

**Risk communication from a multicultural
perspective
- A study for Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services**

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Abstract

Risk communication towards people with a foreign background is a problem in Sweden today. This has been brought to attention by a survey carried out by Suzan Rashid and Jasmita Jansari, which was carried out on behalf of Jonkopings Fire and Rescue Services. An example of a tragic event partly caused by lack of risk communication is the recent fire in Rinkeby where six young girls and their mother, all with a Somali background, lost their lives due to wrong behaviour in a crisis situation. Thereby, the purpose of this work was to provide Jonkopings Fire and Rescue Services with a theoretical view on how to reach people with a foreign background in risk communication. When working with the literature, different strategies to solve this problem have been found, namely, to hire people with a foreign background to the rescue service, to translate brochures containing safety precautions from Swedish to other languages, to put a bigger responsibility regarding safety issues on landlords and to create a good relation between people from foreign cultures and the rescue service organisation.

A key aspect is the difference in cultural values of people with a foreign background. Cultural values are very hard to change and this fact has to be considered in risk communications. Combined with specific environmental components, they may create barriers when having risk communication between the rescue service and non-Swedish persons. In this work, six cultural dimensions were used to describe different values, which can affect risk communication between different cultures. The specific environmental components could be described by means of model comprising three conceptual spheres, which represent affecting factors, acting patterns and perceived exposure.

The conclusion of this work is that today a key measure, which takes in account cultural values, is to hire people with a foreign background to the rescue service, assuming that they have the same authority and values within the culture. However, with a good relation between different cultures and active understanding of how the values differ between cultures it should be possible to reach people with a foreign background even for a Swedish person. It is also important to know the Swedish values. Cultural values are underestimated when it comes to risk communication and should therefore be given more attention.

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1 Introduction

The community today is heading for an increasingly complex environment with more advanced technology and larger heterogeneous populations. The increase in complexity is followed by more complex risks. It is therefore important to reach the whole community in order to help prevent these potential risks from happening. To involve as many people as possible into this process is of the greatest importance. People with a foreign background may often experience a feeling of alienation within the community and there is a greater requirement for increased communication here. The recent fire in Rinkeby has highlighted this problem where six children and a mother with a Somali background lost their lives. Instead of remaining in the apartment they died from smoke inhalation in the stairway. Maybe this tragic event could have been avoided if the people who perished had received better information.

1.1 Background

Risk communication is a vital part of a Fire and Rescue Services work. The public themselves do much of the fire and damage prevention work. It may be things like ensuring that all the candles are extinguished before leaving the room. Therefore it is important to supply the public with the knowledge, for example on how to act in an evacuation of a building. What different symbols means and so on. With today's methods it can be difficult to reach everyone with risk communication due to cultural obstacles. This can be due to preconceived views of different groups in the community and some foreign settlers have a distrust of uniformed personnel and the authority. Some cultures are reluctant to listen to risk communication from younger people or other gender. Body language and gestures when meeting other cultures can be misinterpreted and hinder further communication.

Jonkoping's municipality has 125000 inhabitants.¹ Among these inhabitants 22000 have a foreign background.² The municipality is a part of the county Småland, which lies just south of Lake Vättern. Some of the most densely immigrant populated areas in the municipality is Råslätt, Öxnehaga, Österängen and some parts of Huskvarna söder. The Fire and Rescue Services in Sweden today have a problem reaching non-Swedish citizens with risk information. In a survey made by Suzan Rashid and Jasmita Jansari 2000, with a follow up 2006 and commissioned by Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services, it became clear that the citizens of Råslätt in Jonkoping had a poor understanding about risk assessments.³ The Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services are in need of a strategy to reach the non-Swedish citizens in the municipality and that is what this report will discuss.

1.2 Purpose

The Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services have lately seen the need for more academic studies in their work. This report has because of this been aimed at creating a theoretical framework on how to reach people with a foreign background. The theoretical model should be independent of cultures and applied on a general scale.

¹ Jönköpings kommun, 2009

² Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB), 2009

³ Appendix I

1.3 Method

This report is based on information from literature sources and interviews. The literature sources have been taken from the library in Lulea University of Technology, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) publications, statistics from Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services and scientific articles from Scopus.⁴

All interviews have been carried out openly and in person. The goal was to conduct a discussion about the view on the multicultural community and the Fire and Rescue Services. Some questions were added to avoid diverting from the subject.⁵ Six interviews were carried out at Jonkoping's Fire and Rescue Services, which also commissioned this work. There were two Fire Engineers, an Informant, the Readiness Coordinator, the Deputy and the Head of Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services who were interviewed at Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services. A social worker at the Fire and Rescue Service South and the chairman of the Shia Muslims in Jonkoping were also interviewed.

1.4 Limitations

This study report is based on the assumption that it is possible to create homogenous groups in the community. These homogenous groups will be described as groups or cultural groups throughout the report. Groups that this report is directed towards are people with a foreign background, Swedish people with both parents born outside Sweden and immigrants. The risk communication refers to the preventive work of a Fire and Rescue Service and not the crises communication during an accident.

⁴ Elsevier, 2008

⁵ Appendix II

2 Result

2.1 Risk information

Risk communication with people from a foreign background varies greatly between different Fire and Rescue Services in Sweden. Some Fire and Rescue Services do not have a uniform policy; meanwhile some have completed a number of projects and surveys but not used this information to formulate a policy.⁶ The most ordinary view around this subject is that as a Swede you should show a great openness and understanding for different cultures. To employ people from a foreign background within the Fire and Rescue Service as either advocates or fire fighters are also seen as progressive. There have been some discussions from for example Malmo city office that it is the language, which limits the information to these groups. This was also brought to attention of different authorities during the aftermath of the fire in Rinkeby. An open and responsive communication is probably one of the most fundamental prerequisites for successful communication. Of course it is equally important to absorb information from the other party. To employ a non-Swedish person can be very helpful not only for risk communication between cultures but also to get new ideas and different values of the Fire and Rescue Services. However, in risk communication, the effect is limited. First and foremost it requires that the people from the emergency services be of the same or similar culture to be advantageous. It is also important to the individual who represents the Fire and Rescue Service that he is met with trust and confidence from that culture. To recruit people with foreign backgrounds makes it possible to work around the cultural and environmental barriers, which are likely to improve both the work and vision of the emergency services. To translate risk information through interpreters or text can be a useful complement in risk communication to other cultures. Some cultures have no tradition of written information and therefore will not read flyers. However, immigrants in most cases have access to someone who understands Swedish or they are able to do it themselves.⁷ One of the major problems in translating texts, is that they are written taking into account the typical Swedish norms of the country and that these values form part of the translation; namely that our Swedish values are embedded in the written language so that the information can feel odd and misleading for people with foreign backgrounds. Swedish information often relies on factual arguments to get the reader to understand the problem in the current situation. Arguments based on facts are not common in all countries. Instead the information can often be based on relationships dependent on what kind of person/authority writing and sending it.

An additional focus in this area is to shift more responsibility on to landlords; ensuring that their apartments meet the required standard in terms of risk prevention. The advantage is that it will be safer and landlords are not as intimidating as a professional officer from the emergency services can be. On the other hand it is only a part of the problem, which will be attended this way. Information about how people should behave in case of fire in the apartment and what constitutes risk in society is still needed. Thus the need remains to get through the cultural barrier with the risk information to people with foreign backgrounds.⁸

⁶ Olofsson, 2008

⁷ M. Virani, personal interview, 2009

⁸ personal interviews, 2009; Malmo city office, 2007

2.1.1 Safety Culture

To prevent risks and accidents on an individual level is important for the community. Home safety is governed by different choices and habits in the home, which can make the responsibility blurry.⁹ Safety culture, is sometimes difficult to define and it can mean many different things, such as that a person is conservative or prudent. I have in this report chosen to define safety culture as the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has done in the following text:

*"A broader concept of basic knowledge and skills which the individuals need to have the insight and ability to manage everyday risks of accidents and thereby also strengthen their ability to operate properly in major emergencies, disasters, and disruption of important social systems."*¹⁰

Developments in risk prevention head towards increasing responsibilities placed on the individual. Individual responsibility should be seen from a societal perspective. Knowledge of risk prevention varies widely among people, depending on age, social class, gender and culture. Within these areas, groups often form and some of these groups are more vulnerable than others.¹¹ How the environment looks may also alter the premise. If people living in areas with a lot of forest are questioned about different risks of the forest, for example uprooted trees, they will probably be calmer and think the risks can be prevented to a higher degree compared with people living in areas without any kind of forest.¹²

Attitude and behaviour are two key concepts in social psychology. Attitudes are about what kind of understanding and feelings people have about specific issues. Attitudes are formed on an object, a person or an idea. Attitude consists of three different components cognitive, affective and behavioural. The cognitive component consists of what kind of knowledge the person has regarding different risks such as smoking. The affective component is the emotions that exist, if the person is worried about the dangers of smoking or not worried at all. The behavioural component involves the individual to take an active part in changing something, e.g. to reduce smoking in public places by signing protest lists. The relationship between attitude and behaviour is complex, but some researchers believe that it is first the behaviour, which must change before attitude eventually changes.¹³ To change others' attitudes is difficult. There are many factors that must be taken into account, culture, habits, environment and social interactions. Culture creates a fundamental base value for what constitutes good and bad. It also provides standards and practices that reflect some aspects of everyday life, such as prayer, Midsummer, varied diet, or different materials in the home (such as silk clothing and bamboo furniture). To alert people to their behaviour requires that they can recognize themselves in their habits and the environment they live. The perception of risk is highly individual and it is therefore important to focus on a specific group with a fairly homogeneous structure.

