a part of the official delegation of the high guest. This was seen as a valuable contribution to the promotion of business abroad. For business, the state visit was an event to develop good business contacts, introduce industries, and raise interest so that the business could be highly profiled to the host country. Signing contracts during the visit was considered less important. One remark contemplated that trade relations were more important an objective of the state visit than political issues. Trade delegations were considered to appear reliable and constant when following the high guest to the state visit. On the other hand, if the countries were neighbours it was considered not that important that the trade delegations participated the state visit. The trade relations could be established any way.

" Economic and trade delegations that follow the head of state abroad have become more common also in Estonia...when President Meri made a state visit to Finland the

business delegation did not follow him. Firstly, because Finland and Estonia are so closely situated and they have already established business in each other's countries.(XVI.3)"

"State visit is a good forum to promote business...there is a growing interest to invest in Poland...the Polish try to increase exports to Finland but the results are not concrete yet.(III.4)"

The geographical aspect was also noted, by stating that it is customary that the newly elected presidents make their first state visits to neighbouring countries. President Ahtisaari begun his series of state visits by visiting first Sweden in 13.-15.5.1994, then Estonia, in 31.05.-01.06.1994. The first state visit to Finland during President Ahtisaari's term was paid by the President of Estonia in 16.-18.5.1995. (<http://www.tpk.fi>). " *President Ahtisaari starts with Sweden, Nordic countries, Baltic countries, U.S.A, Russia, and EU-countries.(I.4)"*

Being a member of an alliance was also considered to have an effect on the content of the state visit. These responses partly came up with the remarks about summits and conferences. Remarks of an alliance referred to the European Union. On one hand state visits between EU-member countries were predicted to become less important than state visits outside of the EU because the heads of state and governments, ministers and high officials have an opportunity to meet via EU and discuss matters concerning their respective countries. On the other hand, the other respondent argued that during the EU meetings there is no time to discuss on bilateral issues because "*multilateral affairs take all the time.(IV.4)"* State visits are needed for a dialogue on bilateral matters.

6.2 The Communication Fora of a State Visit

I wanted to find out what kind of different communication fora the state visit provided, both official and unofficial. I also wanted to look for different languages used during the state visit. These languages I called parallel languages. What were the reasons that determined the choice of the official language for the state visit and what motives influenced the usage, for instance, of mother tongue or a foreign language on different occasions. It was a bit surprising that the use of English language was much emphasised in interviews. Hence, I have chosen to discuss about the favoured position of English in more detail. The aspects of miscommunication caused by cultural differences and/or knowledge of languages are also examined. The aspects of verbal communication received a total of eighty-two (82) remarks which I organised into thematic units 6-8. Remarks were divided accordingly:

Use of languages	Fora of communication	Miscommunication
(official language, unofficial languages mother tongue, use of English)	(official, unofficial fora)	(knowledge of languages cultural differences intentional miscommunication)
Total 41 remarks	Total 25 remarks	Total 16 remarks

Table 3.

6.2.1 The Use of Languages

The use of languages pertains to different languages the delegation members may use during the state visit process. Forty-one (41) remarks pointed out various aspects of selecting a language to various situations. I reorganised the remarks into the groups of official language, unofficial language, mother tongue, and the English language. I had not planned to discuss about one specific language but it became obvious during the interviews that the English language had a special status. Use of English was referred repeatedly so that is why I considered it important.

Official language refers in this context to the pre-negotiated language of written material such as menus, programmes and the common language spoken between the heads of state. In interviews, the respondents used the term official language rather freely and it covered many things. *"Official language means all printed material, programmes, menus etc...(VI.1)"*

Remarks pointed out that selecting the official language of the state visit depended on the knowledge of the languages the high guests were proficient in. Also, the notion of equality was pointed out. One interviewee felt that *"the use of language which is one's mother tongue and other's foreign language can be felt*

that one is in a more favourable position (nuance and expressions)...(XVI.4)" Other reasons for selecting an official language of the state visit were the national rules, "what is the country's policy? French, Germans, Swedish use their own languages.(I.5)" One respondent preferred common language over using the native tongue because of more direct contact by using one language. " When translators are used the high guests have only half the time to discuss.(IV.5)"

In ten state visits to Finland between 1995 and 1998, five (5) countries, Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Poland, and Argentina used English as official language and three (3) countries, Estonia, China, and Latvia used their mother tongues as official language. When mother tongues are the official language of the visit, programmes of the state visit are printed in both languages. With Sweden and Iceland, Swedish was used.

Unofficial language refers to any other languages that are used during the state visit, and which have no recognised status. Events where unofficial language is used are, for example, small talk, greetings and such. The high guests may have prepared with a few phrases in host's or guest's language or at receptions or dinners the High guests may speak several languages with hosts and other guests. Using unofficial languages *"is a gesture of politeness and respect if one has the knowledge of guest's language, but there are problems when the official discussions are held.(XVI.5)"*

" But for example, in Latin American countries, a delegation member who spoke good Spanish used that together with English. (VIII.5)"

Speaking different languages was also seen as a form of marketing self to publics.

" Chirac spoke French and Brundtland spoke English. Both understood each other but could/would not speak each others language. It was also a principle.(XIV.2)"

"Prime Minister of France Lionel Jospin spoke English when visiting the United Kingdom, whereas the Prime Minister of the U.K. Tony Blair showed his good command of French.(XIII.1)"

The use of native tongue relates to high guest's own language and situations where it is used. It is customary that the official speeches and toasts are made in mother tongue and written translations are provided. Official discussions can also be held in mother tongue with translators. Mother tongue is used in official events and its status was referred to the substance of the discussions and to the avoidance of misunderstandings.

"...tämä kielihomma pätee myös virallisiin keskusteluihin, että niissä jokainen yleensä käyttää äidinkieltään, ettei tulisi mitään väärinkäsityksiä."/"... use of languages is also related to official negotiations. Everyone speaks his/her mother tongue in order to avoid misunderstandings.(VII.2)"

Mother tongue is used to observe national rules. It can also be a sign of what is the used policy between the two countries.

" The King of the Belgians gives speeches in his own languages, French and Flemish, which are then translated to Finnish. This is one way of implementing bilingual rules.(V.4)"

"The use of mother tongue can be a sign of reciprocity. For example in letters, if letters are written in mother tongue with translation included, the other country uses the same method with that particular country.(III.5)"

One remark stated that the mother tongue can also be an expression of power. *"We speak our own language even if we can speak your language.(III.6.)"*

If the native tongue is used the role of translators is highlighted. One interviewee stated that the heads of state are accustomed to using translators and continued that using a translator is *"a different form of communication.(XIII.2)"* *" If a person possess an excellent mastery of his/her mother tongue, he/she usually understands better other languages even though he/she does not speak them. Their answer will show whether the intended messages and the nuances have been translated correctly and understood by the participants.(XIII.3)"*

As mentioned before, I wanted to examine the use of English language as its own item, because the interviewees referred to its use so often. I had not prepared any questions or comments on the role of English or any other language of that matter. I knew that French has been considered as a diplomatic language and believed that it was used regularly. Five (5) heads of state, those of Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Poland and Argentina used English as the official language during their state visit to Finland.