2.1.2 Follow-up of risk work

There are often a lot of weaknesses when a campaign is implemented. Group analyses are usually not done; that is what standards, values and attitudes the group has. Empirical

⁹ Enander, 2005

¹⁰ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

¹¹ Enander & Johansson, 1999

¹² Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

¹³ Enander, 2005

evidence or theoretical models of the target group will also increase the understanding about the group. This means that if a campaign is effective it can be difficult to identify precisely what made it successful. A campaign usually does not have a follow-up. These two factors make it difficult to build on a successful campaign or learn from the mistakes if it fails. It should also be noted that an evaluation and continuation of a particular campaign should not be generalized; to a great extent since it is often many factors that come into play.¹⁴

2.2 Information work by Fire and Rescue Services

The text below describes the information gleaned from working with people from a foreign background among three different Fire and Rescue Services. Rescue Services South, which is collaboration between Burlöv, Eslöv, Kävlinge, Malmö and Lund, has come a long way in its public relations work. Similarly, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service in the UK have come further than many others. Jonköping Fire and Rescue Services is an example of an organization in its inception. The three emergency services have been included in this report to display information on current work with people from foreign backgrounds.

Jonköpings Fire and Rescue Services

The Rescue Service in Jonköping has invested heavily on education in the municipality. A specific focus has been the education of children and adolescents in grades two and five. Adults have also been trained in various forms of preventative work. Concentrated work with non-Swedes has been to inform on different events at Råslätt. On these occasions the Rescue Service have used leaflets in different languages from the Swedish Fire Protection Association. Jonköping Rescue Services have also made an attempt to use advocates, Suzan Rashid and Jasmita Jansari mentioned earlier.¹⁵

Fire and Rescue Services South

Rescue Service South has had major problems at work, where, among other things, stones have been thrown at fire fighters. The most vulnerable area is Rosengård in Malmö, where the 'Herrgården' is the most vulnerable. This has led to the rescue South making a serious effort to reach out to these areas where a large extent of people from foreign backgrounds lives. Braemar Sager was assigned to this. The mission had two purposes. One was to reach out to as many non-Swedish people as possible and the second was to convey information about the culture internally. This led to efforts to provide information on local activities and festivities, information to various cultural and religious associations, a new "information station" on Rosengård and fire education to classes studying Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). Other campaigns have been to run an information centre at Rosengård, knocking on doors and inspecting smoke detectors as well as using an Information-car in which children in particular can experience hands on lessons using fire extinguishers. These campaigns have succeeded in creating awareness among people from foreign backgrounds, teaching them what an emergency is and that there is a distinction between the police and fire fighters. The information is currently on a basic level, but in the future a training room is planned where it is possible to educate people more practically than theoretically.¹⁶

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Merseyside is a county in the UK, which contains the municipalities Sefton, St Helens and Wirral with Liverpool as the main city. These areas are poor with high unemployment and

¹⁴ Enander & Johansson, 1999

¹⁵ According to T. Petterson, personal interview 2009

¹⁶ According to S. Braem, personal interview 2009

poor living conditions. The area's rescue services have made themselves known through a comprehensive work of prevention. This work has been prioritized as the management of the emergency services thinks that preventative work can make a difference. When a fire has occurred the damage is usually already done before rescue personnel are on site. Prevention work has led to fires and accidents having decreased significantly in the field. Visiting the households using personnel from MF&RS has done this. These personnel acquire a fire prevention education and the goal is to use people with different backgrounds, such as various immigrants who can communicate in their language with others of the same ethnicity. During these visits, smoke detectors are installed if they do not already exist and the information provided is based on the need of every person. A risk assessment is also carried out on the dwelling along a 40-degree scale.¹⁷ These statistics are then used to avoid potential risks in the future. At high risk the Community Advocates are called in to try to decrease the risks by, for example replacement of poor kitchen facilities.¹⁸ All citizens are informed, from pensioners to children, immigrants or natives. During these visits the MF&RS also helps with social problems as far as possible. This is not the only thing Merseyside and Rescue Service has done. They have opted to be open to all new ideas that come up as long as it reduces damage to society.¹⁹ Education and personal responsibility is not as widespread in England; it is basically the emergency services that undertake to perform the risk-prevention measures in the community.²⁰

2.2.1 Summary of the Fires and Rescue Services activities

Often it is only those emergency services in Sweden that are active in dense immigrant areas that have an explicit strategy to inform people of foreign background on risks.²¹ Those emergency services which have begun to target information to immigrants such as rescue South often puts a great emphasis on hiring people with foreign backgrounds. This is probably something that has been taken from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. This rescue service has gone from thinking conservatively to thinking ahead and dared to try new ideas. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have come a long way in its risk prevention and it is not only the risks that are prevented. They have also managed to resolve many of the social problems. Something that should be taken into account when comparing Merseyside with Swedish rescue services is that they do not have the same conditions. The UK has a different legal framework, local differences and a slightly different culture, which probably gives different effects on strategies, depending on the country where they are applied. There have been attempts to use social workers for example in Jonköping and Rosengård in Malmo, but these are usually time-bound missions. There is a need in Sweden for more personnel with foreign backgrounds in the Fire fighting profession, with a permanent contract. The use of fire fighters as a social worker can also be something, which can solve the problem to reach immigrants in the long run. Rescue Service South has done much to get immigrants to understand what the emergency is and create trust. This is a first step in risk communication to these people and a step you should also begin with.

¹⁷ Johansson, 2008

¹⁸ Johansson, 2008

¹⁹ Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, 2009; Larsson, 2008

²⁰ Johansson, 2008

²¹ Olofsson, 2008

2.3 Risk Communication

One of the Rescue Services tasks in society is to raise public awareness of the risks and how these can be prevented. An example would be how a smoke detector works, its purpose and its limitations. Risk communication is composed of three components, the sender, the message and the receiver. Sender is in this case the emergency services, the message is information on risk prevention or risk, and the receiver is a non-Swedish group in Sweden. A sender's task is to try to change the recipient's attitude, which requires both that the recipient has a trust in the sender and the sender has an understanding of the recipient. The message should be clear and shaped in the manner best suited to the recipient, such as written, oral or / and practical execution. For the emergency services to be able to reach out with their message requires some form of orientation to the target group. A message sent out to all of society will probably not reach all. This is because society is not homogeneous, there are numerous groups who have different attitudes towards the emergency services and towards the message they want to reach out with. Emergency services may have low credibility and the message can be vague and passed through the wrong channels such as through flyers or ads in newspapers. Even if the sender uses empirical facts in his message it is not certain that the receiver will accept them. Recipients often have a subjective view of risk depending on their past experiences, values, sense of control and moral beliefs about risk. It is therefore important not to limit itself to consideration of the facts; otherwise it will probably mean risk communication fails.²² Another important component to consider is the environment in which the recipient lives.²³ Risks and preventive measures change depending on where you live. Non-Swedish people often come from very different environments in relation to the Swedish and will therefore perceive the risks and strategies in the way they did in their home environments.²⁴ Therefore it is important to take this into consideration when the Fire and Rescue Services are formulating their messages to residents. When communicating risk to non-Swedes there must be two main aspects to consider for a successful risk communication. The first is the recipient's values and attitudes. This is about a person's subjective perception of risk. Here, the emergency services need to be open-minded and respect the cultural differences and to have an understanding of the different values that exist. The second aspect is the environment in which they live and what their habits are. It is important to design the message to the environmental conditions that exist, such as if the target group live in multi-storey flats.

²² Breck, 2002

²³ Enander, 2005

²⁴ Enander, 2005

2.4 Culture

Culture is something fundamental but at the same time hard to describe. It is something, which is shared between groups of humans and on how you should live your life. Even in entirely new situations, there is a preconceived opinion based on cultural values. Culture is passed on from generation to generation and can only be changed after a long time.²⁵ The word culture has over 150 different definitions with several meanings, but the three most common meanings are shared beliefs, values and habit.²⁶ There are almost countless different cultures and traditions in the world. These cultures have been created by specific historical and environmental conditions. However, people around the world are quite similar. There are far more similarities than differences between different populations. The differences that still exist can create misunderstandings in communication between different cultures. It is therefore important to have an understanding and openness towards other people and groups.

A simplified way to see how an individual's complex thoughts and emotions are organized can be described as a pyramid, shown in Figure 1. The bottom and also the largest part of the pyramid is the genetic and hereditary component. This is a person's instinct, which is the frame of our capacity. It controls the different needs like social presence, practice and attention. This level also controls emotions, anger, joy, shame, love and depression. Hofstede compared this part as the brain's "operating system" which can be a pretty good metaphor. The cultural part is how the feelings and needs are expressed, how to greet people, ways to eat, how people show appreciation, body movements and hygiene. Culture is learned from childhood, whereas impressions from the environment impact the cultural component. This learning begins in the family and continues to relatives, school, and workplace and ultimately to society in large. Hofstede defines this level as a mental programming that is specific to a group. The upper part is the individual conditions. This part has a unique composition of genetically and culturally inherited traits that make each person different. The individual part is a collection of various mental programs, according to Hofstede.²⁷

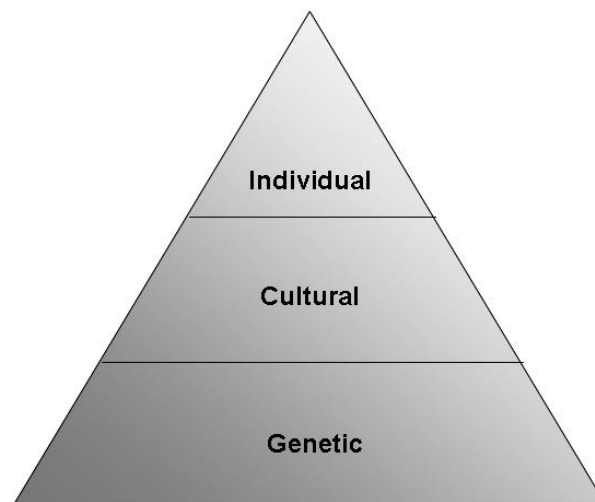


Figure 1. *Hierarchy of affecting factors.*²⁸

²⁵ Jones & Quach, 2007

²⁶ Tone, Skitmore, Kwok & Wong, 2009

²⁷ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

²⁸ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

There are many models to describe a culture. In this report, I have chosen to use a model that depicts the various layers that go deeper inwards until it reaches the nucleus (see Figure 2), just like an onion. The farther into the "onion" midst the more difficult it is to change the cultural components. In the outer shell are symbols followed by heroes, rituals, and eventually values. Symbols can be different objects such as flags and clothing typical of each culture. Heroes within the culture can be both fictional and real; it is "people" which are seen as role models within the culture. Performance of rituals that have no specific target but still considered as important like Midsummer, or other religious ceremonies are to show respect or linking social ties within the boundaries of the culture. These three described shells can be defined as habits. Changes in habits can be done quickly as opposed to values where changes occur much slower. Values are what may be deemed positive or negative, what conditions that are preferred and thus forms the basis of a culture. Values are something that cannot be seen in a culture. They are an invisible part, which can only be observed from people's actions and behaviour. These values are acquired early in life and usually last a lifetime.²⁹

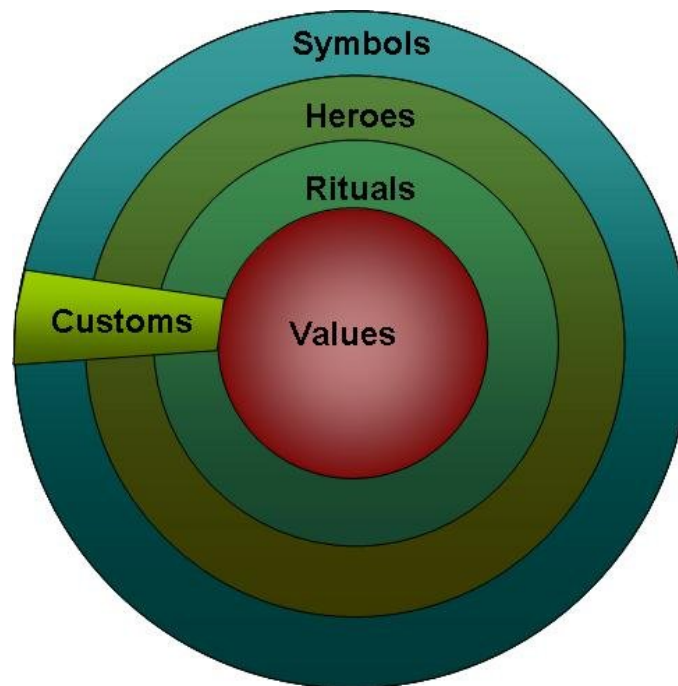


Figure 2. *The cultures different layers.*³⁰

2.4.1 Dimensions

Below is a description of six different dimensions. These dimensions are the result of various studies made by Geert Hofstede, Alfons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner. The dimensions of this work will be used to create a cultural profile of different homogeneous groups. The idea is to use the dimensions to make it possible to identify differences in cultures. A very important thing when using these dimensions is that cultures do not necessarily have to be found in the outer parts of the dimensions' limits. If individualism / collectivism is taken as an example, this does not mean that one culture is either completely

²⁹ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

³⁰ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

collectivist or bears all its properties, the same with the second pole, individualism, most cultures place themselves somewhere in the middle. The culture can also accommodate certain collective behaviours and some typical individualistic behaviour in various respects. For example, the Swedish culture has strong individualistic features of how to live and behave, while there is a strong need to have consensus in group discussions and unwillingness to stand alone with an opinion. Another important point is that many of these dimensions are based on national surveys, i.e. investigations were carried out from a national perspective. This means that these dimensions can maybe only be generalized on very large groups.

Power distance

When communication between authorities and citizens is made, it is sometimes easy to see differences in people's behaviour toward authority. Some people may obey directly what the authority says, while others begin to question and seek some sort of explanation as to why things are in a certain way. This dimension is about high and low power distance. People in a culture with low power distance assume that the authorities and superiors will ask them about things that affect them. In addition, conflicts and questioning towards superiors orders are encouraged, even if the superior ultimately has the last word. In a culture with high power distance the authority's word is the law. Citizens in high power distance cultures do not question authorities unless they are so oppressed that they will revolt. However, it is not certain that they will perform the act or change behaviour depending on their own perception of the authority. In cultures with high power distance, the young are expected to obey the elderly, there is a hierarchy in which an autonomous behaviour is suppressed and the obedience of the elderly is essential. Parents are very careful of a high power distance and do not let children try out new things themselves. Even in adulthood, parents still have a certain authority. In cultures with low power distance it is the other way around. This encourages the children to teach themselves and become self-sustaining. The child is also seen as an equal and at adult age their parents usually make decisions without consulting them. Many dictatorship-governed countries tend to have high power distance.³¹

Individualism/Collectivism

Something that is very fundamental in human nature is the social interaction with others. This interaction is greatly influenced by cultural factors. In countries with a strong collectivist culture the contact with authorities is often through a close friend or relative within the collective group working for the agency. Loyalty to a collective group is very strong, and breaking it is among the worst there is. This is a common cultural value in the world. However, in individualistic cultures "I" instead of "we" is central. Each individual is acquiring his or her own characteristics, and friends. Although family cohesion is quite weak and as a child the immediate family members is what constitutes their group. Collectivist societies often avoid conflict and a yes or no does not always mean this, and therefore can be misinterpreted by people from more individualistic cultures. In an individualistic culture, it is more common, with a straight yes or no, although conflict is common and is seen as a good way to strengthen friendships. Individualistic cultures have a more open and truthful manner. Even if this would hurt someone, it is still seen as better to be honest. In collectivist cultures, it is the opposite. This avoids people hurting others, even though it requires a lie. If a new issue arises from a collectivist group then all gather together to form a common view on the subject. Funerals, weddings and other family rituals are very important in a collectivist culture; it is basically inexcusable to miss a funeral. In individualistic cultures it is considered

³¹ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

embarrassing to be silent when people meet, while it is perfectly normal for a collectivist culture.³² Many people have travelled to various Asian countries and when asking the local population for directions have been met with an affirmative answer to all questions asked regardless if an opposite question has been asked. This is a typical example of collectivist behaviour.