Reasons for the popularity of English laid emphasis on its global use. *"English has become a global language and no other language has same qualifications to do so.(XVI.6)"* The official language of the Estonian state visit was the mother tongue but *"President Ahtisaari and President Meri spoke English together. (XVI.6)"* Responses also pointed out that English had become more common than the traditional diplomatic language, French. *"English is used, French is losing its importance.(I.6)"*

"English has become a neutral common language. There is a paradox that the use of English has increased after Finland became a member of the EU. It is a good protocol language. French, German, Swedish, and Russian could be used with the heads of state of those countries but with others English.(XIV.3)"

" Usually the guest and the host speak English, but still in the beginning of the 90's verbal notes were written in French.(XI.5)"

On the other hand, it was also noted that perhaps English was less used in countries where French had stronger position in education and in politics.

"...in Poland the knowledge of French is wider than in Finland.(III.7)"

"There still are many ambassadors who use French as the language of official communication between each other. These Heads of Missions usually represent countries where the use and learning of French is more common and where the mother tongue has roots in Latin.(XVI.7)"

Popularity and extensive use of English was also criticised in interviews. Respondents commented that using that much English lessened the ability to use and understand other languages.

"Englannin kielen käyttö on yleistynyt, mutta edelleen esim EU-protokollassa asiat hoidetaan ranskalla. Selvää on, että paljon asioita jää huomaamatta, jos tukeutuu vaan englannin kieleen."/English has become more common, but still EU-protocol uses French. It is clear that lots of things go unnoticed if only English is used.(VII.3)"

"Only 8-10 years ago programs of the state visits were printed in two languages, in Finnish and guest's language. Today, mainly English is used. What does this tell about our knowledge of languages.(II.2)"

Respondents also criticized that the Finnish took often for granted that other people spoke English and that they could use it well. One comment stated that Finnish preferred elementary knowledge of English from speaking mother tongue and using translators.

"It is important to keep in mind that if one communicates in English without translator, one should have excellent command of English.(XII.4)"

"We compromise the use of language and think it is easier to speak English than use translator. We somehow assume that everyone speaks English. In Finland it is taken for granted that the Finns speak good English. We do not have the same attitude towards other languages.(XIII.5)"

6.2.2 The Fora of Communication

Fora of communication refer to various communication events in the state visit process such as official negotiations, speeches and lectures, press conferences and so forth. I have divided these communication fora to official and unofficial events. Twenty-five (25) comments referred to these aspects in the interviews.

Official fora of communication in the state visit process represent those events which are a fixed part of the state visit structure. The substance of the official discussion is usually selected beforehand by both parties. Official fora of

the state visit are all the official discussions between the heads of state, ministers, and other members of the delegations. I consider the toast speeches that are held at the state banquet or at the reception as official fora because of their public nature and their substance. Furthermore the meetings with the advance-teams before the state visit are considered here as official fora. Comments on official fora were rather equivocal. On one hand official negotiations and toasts were seen profitable and efficient. On the other hand they were seen old-fashioned.

When the substance had been decided beforehand, the wide range of issues could be covered in short time *"from general policy line to detailed issues.(VI.2)"* Also, ministerial discussions were considered more important if the visiting minister came outside the EU. *"The EU ministers and high officials meet regularly anyway within the EU.(V.5)"*

"...agenda on sovittu etukäteen osapuolten kanssa niistä aiheista mistä keskustellaan, mitkä perustuu etukäteisvalmisteluihin, ettei ne mihinkään yllättäviin keskusteluihin mene..."/ ...the agenda of the discussions is agreed beforehand, so there are no surprises...(VII.4)"

But even though the agenda is well prepared beforehand, during the tête-à-tête meetings the heads of state can discuss freely and perhaps not all of that is informed to public.

"... useimmiten virallisiin neuvotteluihin liittyy myös kahdenkeskinen tapaaminen valtion päämiesten kanssa...heillä on tietysti agenda taustalla, mutta sillä hetkellä he voi tietysti puhua mistä haluaa, ja mitä siitä sitten tiedotetaan muille on heidän oma asiansa..."/...in tête-à-tête meetings, even though there is an agenda, the heads of state can discuss what they like and not everything is necessarily reported to the public.(VII.5)"

Industry and business people considered official receptions and state banquets acceptable places to make closer contacts with visitors and continue discussions in a more informal fashion. One remark noted that the ambience of the state banquet is relaxed and intimate. *"This changes during the toast speeches when they are televised.(XIII.6)"* Toast speeches were seen ceremonial but also as sources of information of the current situation of both countries as well as promoting good image. Toast speeches are usually held in mother tongue and written translations are provided for the guests.

" Jos ajatellaan päivällispuheita kautta ajan, niin niissä on ollut hyvinkin laajoja katsauksia sen hetkisen tilanteen ja maan politiikkaan ja kahden välisiin suhteisiin....tottakai niissä on niin sanottu seremoniallinen puoli jossa toivotetaan vieras vielä tervetulleeksi....että vierailu on hänelle mieleen ja että jää hyvä kuva Suomesta..."/"If one looks at the toast speeches back in history, they have covered extensive political issues, current situations in country's politics, and bilateral relations... of course the ceremonial part has also been important, i.e. the guest has been

welcomed...and wished to have a successful visit so that the guest will have a good image of Finland.(VII.6)"

On the other hand, the official fora were considered old-fashioned because the information distributed *"is already old when it reaches the audience, because the written version of it is usually handed beforehand.(IX.1)"*

Unofficial fora refer to different communication events which occur irregularly and sometimes spontaneously. Personal discussions between the high guests can take place, for example, during the table discussions at the dinner or luncheon. Receptions organised by the visiting head of state are good examples of informal gatherings where people mingle freely and meet many people. The visiting head of state can also organise a reception to a colony of his/her country. Usually it is held at the embassy without lots of formalities.

Lectures and speeches at the universities or for example at the Paasikivi-Society are quite common. These events are considered important fora for reaching wider audience, *"and more people can talk to the president.(III.8)"* Distributing au courant information about the country's current status was remarked as a good point.