Masculine/feminine

When these words are mentioned thoughts immediately go to a man and a woman. But both males and females may have a more or less masculine or feminine behaviour. Risk communication between an authority and a masculine culture is more likely to affect the behaviour of the culture, depending on skills and status of the authority person. In a more feminine culture the social interaction between the authority and residents would be more important for this culture to appreciate and absorb the information. Masculine cultures have often-greater distinctions between the sexes, which result in men and women separating in different contexts, such as at funerals. Men in masculine societies are not expected to show emotions but to be more aggressive and forward-looking, while women should show more emotion. In a more masculine society, both men and women are more masculine. A feminine culture, however, expresses more feelings in general, among both men and women. The older people are less important than the difference between the sexes.³³ To engage in risk communication in masculine cultures requires that in certain contexts a distinction between the sexes should be made. The sender also needs to be more extrovert and driven in his message. Aggressive behaviour and women segregated from men are typical examples of masculine cultures.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Cultures can be divided into uncertainty avoidance cultures that need a lot of predetermined actions in society and tolerant uncertainty cultures that do not require it in the same degree. In cultures with high uncertainty avoidance it is common with many laws and regulations covering all possible events. It is not sure that all these laws are followed, but the laws will primarily provide greater predictability. The same applies to religion and technology in uncertainty avoidance cultures.

During children's upbringing, they learn to distinguish between what is clean or dirty and what is dangerous or harmless. Clean and dirty can be anything from various chemicals and ideas to animals and humans. In uncertainty avoidance cultures, these limits are hard-coated; they perceive the world as a hostile place because they are protected from experiencing unfamiliar situations. Even many ideas may be taboo in a state of uncertainty avoidance culture. The uncertainty tolerant culture has an interest in the unknown, which differ from the cultures of uncertainty avoidance, which may perceive as threatening and dangerous anything that is new. This also means that the uncertainty tolerant culture will probably take on new technologies faster than the uncertainty avoidance cultures are doing. When it comes to education and learning, uncertainty avoidance cultures wants to have a very accurate description of a clearly defined objective or response. For an uncertainty tolerant culture, it is more appropriate to give more unstructured data with no clear objective. Here it is the ingenuity that is important; it would be taboo to only have one answer.

Teachers of uncertainty avoidance cultures are often regarded as sages where it is good to talk professionally, they may also enjoy a good reputation. Not being able to answer all questions

³² Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

³³ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

on the other hand is accepted in uncertainty tolerant culture. Here it is also positive to talk in everyday terms. Experts are much more important for a safety avoiding culture than it is for a safety tolerant culture. This means that in the uncertainty avoidance cultures the experts are often used in commercials to sell a specific product. Humour is more common in uncertainty tolerant culture for advertising campaigns.³⁴ Immigrants in Sweden often complain that there are too few and not very specific laws and regulations.³⁵ This could mean that the information that should be given to uncertainty avoidance cultures should be clearly defined and precise. When introducing new technologies to uncertainty avoidance cultures, it is probably important to spend much time on getting them to accept the technology, instead of trying to convince them why they should avoid the risk.

Analysis/Integration

Integration tends to look beyond a particular field and an analytical culture looks for a specific domain.³⁶ An analytical culture uses facts and other arguments, for example, makes someone accept something. They do this because they see the communication between the people they will close a deal with as only 'business'. They do not want to waste time on relationships and small talk. Relationships can sometimes be seen as harmful to agreement, where people can be influenced by their relationship to the other party. In an integrated culture on the other hand, the relationship is the focus. Agreements and transactions are only made with persons who are close. Facts and agreement does not make much difference in negotiations with such cultures as compared to the effect a good relationship has.³⁷

Control/harmony

When the source of motivation and values are taken beyond their own environment, culture strives to be in harmony with their surroundings (being controlled by the environment). But if the source of motivation and values come from within, the culture tends to try to control their environment.³⁸ An example of this dimension could be how people in a group reasoning, when they choose to sit in a secluded place and discuss, rather than to sit amongst other people. The controlling culture would have thought that this behaviour was because they did not want to be disturbed by the others sitting around, while the harmonious person wants to sit in a group room so as not to disturb the people outside.³⁹ For communication to cultures that want to control the environment, it is probably most efficient to focus on giving people as much control as possible over the risk or the risk-prevention measure. With harmonious cultures, it is probably better to show how much the damage to the surroundings would take if the risk or the risk prevention measures are not carried out. Many Swedes who travel on the German Autobahn the first time often get a mild shock. In Sweden it is customary to stand in line and not force yourself past everyone. On the Autobahn, for example, it is much more crowded and people trying to force themselves past everyone is more the rule than exception.

2.4.2 Summary and comparison

In Table 1, all dimensions are combined with a brief description. Some of these dimensions, which are listed, depend not only on cultural values. Dimensions of individualism/collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance are some dimensions in which the economic welfare of the culture can make it more or less inclined to move towards

³⁴ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

³⁵ Enander, 2005

³⁶ Thorne & Saunders, 2002

³⁷ Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998

³⁸ Thorne & Saunders, 2002

³⁹ Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998

one or the other level. Various dimensions can also depend on each other. Power distance and individualism / collectivism, for example are negatively correlated with one another.⁴⁰

Table 1. Show the different dimensions described in the report.

Dimensions	Description
Power distance	<p>High: Greater habit of obeying people who are higher in rank, such as a professional officer and director. Dictatorial control mode is considered as normal.</p> <p>Low: Communication is done on equal conditions and all are seen as equally worthy.</p>
Individualism/Collectivism	<p>Individualism: Make their own decisions based on facts and their own discretion.</p> <p>Collectivism: The group's voice is the individual's voice. Here the group determines which values a person should have.</p>
Masculine/feminine	<p>Masculine: It is more common with aggressive behaviour in communication. There are also major differences between the sexes.</p> <p>Feminine: Aggressiveness is avoided in the communication. There are minor or no differences between the sexes.</p>
Uncertainty Avoidance	<p>High: Strong partitioning between dirty and clean. Encompasses the needs of many and precise laws.</p> <p>Low: The individual is curious about the unknown and open to risks. It is normal with few and vague laws.</p>
Analysis/Integration	<p>Analysis: Facts are important when negotiating.</p> <p>Integration: Relationships are important in negotiations.</p>
Control/harmony	<p>Harmony: Respects its surroundings.</p> <p>Control: Want to control its surroundings.</p>

2.5 Swedish Culture

Today, Sweden is in many ways, multicultural with a large percentage of people of foreign origin from all over the world. Furthermore there exist many ideological and range-bound cultures, feminists, conservatisms, and so forth. However, there are clear features of values that can be defined as typically Swedish. These values can of course not be attributed to every individual in Sweden. These values should rather be viewed as a norm in the same way as