"The possibility of a speech or lecture given by the high guest has become more common and is considered an important point. Members of the Corps Diplomatique are very interested in these speeches and lectures in the Paasikivi Society or somewhere else...(XVI.8)"

"President Kwasniewski gave a speech at the University of Tampere. The speech addressed the younger generation. Public or semi-public speeches are important. That way the high guests can reach wider audience, because the delegations of the state visits are rather limited in number. The possibility to give speeches and lectures has increased and that is good.(III.9)"

On the other hand, it was stated that speeches and lectures were considered old-fashioned and somewhat unreliable channels of distributing information. *"Speeches can be used to cover some sensitive opinions or to bluff when there is absolutely nothing to say.(IX.2)"* Press conferences were preferred over speeches or lectures because they were more dynamic and were held according to the rules of the media.

.." At press conferences, items not related to the state visit itself can also be covered.(IX.3)"

One remark noted that it was positive that the president of the republic accepted often the courtesy calls by the business delegations because foreign representatives of businesses appreciated it a lot.

6.2.3 Miscommunication

During the state visit process, miscommunication was referred to in sixteen (16) remarks. Problems of proficiency in languages and cultural differences were pointed out to cause situations of misunderstanding. One comment argued that miscommunication could be intentional.

Interviewees affirmed that many methods were used in order to understand each other. It was not seen that serious if there was no common language. If the language was very exotic, translators were used. Also sign and body language could be used when necessary. One remark stated that young officers, for example, in security were trained to specialise in different languages. The issue of increasing the use of English came up in a discussion on miscommunication. An interviewee was afraid that the Finnish use English even if the guest speaks hardly any English....*"the Finns are not necessarily aware of that.(XIII.7)"* Some visitors print programmes also in their own language when there are members in the official suite who do not speak the official language of the visit.

The concept of faux amis i.e. when the same word has a different meaning in different languages was illustrated by the following example. When the President of Estonia Mr Lennart Meri made a state visit to Finland, one member of the Estonian delegation bore the title of Vice Chancellor in economic affairs/varakansleri which in Estonian is Asekantsler ("ase" means weapon in Finnish). Even though the visitor's title was translated correctly in the Finnish programme, varakansleri, at the state banquet held at the Presidential Palace, the visitor was seated next to the Finnish Minister of Defence. At an other dinner in Turku Castle, the delegation member was seated next to the Commander of Turku and Pori Military Province.

Miscommunication caused by the lack of common language was not seen very serious and respondents commented that there were not much problems. People who were part of the state visit process knew their tasks and were professionals. Everyone's goal was to conduct a successful state visit. *"The more one learns other languages the more one realises that our aspirations are the same.(V.6)"*

"Knowledge of culture is a knowledge of language. One can understand different languages without speaking them.(V.7)"

Miscommunication due to cultural differences was referred to simply as understanding things differently. *"... if the host understands the guests reasoning, he also understands how they think differently. Some questions which are important to the host are not seen that vital by the guest.(XIV.4)"* It was also noted that some countries were better understood than others. One example of misunderstanding was the difficulty to understand the difference between *"denial, suggestion, and order."* *" State visit succeeds if all parties understand the rules*

similarly. It is very hard work and there is a lot to learn.(VIII.6)" Usually both parties wanted to reach a compromise. That was possible if one party was not obstinately holding on to their own opinions. "The Crown Prince of Thailand allows only two persons of his party to accompany him for dinner. Finns could not understand nor accept that. Result was that at dinner there were three Thai guests and tens of Finnish guests.(II.3)"

And then, one comment argued that sometimes the miscommunication can be intentional if the participant does not want show that he/she does not understand other languages.

"People stick to their own language not because of power but because they do not know other languages. They hide that fact behind the power issue. People have interest in hiding similarities in order to control people.(V.8)"

6.3 Non-verbal Signs and Codes

With aspects of non-verbal signs and codes I wanted to look at the importance of the symbolic issues of state visits as well as what non-verbal codes were given a significance in communication processes during the visit. State visit embodies many ceremonies and events that are ruled by conventions. I also wanted to find out how strongly the national characteristics corresponded to these non-verbal symbols. A total of fifty-six (56) remarks on non-verbal signs and codes were organised under the thematic units 9-11 and were divided accordingly:

Symbols	Concept of time	Cinesics and paralanguage
(decorations, gifts, seating order, flags, dress code)	(minute programme, national rules, measure of success)	(translators)
Total remarks 31	Total remarks 15	Total remarks 10

Table 4.

State visits have many symbolic signs that are used to emphasise the ceremonial atmosphere of the occasion. These symbolic signs are flagging, dress codes, exchanging gifts and decorations, seating orders and so forth. Many events during the state visit have a specific dress code which assist the participants to dress correctly for the occasion. Symbols came up in interviews in thirty-one (31) remarks of ceremonial procedures. The concept of time, receiving fifteen (15) remarks, was one non-verbal code that was given important in the interviews. The state visit programmes are made on a minute-scale and the hectic timetable during the visit was pointed out. Other non-verbal codes such as body movements and paralanguage were given significance in ten (10) remarks and were only mentioned in the discussions on translators.

6.3.1 Symbols

Symbols apply to the ceremonial characteristics of the state visit which are determined by some conventions. In the respondents' remarks the exchange of decoration was considered as symbolic to the glamour of a state visit. It was noted that the exchange of decorations was ruled by national conventions and that decorations were more appreciated in some countries than others. For example, in Sweden, decorations are not given to the Swedish, only to the foreigners, *"that is why the Swedish like to exchange decorations.(I.7)"* It was considered important in one remark that the visiting country and the host country have established such systems that the exchange could take place. *"There have been problems with newly independent countries who had not yet established their decoration systems.(I.8)"* Decorations were also seen as a substitution of lavish gifts and wearing them in pomp on the occasion. One respondent argued that decorations were not received because of personal achievement, such as decorations given to war heroes, but the exchange during the state visit symbolised the circumstances of that visit. On the other hand, one interviewee remarked that receiving a decoration could be seen as a measure of success of the state visit.

When the interviewees were posed questions about exchanging gifts, not many comments came up. Exchanging gifts was seen as a rather private function but respondents considered that it had a symbolic importance. Hosts and guests selected gifts to manifest high quality, technology and design of their countries. It was also pointed out that today more trendy gifts were given and received. *" In gifts we try to show Finland as a country of high technology and quality design. The silver medal is presented in a birch case.(XI.6)"* Gifts were given to show gratitude *"to thank for the assistance during the visit.(V.9)"* Respondents, in general, were not eager to talk of what gifts they had received and stressed the private nature of the issue.

The seating order was seen as a tool to facilitate the procedures of formal events. Seating order is usually determined beforehand during the advance-team negotiations when the reciprocal order of precedence is clarified. Two interviewees took up the issue of seating order of gay and lesbian couples and noticed that the contemporary system does not acknowledge such a thing.

Flags as symbolic signs had a specific importance in the state visit process. Two points came up with special importance. When the high guest resides at the government guest house his/her national flag is hoisted to mark the territory of the high guest. *"It is their country, their territory as long as they stay there.(I.9)"*

" Se (lippu) markkeeraa ilman muuta sitä, että se on hänen asumuksensa sillä hetkellä ja nauttii sitä kaikkea koskemattomuutta mitä hän kotimaassaan nauttii. Kyllä se lippu on sellainen, ettei sitä enää niin voimakkaasti korosteta. Se on näitä

valtion symboleita, jotka sidotaan valtion päämieheen/ It (flag) emphasises his/her place of accommodation and that he/she enjoys the same rules of immunity as at home. The symbolic importance of the flag is not that much emphasised anymore and it mostly manifests the status of the head of state.(VII.7)" Another aspect that came up was the use the EU flag together with the national flag to show Finland's membership in the European Union. "*...se on sellainen symboliarvo, että kuulutaan eurooppaan/ it has a symbolic value that Finland is part of Europe.(VII.8)"*

Dress code as a non-verbal symbol was given significance by the respondents. Dress code was considered to give guidelines for the visitors to dress up for the occasion. Weather and time of the year was considered important when arranging a state visit to Finland. Colours of the outfits of the high guests are decided beforehand and different rules of wearing hats and gloves are negotiated. Rules of dress code change in the course of time. Hosts were seen rather liberal and flexible with the dress code and that was appreciated.

..."as Finns are very democratic dark suit was just fine. The President of Argentina had visited several countries before he arrived in Finland. Protocol in that sense is not that important anymore.(XII.3)"

Respondents saw that the dress code changed also according to fashion rules and that every head of state brought some own customs to the dress code.

" Nobody uses the white shirt anymore with the dark suit. So there is a new fashion during the day. The former dress-code "dark suit" is replaced with "dark coloured suit" so that the official delegation feels free to dress up in coloured shirts.(I.10)"

6.3.2 The concept of time

The concept of time received a total of fifteen (15) remarks which pointed out the significance of the minute programme of the state visit, the short duration of the state visit and some national characteristics that co-governed the orientation towards time. Both the organisers and the guests pointed out that Finns are punctual and try to keep the tight timetables. The representatives of the guests found punctuality important and considered good timetable a "*necessary, key element of a successful visit.(V.10)"* Being on time was seen as a sign of security i.e. the guests got the feeling that the hosts knew what they were doing. Everything was under control. "*There should be no question mark of what to do.(V.11)"*

Hosts remarked that being on time was also a sign of success and that being on time was a sign of a well-functioning organisation. "*If the timetable does not keep it is the fault of the organisers. We have failed.(I.11)"* Cultural differences towards time were taken into account but it was noted that in order to succeed the hosts had to follow their national rules towards time. Hosts used

"*buffers/puskuri*" to avoid situations where the timetable could not be observed. Buffer means extra time that is put in between the events during the state visit. For example, car convoys can drive faster or slower or some "extra" event can be taken out or added in if necessary. "*If the guest desires and we have extra time we can go to the market place and have coffee.(I.12)*" One remark criticised the Finns as being too punctual: "*The high guests are just human. Maybe we should relax a bit.(XI.7)*"

Respondents also saw that the trend was towards shorter and ceremonially lighter visits. "*Guests have so little time today*" and because the heads of state meet on different occasions (XIV.5).

6.3.3 Body Movements and the Tone of Voice

Movements of body and the tone of voice, receiving ten (10) remarks, were commented only on translation situations. It was noted that body movements were important factors for example in greeting when there was no mutual language. The high guests showed by handshakes and smiles the positive nature of the situation. The tone of voice has a great importance to translators. It regulated the nuances of the speech. Jokes were considered translatable whereas irritation and flirting were regarded a bit problematic because of the different prosody of languages.

6.4 Tools to Avoid Miscommunication in a State Visit Process

I categorised the respondents comments on conducting a state visit into comments on professionalism and expectations towards the guest and the host as tools to avoid uncertain situations because their emphasis was to carry out a successful visit. The respondents gave significance in eighty-two (82) remarks to the following aspects that could be used as tools. Firstly, perceptions towards hosts and towards guests were seen as aspects that influenced the conducting of the state visit. Secondly, protocol was seen as a framework that guided the participants through the visit. Preparations of the visit were another important tool to avoid misunderstandings. Thirdly, professionalism of the organisers was stressed as an important factor in organising a successful visit. Fourthly, preparations and advance-team meetings were given significance in the state visit process. Comments were organised under the thematic unit (12-15) and the remarks were divided accordingly:

Perceptions	Protocol	Professionalism	Preparations
(Finns as hosts, others as guests)	(national elements, international rules, framework)	(organising skills, experience, stereotypes)	(advance-teams, embassies, questionnaires, CV's)
Total remarks 31	Total remarks 20	Total remarks 12	Total remarks 19

Table 5.

6.4.1 Perceptions

Perceptions refer to the comments made by the respondents that emphasised on perceptions on Finns as hosts of a state visit. Finns were seen to be punctual, flexible and having a very professional attitude towards organising a state visit. It was considered that Finns could create circumstances where every member of delegation knew what was going to happen next. Hosts were considered professional and it was emphasised that they *"were evenly polite to everyone.(XIV.6)"* On the other hand, it was stated that hosts saw problems in behaving naturally in state visit environment and that solemn behaviour and formalities were used to conceal insecurities. *"We know manners and we can function in every day occasions but with official ceremonies we panic and become stiff.(XIV.7)"* It was also noted that organisers did not take cultural differences into consideration as much as they should have, because they could not use the knowledge and experience they had.

Respondents gave only a few comments on guests. Visitors who show initiative and interest towards the visit are appreciated. Problems were noted only if the advance-teams were not used to state visits and lacked experience. The guests were not criticised at all.

6.4.2 Protocol

The meaning of protocol was seen by the respondents as a set of rules that governs the state visit process and is used to facilitate things. The rules of protocol are based on international rules and are similar among the Nordic Countries and other European nations but they also embody of national elements. National characteristics are used for example not *"to look ridiculous. For example, too massive car convoys would look ridiculous in the narrow streets of Helsinki and would not serve the purpose of efficient transportation. It is different in the wide avenues of Buenos Aires.(XIV.8)"* It was emphasised that protocol is not a law but more like a general framework that is used to guide the state visit procedures. These sets of rules were seen dynamic by nature and interpreting them and using them flexibly depended on the experience the organiser had. Protocol consisted of rules or rather suggestions on seating, greeting, ranking order, dress code and so forth.