⁴⁰ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

there are many dialects in Sweden; there is still something in some form, which is defined as "normal" Swedish. Swedes often consider themselves to have no cultural background; they think their values are based on modern rationality assumptions that are created on the basis of modern industrial society the Swedes live in. This is, of course far from the truth. Sweden has its own culture and not only that; it can be very extreme in some perspectives. When a typical Swede discusses a topic then he or she keeps to strict facts and factual arguments. The involvement of feelings often makes the person lose sight of the debate. This means that the Swedish culture has a strong connection with the analytical part of the dimension analysis/integration. Both the verbal and nonverbal language of the Swede tends to be much less expressive compared to many other cultures. Having too much body movement and speaking loudly in a debate is considered as aggressive behaviour and displaying ignorance on the subject. Sweden has a strong feminine shaped society. This is one of the most distinctive features of Swedish society. It is this dimension that clearly explains the Swede's resistance to aggression in communication. Since there is no need to show aggression, Swedes often tend to seek consensus. Not to interfere unnecessarily is also seen as typical in Swedish society. As is to talk loudly in public places, for example on a bus, as this would prevent the bus driver from making himself heard if necessary. Proximity to nature is also associated with the Swedish culture. This explains the large amount of nature programmes on Swedish television channels. In other words the norm Swede tends to seek harmony with nature and their surroundings. When carrying out risk communication with other cultures that want to control the environment it will probably create conflict. Sweden's culture is also very highly individualized, where family ties are relatively weak, and to live with several generations in the same dwelling is unthinkable. As an individualized culture the Swede takes in information depending on the facts and the norm in the society. Relatives do not have quite as much influence on the decision. Children's free education in Sweden is also a characteristic. A form of education, derived from the Swede's low uncertainty avoidance. Power distance in the Swedish society is very low, the Swede has a similar principle, which is reflected in society, such as health care, where everyone is part of the same queue. In risk communication, it is not very important what status the person has in society, but rather how social and eloquent the person providing the information is. In Table 2 the dimension of the levels of what the "norm Swede" possesses in the society is described. As a Swede it is important to take these features into account when you encounter other cultures. Immigrants may also have a tendency to interpret certain things in Swedish society, such as that the Swedes are materialistic. Such an interpretation may be due to Sweden's good welfare compared to some other countries.⁴¹

⁴¹ Daun, 2005; Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

Table 2. Describes the level of Swedish norms of various dimensions.

Dimensions	Description of the Swedish norms
Power distance	Low power distance: Communication is best done on equal terms and it is permissible to argue with superior people.
Individualism/Collectivism	Strong individualism: Swedes are more inclined to listen to facts than to relatives. Some collectivism. In-group discussions, Swedes seek consensus, it is inconvenient to be of a different opinion.
Masculine/feminine	Strong Feminine: The Swedish society makes no distinction between men and women. Women are also accepted in most jobs in society.
Uncertainty Avoidance	Low: Swedes do not have many laws but the laws, which exist, are followed.
Analysis/Integration	Analysis: Facts are the most important thing in negotiations for a Swede.
Control/harmony	Harmony: Most Swedes respect their surroundings and avoid any unnecessary interference.

2.5.1 Swedish cultural clashes

A distinct feature when a Swede encounters another culture is that he or she often falls silent when interacting. This is of course something Swedes expect of other cultures as well. When persons of a foreign origin do not react in a similar fashion, conflicts and irritation arise easily. That men and women are very distinct in many cultures is also something that is perceived as negative in Sweden. Swedes are accustomed to, or assume that there are no major differences between the sexes' capacity and therefore listen to what both men and women have to say. In some cultures, this would be seen as impossible. The Swede is also extremely analytical when he/she communicates with other people. It is only with their friends and family they discuss their feelings. When a Swede encounters an integrated culture, he/she would probably be asked social and family related questions. If a risk communication were to be conducted in such a situation, it is advisable to create a social interaction rather than spend time on giving a large amount of facts to persuade the person. In Sweden, it is also common to have rules that are not clearly defined. This can cause problems and irritation for some Swedes, regardless of ethnic background.⁴² It is therefore advisable to conduct a more clear risk communication with well-defined objectives and suggestions to people with foreign backgrounds. The typical Swede does not put so much emphasis on the title of people they encounter. When a Swede is faced by a person with high power distance, they may perceive the person as arrogant if the person believes they have a higher status, or to fawn if they feel that they have a lower status. These cultural clashes are something you should be prepared for as a Swede. There is nothing that cannot be changed and to keep a good risk communication it is important to overcome these cultural differences.

⁴² Ohlsson, 2009

2.6 Model of behaviour

In risk communication, it is not only the cultural values that can be a barrier. The environment and habits are very important factors to consider when the information is given to different people. In this chapter, a behavioural model will be described and integrated in another model later on in this report.

Ann Enander and her colleague, Misa Sjöberg have in their research on risk behaviour designed a model to describe people's behaviour towards risks and situations in everyday life. The result was a model of three spheres, depending factors, acting pattern and perceived exposure, see Figure 3. The model was developed based on a survey carried out on more than 2,000 people and through focus group interviews.⁴³

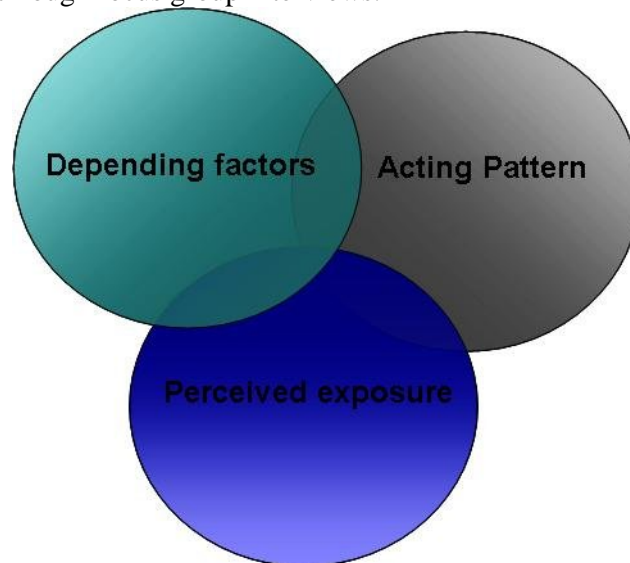


Figure 3. *Ann Enanders and Misa Sjöberg's sphere of thought.*⁴⁴

2.6.1 Depending factors

Within this sphere there are factors that describe people's attitude to risk and safety awareness. The sphere can be split into three different categories, the environment, context and experience. The Contextual and Environmental categories are depending on if people are safe or unsafe, and if some environments are known or undesirable. This has an impact on the individual behaviour. People feel safe in a known environment and often think it is safe, while the people who are insecure may feel a need for greater risk-prevention measures in their environment. But most people learn to manage their everyday lives and are aware of the dangers there. The difference between these risks is that they are known to the individual and can therefore be prevented. Different environments provide different levels of security for each person. In a change of environment or social life, such as having children, people will be more aware of the risks of everyday life. Experience of a risk can be acquired directly by the individual having been involved in this kind of accident, before or indirectly through the media and social contacts. The perceived risk may have arisen long ago or recently, it could have been anywhere else that is far from the everyday field. It can also involve emotional intimacy; individuals have different levels of intimacy depending on personality. Some can be

⁴³ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

⁴⁴ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

very emotional about a particular accident, while others are not affected at all.⁴⁵ This sphere has described what kind of factors may influence the way people act and how they relate themselves against risks.⁴⁶ Depending factors may explain some of the phenomena that exist in cultural meetings. People with foreign backgrounds often come to Sweden from countries with different environments and it is therefore likely that many both feel a certain insecurity and lack of experience.

2.6.2 Acting pattern

It describes the way people think and act when they face a risk or take a position on a protective precaution. This sphere can be divided into three categories, principles, strategies and habits / behaviour. Principles describe the kind of fundamental values that a person has about risks. As an example, the upbringing of children can be used as an example; some parents let their children become exposed to some risks while other parents try to stop the children from exposure to too many risks. There are many ways to relate to principles. Some believe that individuals themselves must take full responsibility for certain risks, while others think that society should have some responsibility. Strategies deal with individuals' routines and habits. This builds on the basic category that people form their strategies according to what they believe and value. An example of a strategy among individuals is to habitually search for the evacuation information of a new building. The last level habits / behaviour are based on the other two. This is the real part of the sphere in which individuals choose to act and behave in a certain way towards risks. When a person chooses to behave in a certain way pros and cons weigh heavily on the decision before acting.⁴⁷

2.6.3 Perceived exposure

This sphere deals with people's perceived vulnerability. Vulnerability can be experienced physically, mentally, materialistically/economically and socially. People can also see how dangerous something is, and who may face some risk. The perceived exposure increases with age, as people become frailer. There are various ways to become aware of your own vulnerability, other people telling you or through experience. A major point in this sphere is to have control.⁴⁸ This may explain why people felt such a strong vulnerability against mad cow disease, in which they had no opportunity for self-monitoring.⁴⁹ Monitoring can be prevented economically; such as people cannot afford to buy a fire extinguisher. Also lack of knowledge may prevent control of a certain risk, such as how a smoke alarm is working.⁵⁰

2.6.4 Synthesis of the behavioural model

In Figure 4, the spheres and its components are summarized. These three spheres; depending factors, acting pattern and perceived exposure, provide a good model for a theoretical framework and a more practical implementation. The model also shows some situations where it is easier to change an individual's behaviour for example when rescuing a child. This model also explains many of the behaviours that can sometimes be seen as irrational, such as the hysteria that surrounded mad cow disease. Ann Enander and Misa Sjöberg have compiled a number of issues, which can be deduced from the model. This may go some way to describe conditions towards risk and the targeted audience. These questions are compiled in Table 3.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