"Most secure way is to act by the book but with experience and skills protocol gives lots of flexibility. People who are insecure go by the book because it is easier.(II.4)"

Respondents also noted that protocol gives a fixed principle of how to act. *"To that principle it is easier to build up individuality.(IV.6)"*

On the other hand it was noted that even though protocol tries to change the ceremonies to adapt to modern times by using modern technology, state visits to Finland still were organised in a rather conservative fashion.

Respondents saw that protocol was an important tool to avoid chaos and misunderstanding. It was seen as a framework that ruled the state visit processes.

6.4.3 Professionalism

Professionalism refers to the ideal characteristics of a good organiser that were considered essential by the respondents. Experience, proficiency in languages, respect towards others and flexibility of the organisation were noted as preferred virtues of professional organisers of the state visit. Experience of working and communicating with people from different cultures was considered important. *"The know-how of organising a state visit comes from experience. One cannot learn it from books nor at schools.(I.13)"* Using stereotypes was also noted to be one issue to develop in organising state visits. Positive stereotyping was considered a good basis to understand different situations, although one respondent considered the word 'stereotyping' to have a too negative connotation.

"Our knowledge of visitors is based on experience. We use stereotypes and it works. As a host we do not want to distress anyone but be flexible, and quickly read the situation.(VIV.7)"

"We take the cultural differences into account like when we think that in Rome do as the Romans do.(XI.8)"

6.4.4 Preparations

Preparations of the visit were considered a crucial factor in organising a successful state visit. If the preparations failed the visit was destined to fail. Advance-team negotiations were thought important. It was also seen important that negotiators understood each other i.e. had some common language or used translators. One comment noted that if 90% of the advance-team negotiations is understood then the state visit has good chances to succeed. The objectives of the advance-team negotiations were to go through every aspect of the visit beforehand *"so that when the guest enters the room he/she knows what to do and how to do it (V.12)"* and also to reach a compromise on the issues that are handled differently in different countries. Advance-teams negotiate over issues like who is responsible of what, who is paying what and so forth. Timing of the advance-team meeting was also noted as an important factor. The meeting should take place not too early nor too late.

..."There should be just enough time to adjust all the preferences, to confirm all unclear opinions and deal with the questions brought up by the representatives of hosts and guests.(IV.7)"

After the advance-team meetings, not many changes to the programme were accepted.

Respondents pointed out the difference between countries in organising a state visit. *"Usually in Europe all have more or less similar proceedings. The farther one travels, the more there are differences in practices.(IV.8)"* Embassies abroad were seen as a great help to provide information about the different aspects of conducting a state visit. Embassies were also seen as a link to transfer information about differences in cultures. *"They advice guests and hosts about the ways to adjust to each others values.(IV.8)"* Embassies were also seen as a suitable body for carrying out the follow-up after the visit. On the other hand, one remark noted that sometimes embassies assume perhaps too a great role which was not seen necessary.

Other tools that were regarded instrumental to the preparation of a successful visit were questionnaires, information packages, CVs sent in advance, video recordings of official ceremonies in Finland and the Service d'honneur assigned at the disposal of the high guest. They accompany the high guests and assist them in any question that may arise. The persons who are appointed as Service d'honneur are usually prominent representatives of society and usually have some links to the visitors' country, ambassadors, directors of multinational companies and so forth.

6.5 Measuring and Evaluating the Success of a State Visit

When I asked all the respondents the ways of measuring or evaluating a successful state visit they all found it a rather difficult task because most times a state visit had no specific goal such as a treaty to sign or a business contract to conclude. A total of forty (40) remarks were organised under the thematic units 16-18 and divided accordingly:

Media & public interest	Continuity	Practicalities
(personality, power, action)	(cont. of personal and state- to- state relations, embassies)	(being on time, meals, transportation...)
Total remarks 19	Total remarks 9	Total remarks 12

Table 6.

Many of the interviewees commented that the goals of the state visits were decided prior to the visit and incorporated issues such as recognising the good relations between the two countries, profiling industries, current situation in neighbouring countries and questions of international politics. Usually the negotiations and meetings on any concrete contracts that were to be completed during the state visit had been negotiated on various levels well before the visit and providing something concrete during the visit was seen more of a cosmetic detail of the state visit programme. It was noted that the organisers drafted a plan of those issues that were to be covered during a state visit. This plan consisted of background information for the substance of the discussions on

different levels during the state visit. I did not have an opportunity to look at these plans.

The way of measuring or evaluating the success of an actual visit also depended on whom this question was addressed to. On one hand, the success of a visit was directly related to the interest of media. Media interest was also referred to have a direct impact on the interest of the public towards a particular visit.

On the other hand the respondents emphasised on the pragmatic side of the visit i.e. how well the programme was observed, being on time, weather conditions in Finland, good food and so forth. The continuity of good relations between nations was noted in respondents remarks as well as the developing conditions of trade between the visitor's and host's country. The importance of state visits as a forum of international politics was questioned and state visits were considered to have lost their interest as comparing for example to working visits, summits and conferences.

6.5.1 The Media and the Public Interest

The respondent's views in nineteen (19) remarks on the interest of media in a state visit were rather equivocal. Interviewees considered the amount media coverage a direct indication of the success of the visit as well as some remarks noted that the public interest depended on the media interest. On the other hand, it was criticised that state visits did not interest media anymore unless the high guest was a beautiful princess or there had happened some catastrophe or scandal in the visitor's country because the heads of state met anyway. Media interest as a measure of success was also considered superficial.

" The question of institutionalising is interesting. What is its purpose?...State visits have lost their importance and interest. The visits are lost in the flow of information in media...i.e. from the smallness of the media coverage of state visits to Finland we can guess that not much more will be covered in countries visited.(XIV.9)"

But it was noted that *"state visit is not a success without media coverage.(V.14)"* The interviewees noted that prior to, during and after the state visit, many opportunities were provided for the media but it was argued that the media was not interested in the information that was provided during those occasions. *" Lots of information is given but it is not fully used.(I.14)"* The interest of media was considered to depend on various issues. The global political importance of the visitor affected the media interest

" ...countries which are politically and globally important create greater media interest than the visit normally would...these visits are usually quite widely covered in media abroad. The output is rather the substance and does not put emphasis on the state visit itself.(IX.4)"

" It does not matter if the high guest is popular or not. If he/she is powerful, the press coverage is guaranteed.(V.15)"

The personality of the visitor and the popularity of the high guest in Finland was seen to affect on the media interest. *" ...when the King and Queen and the Crown Princess of Sweden visited Tammisaari and Oulu, the streets were crowded with people cheering and waving flags. When the interest of the high guests is more focused on their personalities, articles that are released are more focused on the personal side rather than any political subject. The Finns like monarchies very much.(IX.4)"*

Circumstantial interest of the visitor has an impact on the media interest. *"For example the state visit of the President of Tanzania to Finland was conducted just after the bomb attacks against the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya.(IX.4)"* It was noted that circumstantial interest of the media is not related to the state visit itself but to the actions that have taken place.

Public's interest as a measure of success of the state visits was seen related to the media interest. It was noted that the success of the visit could be measured by counting the people following the welcoming ceremonies outside of the Presidential Palace. The amount of spectators was dependent on the weather conditions, *"there are lots of tourists anyway at the market place (V.16)"* or to the personality of the visitor.

Problems with media relations were mentioned. Even though the organisers provided lots of information for the media during the state visit process the media was not very well prepared when they came to the press conferences. *"If they (the press) were prepared they would get more out of it and the press conference would serve its purpose better.(I.14)"* It was also noted that the media was sometimes more interested in other subjects than related to the visit itself. *" There was a slight misunderstanding among the Finnish journalists during the press conference. The press concentrated on things that did not concern the state visit itself. (XII.4)"*

On the other hand it was emphasised that some events occurring at the same time could raise the interest in the high guest. *"Something can happen in the guest's country during the visit that becomes a most important issue. (XIV.10)"* It was also noted that *"some high state officials still try to protect the politicians from media even though the politicians live and influence through the media. (IX.5)"*

6.5.2 Continuity

Continuity of good relations and concrete achievements of a state visit were noted as measures of a successful visit in nine (9) remarks. High guests need something concrete and preferably newsworthy to bring back home to show the importance of that specific visit. If this was not possible then at least a promise of continuity and progress in co-operation was required. Respondents

considered that continuity covered further contacts in government level, cultural events, trade co-operation, contacts, different projects and in the interchange of information. Nevertheless, state visits were considered an important part of the continuous communication between nations.

"The high guests want to have results. They need to explain and give reasons at home why this visit was important and needed. The guest has to bring something home, preferably newsworthy. If not concrete, then continuity, a promise of progress in co-operation.(XIV.11)"

It was noted that there were so many visits going on that it was difficult to follow the progress of concrete results of one particular visit. Embassies were considered a valuable link in follow-up, promoting and ensuring the continuity. *" In autumn 1998, Poland had series of concerts and exhibitions and other cultural events in Finland. Some of these events were the result of President Kwasniewski's state visit to Finland...the embassy plays a great role in the follow-up work of the state visit.(III.10)"*

6.5.3 Practicalities

The success of a state visit can be measured by how well the visit was organised. Twelve (12) comments referred to the terms of protocol, observance of the programme of the visit, working facilities provided for the media as well as the good relations between the media and the participants of the visit. The respondents noted that being on time, meals, gifts, or receiving a decoration could be considered as measurements of success. The success of the organisers was emphasised as an important element.

" After the state visit has started, no one should need to ask where to go next. That is a measure of how the organisers have succeeded.(V.17)"

The working facilities of the media were commented as being an aspects in the success of the organisation of a state visit. Taking into account the time difference between the countries in arranging a press conference in the programme and providing good working facilities as well as good photo opportunities were considered important factors. Representatives of the media sold their stories with good pictures and by delivering the material to the news room so that it would not be the 'yesterday's news'.

The interviewees stated that there was no need to have any meetings of critical feedback to follow the state visit. Firstly, because there is no time and no resources to organise such a thing. Secondly, if the follow-up meeting was to be held, it would be beneficial that a representative of the guests would be present and that would be rather impossible to organise. Embassies could be used as informants in this matter. Thirdly, the organising teams are so small that if there was anything to comment on it could have been done person-to-person.

7 DISCUSSION

In this thesis I have explored some aspects of public relations and intercultural communication in the state visit processes. By interviewing persons whose professions are closely related to conducting state visits I have managed to collect relevant information about state visits. After presenting the analysis of the collected data my intention is now to summarise the main aspects of the study and to show how the different aspects are incorporated in the state visit process.

7.1 The Purpose of State Visits

State visit is a form of interelite communication. Heads of state need to manifest both personal and state-to-state relations with each other and to promote trade and other national interests. State visit gives an official framework and it can be seen as an symbolic event to show at the highest level the interest towards the visiting country. The host country wants to present herself in a most favourable light and both parties desire to build up and/or to maintain a positive image of one's nation. State visit is a beneficial way of practising public diplomacy, i.e. to influence the public and elite's opinions in a host country and to promote one's ideals, culture, current goals and policies.

The high guest is often accompanied by a group of representatives of industry and business. The group is part of the state visit delegation but has a parallel programme with the business people from the host country, such as business symposiums, visits in factories, and talks with the representatives of Finnish industry. State visit can be considered as a meaningful forum to promote businesses because of the high status of the visit. It is obvious that the presence of the high guests bears more weight on the business talks and "opens more doors" in the visiting country. This has developed the state visit structure and probably the representatives of industries have some say over the possible locations where the heads of state intend to visit. In this sense it can be said that state visits and nation's industries are interrelated when promoting a favourable image of one's country and its economy. It may thus be that the state visit organisers elaborate the objectives of state visits for more targeted business groups rather than profiling industries in general.

Between the year 1994 and May 1998, four out of ten heads of state (Sweden, Latvia, Poland, Argentina) gave a speech or had discussions at the Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers. Also a speech at the Paasikivi Society has become a forum of presenting up-to-date information of one's country. As one respondent noted, "*hosts negotiate with the Finnish industry to see what sort of interests they might have, what sort of discussion could be highlighted in a particular state visit.(I.1)*" On the other hand, speeches and lectures were seen old-fashioned and not dynamic because the information was predictable and did not give a possibility to develop a critical dialogue.

Cultural events during the state visit were not emphasised much in interviews even though the state visit programme consists of several travel locations, many of which are based on the visitors interests but also the main attractions of the capital are introduced such as the Senate Square, City Hall, Market Square, the House of Parliament, Temppeliaukio Church, Opera House and so forth. It is intended that the high guests are taken outside of the capital. Seven heads of state (Estonia, China, Belgium, Sweden, Greece, Latvia, Poland,) visited other cities in Finland like Kuopio, Tampere and Rovaniemi. The Finnish hosts stress on extending the state visit programme outside of the capital. It was noted that the hosts design the state visit programme so that the guests have a chance to see the Finnish countryside. In general, visiting the countryside seems to profile a good image of the host country. On the other hand, as one respondent commented, the state visit is a little bit of a political tourism without the possibilities to experience much from the back seat of the limousine. That is why the events such as lectures at universities, exhibitions, concerts and such, offered at the same time with the state visit, may raise both the guest's interest in host country and the public's interest towards the state visits.