⁴⁶ Enander, 2005

⁴⁷ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

⁴⁸ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

⁴⁹ Breck, 2002

⁵⁰ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

⁵¹ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

The model can be used as a theoretical tool to show people's mindset and risk and safety behaviour. The behaviour model can also be used in practice with emphasis on attitude and behaviour changes. Spheres themselves are affected by each other and these three spheres together create a picture of how people look at the risks in their everyday environment. As an example, the acting pattern sphere bases an experience in the sphere of depending factors.⁵²

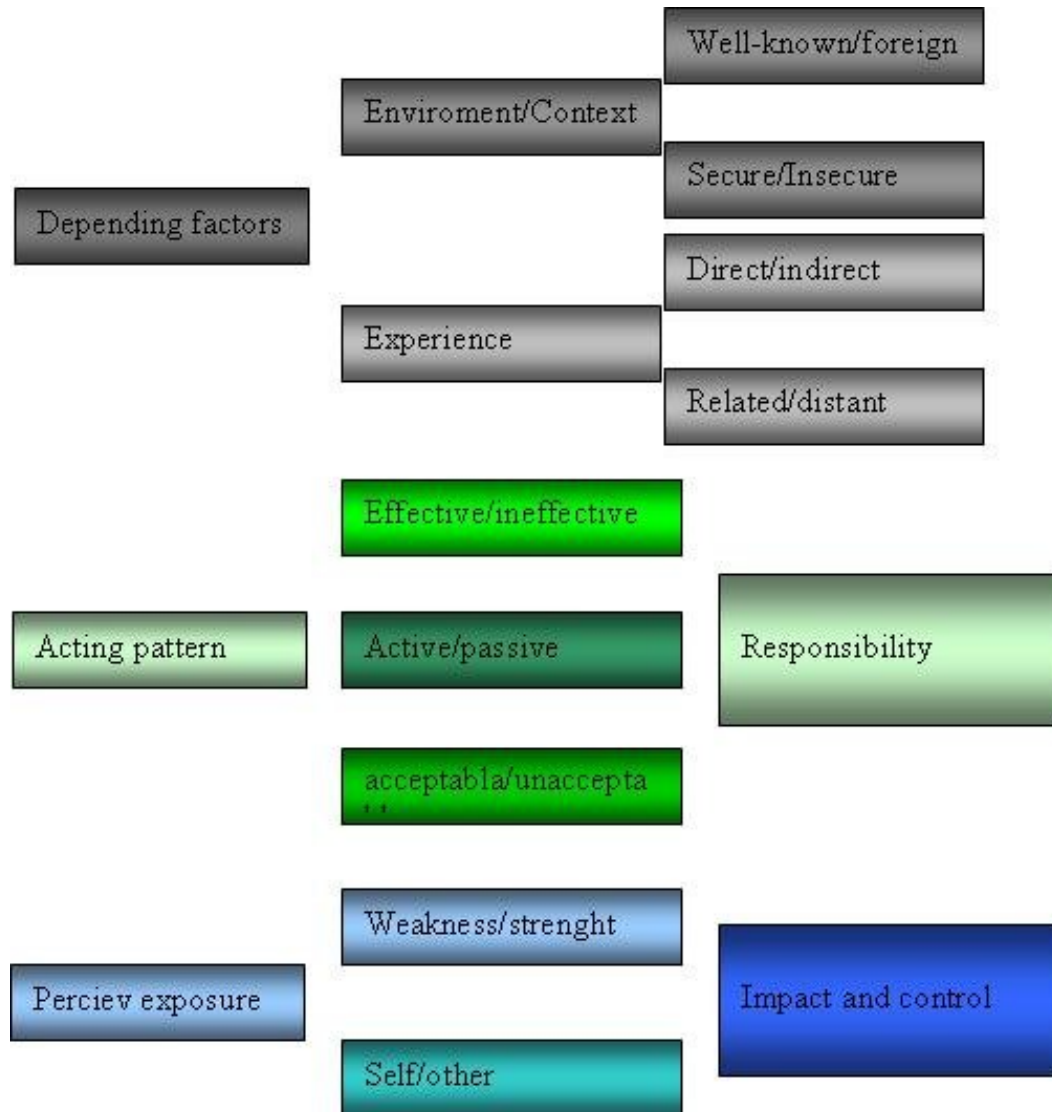


Figure 4. *The thought spheres components.*

⁵² Enander, 2005

2.6.5 Implementation of the behavioural model

In order to change a person's behaviour it requires a thorough understanding of what influences the behaviour of individuals. For example, let's assume that emergency services want to get more people in an area with a high proportion of immigrants to check their smoke detectors more often. To illustrate the conditions that the group of people can have issues with, Table 3 is used. When these issues are discussed you should also consider the various factors in Figure 4. Environments and contexts in Sweden for immigrants can be very different and strange in many cases. They may not know what purpose a smoke alarm has or the context in which it is used. Nor is it certain that they have any experience to deal with a smoke detector or know how it works. Their strategies to deal with a fire are perhaps not related to smoke detectors and they may have other ways of dealing with it. For example they may be under the impression that they would wake up if there were a fire without the need for a smoke detector. It also depends on whether they are active in their behaviour, if they want to take responsibility ensuring the smoke detector works. In some cases there are refugees from war zones who have been through much worse things than being caught in a fire. These individuals might therefore think it is acceptable not to have a smoke detector. The last realm of perceived exposure also plays an important role in changing behaviour. Children, for example, make their parents feel an increased vulnerability to them, and thus more willing to change their behaviour. What influence and control the individual has determines if he or she is experiencing a greater or lesser vulnerability. The points that make the target group not willing to change their behaviour are the points to be processed for a successful outcome. For example, if concluded that it was a bad experience, a different approach and a tighter sense of control may be required. Then the emergency services could give this group more experience and strategies on fires through practical briefings. It may also be appropriate to give them an understanding that they may not have the control they feel they have.

Table 3. *Issues, which can be examined, based on the thought spheres (translated from Swedish).*⁵³

In what environments / context is the risk?
Are the environments alien or familiar to the target group?
Is the environment / context, something that the target group feels secure or insecure with?
Does the target group meet risk in different contexts, roles and physical environments?
What direct or indirect experience may the target group have about the risk?
What factors may influence the interpretation of these experiences?
What type of acting pattern has the target group developed towards risk?
What principle position, strategies and habits in relation to the risk does the group have?
Is the idea of the security behaviour of a risk acceptable / unacceptable, effective / ineffective?
Is there a strong social influence factor?
How does the target group look upon their own responsibilities towards a risk or precaution?
Is there a perceived vulnerability against risk?
What sphere of influence and control have the targeted group of the risk?
How can the group begin to prioritize the security around this risk compared with other risks?
What other values and life goals may be relevant to the target group?

2.7 Cultural model

In the chapter on risk communication the simplest form of risk communication was described, such as an emergency service providing information on fire prevention in the home to a family with a foreign background. The recipient changing its behaviour on the risk in the direction of that the sender intended characterizes successful risk communication. In this case, the sender is a Fire and Rescue Service and the recipient is a homogeneous group with the same cultural and area specific backgrounds. Here it is not as easy to maintain an effective risk communication. The target group can partly have strong different values on the risk information. There may be reluctance to new technologies such as sprinklers. How the information is preferred may differ. Some cultures require strong trust with strong relationships to get them to accept a risk, some might listen more to people with higher status in society. This is a cultural obstacle, which needs to be circumvented in order to have an effective risk communication. Another obstacle is the environment and specific behaviours.

⁵³ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

Say you have two groups with the same culture and values, where one group would have moved to a big city while the second group would have moved to the countryside, this would make their behaviour and habits differ. From the site-specific factors there will therefore emerge a barrier, which may also lead to risk communication failing to change the behaviour of the target group. These two barriers are of course also integrated together. The behaviour of a person is partly based on the cultural values and the same applies to the perceived exposure, where uncertainty avoidance may be in varying degrees.