State visit may not be a very important political forum, although some visits can be loaded with heavy political substance. Finland being a member of the European Union has also become a noticed factor. Being a member of an alliance has created new fora of communication on a diplomat-to-diplomat level and new ways of solving problems. Although the interviewees noted that state visits have some political importance it was stressed that the main fora of political discussions are elsewhere (summits, conferences, EU meetings...) and the state visits were seen more as fora of showing political will towards common interests.

State visit is part of a continuous process of dialogue between the states. Countries do not start their relations with state visits. It is just the highest level of communication between states and its purpose is to express to the public and other states the guarantee and the continuity of good relations between the two countries in question. "*State visit gives a chance to show that we are reliable partners (VIII.2)*. Travelling and meetings between heads of state have increased but the framework of other visits than state visits, has become more informal and the substance of the visit more defined. Although major attempts have been made

towards practising public diplomacy i.e. raising understanding of the country's ideas and ideals by providing features on TV or by organising some cultural events, it still seems that state visits to Finland are more considered as official government-to-government activities allowed only for the political and economic elite.

7.2 Communication Fora of a State Visit

Communication fora referred in this thesis to all events during the state visit process that involved speaking. I wanted to know what different fora there were and how the nature of these fora affected the choice of language for that specific occasion. I also wanted to look at any aspects of miscommunication that were present in verbal situations. An official language is selected for state visits. That is the language used on all printed materials and that is the language the high guests use when they deliver official talks. Official language can be used in informal talks too. Official language is not inevitably the language of official discussions.

I divided the fora of communication into official and unofficial. Official fora, such as advance-team meetings, banquets and receptions, negotiations and tête-à-tête meetings were formal and distant in nature and usually in these situation either official or mother tongue was used to show the independence and power and to emphasise on the importance of the substance. In official situations it seemed that the participants wanted to stress on avoiding misunderstandings. Unofficial situations were considered more informal and intimate. Talks between the high guests in travel venues, receptions, courtesy calls, lectures, speeches and press conferences were more unofficial in their nature and one objective was to reach wider audience. Participants showed more involvement in these events.

Reflecting on the three main factors that are involved in the face systems (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:41-47) it can be recognised that in official communication fora the high guests identified themselves with people of equal rank i.e. -P, except maybe during the unofficial discussions the head of state was devoid of any political power. Furthermore, the participants of the official discussions maintained distance i.e. +D, and stressed the substance of the discussion i.e. + W. In unofficial situations the heads of state and other delegation members considered themselves as equals in power (-P) and distant (+D), but the weight of imposition was (-W) decreased and involvement was increased. If the three politeness systems, deference (-P,+D), solidarity (-P,-D), and hierarchical (+P,+/-D) politeness systems are observed within the context of state visits, it can be noted that in all situations the participants consider each themselves equals but treat each other with distance. Although in informal talks the high guests can be very friendly and intimate, or the high guest is not

attending the official discussions, the power factor and the framework of the event stresses the distance and equality of the high guests.

The form of the event and the use of language seem to be intertwined in state visits. The more formal the situation is, the more emphasis is put on mutual understanding. Official language and use of mother tongue can also show independence, distance, national rules, equality, and/or power. In informal events reaching wider audience and involvement are stressed. Participants can show respect or market themselves by having learnt some phrases in host's/guest's language. The status of the translators was a bit ambivalent. On one hand it was stressed that in official situations the native tongue was preferred. On the other hand, the use of English was favoured over using translators even though the other party did not have a good command of English. It seemed that the importance of being understood was greater with the high guests than with other members of delegation and organisers.

I looked at the use of English as a separate matter after it repeatedly appeared in responses. I had not given it much thought beforehand because I assumed that French was the most used language between the organisers, high guests and delegations. I started to call English as a "diplomatic language without official status." I can not help to see the slight paradox here. Generally, the Finns consider themselves quite good at languages, and now being a member of the European Union, proficiency in many languages by the government officials is even more stressed. For example, all printed material could be produced in several languages. That way the knowledge of languages could be more activated among the organisers. In official negotiations the participants could speak either their mother tongue or some third language, and in unofficial fora any language could be selected. On the other hand, it is clear that Finland hosts different kinds of governmental visits other than state visits almost every day, even several at the same time and the group of organisers is relatively small. So there is not much time to emphasise those visits on an individual basis but rather consider them to fit into the package of official visits.

Miscommunication between the delegations mainly comes as a result of the lack of common language or just understanding things differently. On one hand it was noted that rather than using a translator, the Finns spoke English to the guests even though the visitors spoke English poorly. The Finns seem to take for granted in some occasions that most visitors speak English. Miscommunication due to misunderstandings was not considered very important because both parties wanted to reach the compromise and to show good will unless the other party stubbornly wanted to hold on to their own views. On the other hand, I also noted that the respondents were not very willing to talk about any events of misunderstanding but professionally hid behind the diplomatic and neutral expressions. Host organisers and supportive bodies seemed to consider criticising their own work and the representatives of guests unnecessary and impolite. All interviewees reported various events

where participants had not understood each other *'off the record'* and some comments were excluded from the interviews. In general, during the interviews the respondents were very careful of what they officially said.

7.3 Non-verbal Signs and Codes

Remarks of the interviews emphasised the symbolic characteristics of state visits. These included flags, seating orders, dress codes, gifts and exchanging decorations. Finland uses the EU flag together with the national flag and the guest's flag during the state visit. The guest's flag is hoisted at the government guest house to symbolise that the place is guest's territory. We have come a long way from the 17th and 18th centuries during which the order of precedence and the seating order were the major issues of diplomacy and could bring major states to the brink of war. Today, the seating order and the order of precedence are negotiated well prior to the visit and the main responsibility lies with the organisers. Dress codes to different occasions are not only for fashion and etiquette reasons but also to give guidelines for national practices, climate, and the nature of the occasion. State visits are not so much fashion shows as they are short-term visits and business meetings. Only the evening programme provides more jubilant surroundings and the high guests and the delegation members may show up in a white tie and decorations. Gifts are exchanged between the high guests and usually agreed on beforehand. Gifts are considered a good way to promote a favourable image of countries by introducing the Finnish high technology and quality design, where as decorations can be considered as symbols of expensive gifts given before. Decorations exchanged during the state visit symbolises the visit itself rather than any special merit earned by the receiver.

Symbols refer to the glamorous nature of the state visit and their main objective is to lay an alluring framework for the visit. These symbols are generally known to the people conducting state visits but the details of how to dress up on different occasions, or what gifts are given and received, the seating order, or the drinking and eating habits are individually negotiated in order to avoid misunderstandings.