2.7.1 Integration of the cultural model

Based on the theoretical aspects of this work and through interviews with people inside and outside the emergency services, I have developed a model to overcome the obstacles that can arise in communicating with other cultures. Figure 5 shows an overview of the model. This risk communication model assumes that communication is open with the exchange of knowledge between cultures. The model also requires that the information should be relatively specific, for example, to get more people to investigate whether smoke detectors work or to ask for help when changing light bulbs. This model should be viewed more as a description where problems occur and how it is possible to separate the study of risk communication to non-Swedish people. To be able to overcome the different values that can distinguish between emergency services and the target group, I have added six different dimensions, which together form a cultural profile. This profile is intended to make the sender, in this case the emergency services alerted to what the values of the target group may be. The cultural profile is determined from the cultural norm that the senders has and because the emergency services at the moment are strongly influenced by persons with Swedish norms. It is also most likely that this should measure the norm of the other cultures. Measurements can be done through interviews, surveys and information from the media and/or literary texts on the cultural group. When the Fire and Rescue Service know about the differences and similarities between their culture and target group it should be quite easy to get past the cultural barrier. The cultural profile can also be seen as a foundation and framework from where further research should be done to force the second obstacle. This is because both models overlap. The second part consists of the three spheres of thought as presented in the previous chapter. It addresses the target group's acting pattern, perceived exposure and the environmental conditions in the field of regard. Some risks may be more or less acceptable to the culture and this is partly due to the cultural values of the group but also habits, control possibilities and the environment around them. Habits and actions the target group performs every day, including travel by bus to work or cooking in a certain way. Exerting control over the risks and also the preventive measures may be more or less important for different groups. The environment can be anything from large urban areas to staying out at sea. The aim is to bring risk communication to the environments that the group is accustomed to. To identify what is acceptable or not and whether a particular risk is important. Sphere of thought describes a relatively large area that can make it difficult to get a grasp of how and where risk communication should be conducted. By using the dimensions of the cultural research and a model of behavioural research it should be possible to reach the receiver and get him or her to change their behaviour in a way that is safer to society as a whole. There are also other influencing factors that play an important role, these have been addressed before in the report but is worth bringing up again. The economic conditions and how close people live affect both values and behaviour. These factors must be considered in risk communication.

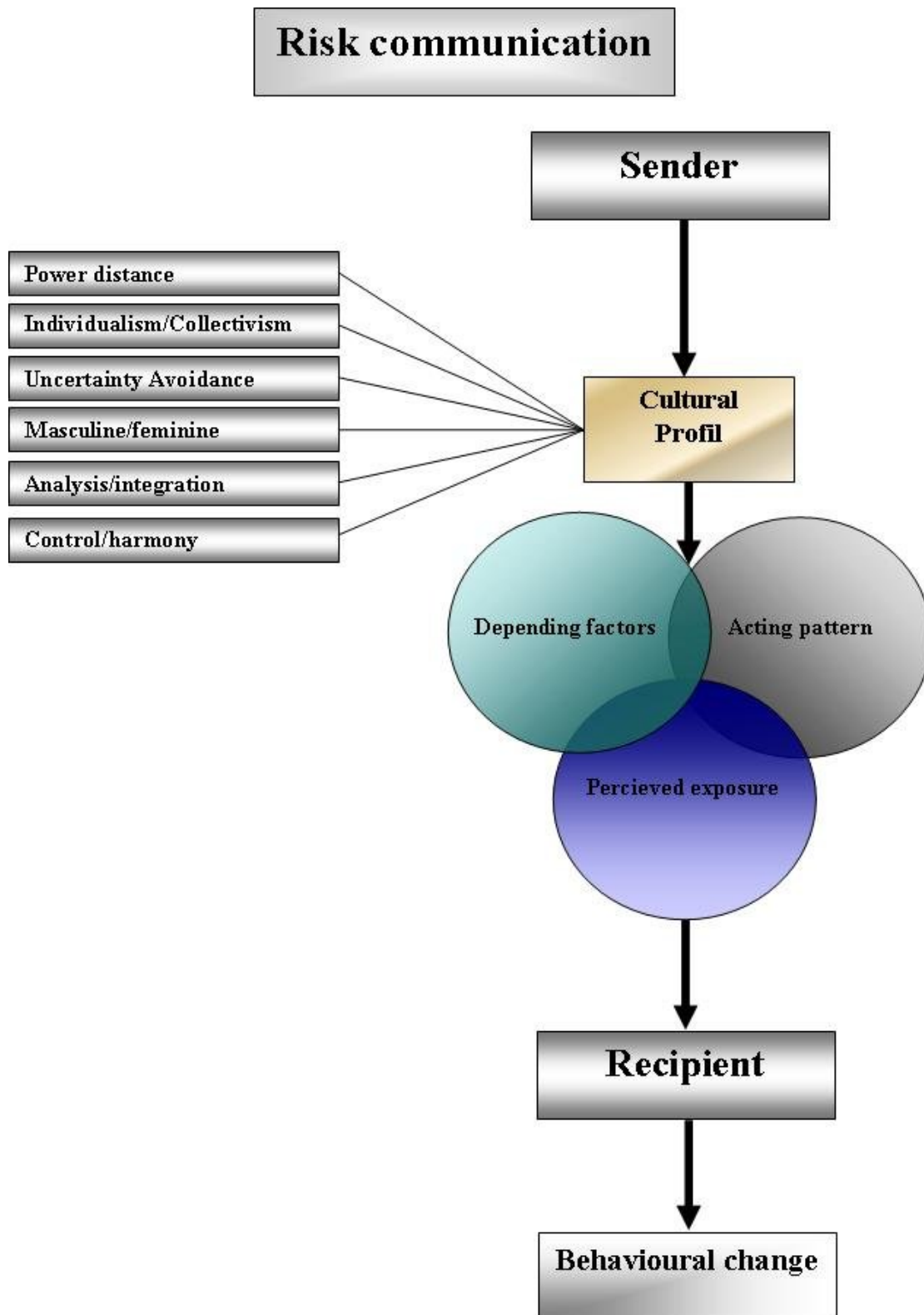


Figure 5. Stressors in risk communication to people with foreign backgrounds. Modified from Misa Sjöberg and Ann Enanders model (see Figure 3)⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ Enander & Sjöberg, 2005

2.8 The fire in Rinkeby, an example

On July 25, 2009 at 22:15 the SOS centre in Stockholm received an alarm of a fire in an apartment in Rinkeby. The fire started in a Duplex at the bottom of the apartment house on Kuddbygränd 12th.⁵⁵ Six young girls with Somalia origin were alone a couple of floors above the apartment where the fire was. Five of the children belonged to the same family, while one was a cousin of the others. The mother of the children was with her friends and the two other boys in the family were outside playing. The father was away drinking tea with a close friend. When the mother of the family discovered the fire she rushed up to the girls in the apartment. After coming up she pulled all the children down in the stairwell, which was filled with toxic smoke because the door to the burnt apartment was open. Smoke divers found the bodies in the stairwell, and all except one girl was pronounced dead. The last girl died several days later due to her injuries. The father also came to the scene after a phone call from another friend, but the emergency services were already in place and prevented him from entering. In the aftermath of the fire there was great sadness in the area. Some sought solace in their religious beliefs.

*"Our faith relieves our grief."*⁵⁶

Some were surprised that it was the smoke that had been the fatal factor.

*"In Somalia, smoke is nothing that we see as directly dangerous."*⁵⁷

The family and the cousin had probably survived if they had stayed in the apartment, but in Somalia, there are no high buildings, so people run out if there is a fire. Some voiced concerns that information about fires should be translated into more languages than what exists today. But the Somalis have an oral tradition of information flow; so this measure may be quite meaningless. During the funeral of the mother, her five daughters and their cousin about 2,000 people attended. There were people from all walks of life including relatives who had travelled from far away to Swedish government officials. The men stood next to the burial grounds while the women were separated standing a little farther away. This is because in the Somali culture, women are regarded as more sensitive. The women agree with this and they do not want to disrupt the funeral ceremony. Many Somalis showed their support in this tragedy, even if they did not know the family very well. According to Hirey Roble this is an example of the Somalis strong bond.