The state visit is conducted by observing a minute programme. This system is widely used and it is accepted by the hosts and the guests. Finns as hosts were seen punctual, effective, but flexible and that is an image the hosts wanted to give as well. One remark by the guest stated that *"the Finnish organisers produce the programme almost robotically but they still maintain good flexibility to accommodate surprises.(V.18)"* Being on time was regarded as a measurement of success of the state visit and if the timetable could not be observed the hosts felt that they had failed. In guest's and host's comments different perceptions towards time was identifiable but also respondents

preferred tight timetable. It gave a sense of security. Everything was under control!

Paralanguage and body movements were little discussed. These non-verbal elements referred to the translators and their work. Translators used these signs in their work to help the communicators to stress their words, understand the nuances and to show politeness. *"High guests read the tone of voice, signals and face gestures.(XIII.8)"* It was noted that translator does not give prosodic information. That is why it was important to follow the nuances of the discussions. It seems that the tone of voice and body movements are more important codes to the communicators than to the translators in order to understand each other. For example, when the high guests communicate by using translators, they receive not only the translated speech but also can observe how the tone of voice of the other party is related to the information received verbally. Translating jokes was seen amusing whereas flirtation and irritation were considered more tricky.

7.4 Tools to Avoid Miscommunication When Conducting a State Visit

Generally, participants of the state visit can be considered as experts of their field. They have a wide knowledge of different cultures and they seem to be sensitive to the situation in order that state visit will succeed. Protocol helps in this. Participants are aware of the rules of protocol and accept that protocol is there to help the state visit process and not to hinder it. On the other hand, rules of protocol bear many national characteristics which are not necessarily known to the visitors. That is why it is important that these issues are clarified before the visit and a compromise can be reached.

" The high guest and the delegation practised Judaism and thus expected to eat only kosher food. Protocol wanted to respect that and consulted a rabbi of how everything had to be proceeded in order not to offend the high guest. There was a problem of where to find a big enough dinner service which met the requirements to serve kosher food. Solution was reached by using an antique service that had been stored for many years.(IV.9)"

Organisers prepare the visits very carefully and almost always the visits are considered a success. Advance-teams meet, videos and preparation files are exchanged, and all details are negotiated in order to avoid misunderstandings. Organisers learn a lot about each other during that process and that way they develop their knowledge of other countries and cultures. Thorough preparations limit misunderstandings and increase professional ability.

Perceptions of others was a difficult issue. Respondents were not interested in talking about the characteristics of visitors nor on general level,

nor remember misunderstandings that had taken place during state visit processes. I did not realise in the beginning that I was dealing with real diplomats who used language so well that they could talk a long time without saying anything. All respondents were most helpful but at the same time very careful with their comments. I understand that well and I accept that too. On the other hand, I wonder if I was too intimidated by the high status of career diplomats and high officials and thus unable to stress the matters of interest to my study. One ambassador reminded me that diplomats worked to assist people. I must have forgotten that from time to time.

7.5 Measuring and Evaluating the Success of a State Visit

Even though lots of efforts have been exerted towards organising state visits, there was a great shortage of a more concrete output. President Ahtisaari's frequent trips and visits abroad have been criticized constantly in Finnish media and the importance of these numerous trips has been questioned. Affects of state visits on the domestic level can cause unity. The Finnish pride themselves as professional organisers of summits and conferences but at the same time state visits abroad cause irritation to the home publics. State visits as a practice of foreign policy are considered as a respect of other countries and a manifestation of mutual interests in trade, alliance, cultural issues, personal interests, image-building and unity in worldviews and opinions. Perhaps more strategic planning of public relations activities are needed.

It seems that, according to the data gathered for this study, the methods how the objectives of the state visits have been profiled to the various interest groups have not produced the desired outcome because of the lack of methods of evaluating and measuring the success of these visits. The remarks pointed out the need for state visits as promoting trade and bilateral relations between the countries in question and it looks as though the participants among themselves have found state visits profitable and effective. It seems that the objectives are comprehended well by the small group constituting the political and industrial elite but not by the public. I agree that it would be rather difficult to point out a single example of a concluded business deal as the sole result of a successful state visit. Nevertheless, it seems that the organisers of the state visits have not fully segmented their stakeholders considering how the public interest of state visits was mainly seen as the amount of people following the welcoming ceremonies outside of the Presidential Palace on a beautiful sunny day.

7.6 The Limitations of This Study

One respondent told me that studying state visits is like trying to nail jelly on the wall. There is some truth in it. In the beginning, I had many doubts of what kind of approach I would take to this subject. My decision was to look at the state visits as an event and try to find various aspects of diplomatic practice, intercultural communication and public relations that gave significance to a state visit process. Every one of those approaches probably would have produced enough information for one study. The security aspect of the state visit is the most important for the organisers. I have excluded it from this study because I found it very difficult to gather the data of it because of its confidential nature. I also have excluded the financial aspect of the state visit, i.e. how much does a state visit cost and who is paying what, for the same reasons I discarded the security matters. As mentioned earlier, at some point in the research I entertained some doubts about the right method, i.e. interviews, to conduct this study with. The interviewees gave lots of information '*off the record*' and gave me vague answers when I wanted to emphasise topics such as miscommunication, culture shocks, perceptions and so forth. I then realised that a major part of this problem was not the method of interviewing but my lack of experience and a feeling of intimidation by the prestige of the interviewees. When I read back my data, I find numerous comments I should have elaborated more.

It would have been interesting to follow one state visit process and try to analyse the objectives and outcomes generated by that particular visit. The problem of conducting such a study is to gather information from the visitors and to link the actual outcomes to a particular visit. On the other hand, it would have been challenging to look at the state visit process as a form of information management of the political decision makers which is referred to by Manheim (1994:7-8) as strategic public diplomacy or strategic political communication. Strategic public diplomacy uses the attributes of human behaviour, i.e. attitudes and preferences, cultural tendencies and media-use patterns to shape and target their messages to produce the desired effect. In this approach, the method of case-study would be more illustrative.

Another approach to this theme could be to concentrate on the national characteristics of the rules of protocol, for instance, by reflecting them against the background of critical incidents. This subject I find extremely interesting. Although it is stated that protocol is very similar all across Europe, it can be seen that there are many national characteristics that vary a lot between countries. I also find that changes in etiquette and protocol are interesting aspects that reflect changes in society.

It is apparent that the high guests coming to Finland are not primarily interested in our beautiful capital, interesting museums, and unpolluted nature, but have some other interests of larger scale. The receiving of a decoration or a cellular phone is not the major issue here. The heads of state have various needs on the international and domestic levels. The concrete results and outcomes of state visits are difficult to evaluate or measure. This, however, would provide an important subject-matter for future studies. I wish that the present cross-section made of the concept of state visit has served as a valuable starting point for me to continue studies on the relations between nations and to provide more profound results on new issues.

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