*"You Swedes are individualists, we Somalis emphasize the collective, and have really close contact with many both financially and emotionally."*⁵⁸

Hirey Roble also mentioned a football tournament, which takes place in Rinkeby between Somalis from different parts of Europe. Here he also mentions that there are major differences between the Somalis in different countries.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Micic, Eriksson & Håkansson, 2009

⁵⁶ By, 2009, (Translated from Swedish)

⁵⁷ By, 2009, (Translated from Swedish)

⁵⁸ Granstrand, 2009, (Translated from Swedish)

⁵⁹ By, 2009; Andrén & Lundgren 2009; Ekström, 2009; Granstrand, 2009

2.8.1 Application of the cultural group model.

Before the culture model is used, it is important that there really is a largely homogenous group to be analyzed. In this case, it would seem the group is people with a Somali origin and residents in the area of Rinkeby. An assumption that also needs to be made is that all in the target group do not come from highly diverse minorities from Somalia. In this case, the risk information to the culture failed to get past the obstacles that arose. Let us say that the information, which shall be communicated to the group, is how they should behave in a fire in an apartment house. We begin by analyzing the first barrier that consists of cultural values that may differ or be equal to the Fire and Rescue Services and the target group. By analyzing the text of the event, it is quite easy to draw some conclusions about the target group from these different dimensions. Power distance will probably be slightly higher than an average Swedish would have. This is based on the fact that Somalia has had a large number of dictatorships and this tends to give relatively high power distance.⁶⁰ But since it is not possible to determine if the group originates from a minority of the country with other values, this dimension should be explored more in-depth before you can make a decision. The target group exhibits a strong collective culture as evidenced, first, from the quotation of Hirey Roble and by the attendance at the funeral. This target group also shows a masculine behaviour. Women and men are separated, both at the funeral and within the family where the father socialized with his male friends and the mother with her female friends. The same also applied for the children in the family. Also that only women show emotions is an example of masculine behaviour. There are some tendencies towards an integrating behaviour, when it seems that the group has strong relationships with each other that they value highly. But there is too little information to draw any firm conclusions on this dimension. Further on to the thought sphere, there are again some points to note. Coming from a country where a house is almost never higher than two stories and arriving to a house in another country with a significantly larger number of floors, will probably enable people in the group to feel at home in his or her apartment. However, their behaviour will probably remain the same, as it was when they were living in Somalia, that is, as soon as there is a fire, you must get out. They have probably not experienced a fire in an apartment before so they lack experience of this type of risk. In terms of the sphere of depending factors it concludes that they perhaps are accustomed to their environment to a greater or lesser degree. However, they have neither experience with fires in apartments before nor how an apartment house is built. The acting pattern is also quite clear: if there is a fire you need to get out. The strategy is to get out. Their habits in relation to smoke are that it is not dangerous and this is likely because the group has never experienced smoke in an enclosed space before. Judging from the situation with the mother that she was prepared to run into the house suggests that she felt her children were exposed. The last fact that could be established was that the group has an oral tradition, which means that information on flyers and advertisements in the mailbox is probably not very effective.⁶¹

2.8.2 Proposal for action

Since the group has masculine values it may require specific information for both men and women, separately. It may also be of importance who is informing about the risk, whether it is a man or woman. The collective value of the group probably lends itself to inform and discuss in groups rather than to walk around and talk individually with each person when it is their common views that govern and not the individual. In terms of the thought sphere, it became

⁶⁰ Hofstede & Hofstede, 1991

⁶¹ This implementation is based on media sources and should only be viewed as a proposal on how the cultural model could work.

clear that there was a lack of experience of smoke hazards and how an apartment is built. Work should be carried out to give the target group practical experience in their environment where they live. Also pressing the safety on children against the risk can be an effective way to get a behavioural change.

My suggestion is thus that the information should be delivered in larger groups and to groups of only men or women. The information should be practical, as written information probably will have little effect. This would provide an understanding and experience of what the group lacks. Moreover, this work should take place in environments that the group is accustomed to and can relate to, for example, their own apartments and the area they live in. The practical part will be followed by a joint evaluation in which the exchange of ideas will take place between the group and the Fire and Rescue Services. The work should be seen as a long term project.⁶²

⁶² This text is based on media sources with questionable veracity and should therefore be treated with great caution.

3 Discussions

Based on the literature, there is a clear message that there is a need to get to know the person or group, which risk communication, is given to. It is also important to allow everyone to become involved throughout the whole process of the risk communication efforts. When it comes to values, this is something that is in principle steadfast; they change over a long period of time. The other components of a culture, which is customs, are easier to change but this is not essential for risk communication as it is not particularly useful to analyze individual values.

During the course, many different perspectives have materialised on the management of the cultural problems in risk communication. Some believe that it is the language barrier, which makes cultures unable to receive information, and therefore want to translate information to various languages. Some believe that more responsibility for risk prevention should be given to the landlord. While hiring people with foreign background to the emergency services, such as social workers is considered an effective way to bridge the cultural differences. Most of the proposals that emerged through the work such as language translation and to put the responsibility on to others do not solve the cultural problem entirely. Such measures are of course good and can be effective in some areas, for example ensuring a caretaker is responsible for the fire alarm and that it is always working. But this does not mean that immigrants know what to do if a smoke detector goes off. This applies of course to many Swedes as well, but for them it is much easier to acquire information both before and during a crisis, because the society is structured and adapted to Swedish values. These measures do not take values into account so it will inadvertently become a barrier when meeting foreign people. The only way today, which I have found during writing this report, is to recruit people with foreign backgrounds. In this way, the cultural barrier is removed, and risk communication can take place using the same approach as when conveying emergency information to a Swede. Another advantage is that people with foreign backgrounds often come from the same environments as other immigrants, which means that they may even be able to overcome that obstacle. This does not mean that the Fire and Rescue Services should hire more social workers that during limited times visit and communicate information. What is required is rather that the emergency services in general should represent the same distribution of cultures that exist in the community they operate in. To employ non-Swedish people is something that is needed but at the same time the other persons with Swedish norms must have an understanding, both for other cultures and their own.

The Fire and Rescue services must reach out with information to everyone in the society. The current situation does not look like that. Usually it is just the "normal Swede" that can be reached with information, while minorities remain uninformed. It is therefore important to make targeted risk communication work and it is here that the cultural model comes into play. When communicating with different cultures and groups, you cannot use information based on the same values that you have yourself. Here there must be an awareness and understanding of different cultures. These are created by implementing the cultural model and create a cultural and environmental profile of the group. Hereby the values are obtained which can vary between the cultures and on this basis it should be possible to conduct a risk communication in a much more efficient manner. In surveys and interviews it is important that all information incorporated in the work have more or less the same values so it does not distort the results. If people with very different values carry out this work these people would most likely give the respondent different values because they all have different cultures, which they compare with. Work on cultural profile should therefore be based on a single

value norm, such as the Swedish norm. Values in Sweden have, as mentioned earlier, a distinctive profile. There are few countries in the world that have as high a “femininity” as Sweden, which probably means that most immigrants will have a masculine nature from the Swede's point of view. This may explain the perception of the Swedes who think that immigrants are sometimes behaving disruptively and aggressively. Another big difference is our individualistic behaviour. It happens all the time that immigrants are complaining that they do not know their neighbours. This means that non-Swedes with collectivist behaviour will feel an even greater deprivation and segregation. Another distraction from the ordinary Swede is when non-Swedes do not follow the implicit rules to stand in line and not push in. Many Swedes perceive this as an insult, but for some people with foreign background, it is quite natural. A probable reason for the Swedes to a greater extent not to push in is their harmonized and fair view of the surroundings. Power Distance is also something that is extreme to the average Swede. Gender equality is not only between sexes but also between rich and poor in Sweden. As a Swede you expect to talk at the same level with all people even if he or she would have been prime minister. For a non-Swedish person this is often perceived as unnatural. Many cultures expect high statesmen or leaders to distance themselves from ordinary people by wearing uniforms or to have other persons representing their voice. As mentioned earlier, the Swedes tend to perceive themselves as more modern and more developed in their behaviour, but there is no right and wrong when it comes to values and cultures. Different cultures are good at different things so you can never say that a particular culture is best.

Sweden is a complex country with many different cultures. This requires an understanding and committed work from the emergency services in order to overcome people's different values and to have a good risk communication reaching the whole community.

3.1 Sources of error

There is a lot of information on countries' cultural dimensions, but these should be treated with caution partly because there are usually a large number of minority groups within a nation, sometimes with very different cultures and partly because people who come to another country will be to a more or less degree embraced in the new country's culture.

The relationship between the listed dimensions and the thought spheres are in no way proved only in the case study of Rinkeby fire and various examples. Probably the dimensions and thought spheres overlap when the cultural components are included in for example the depending factor.

Much of the information and almost all interviews are made in Jonkoping, which may cause some parts of the work only to be attributed to the Jonkoping area.

The dimensions, which are shown in this work, have no direct relation to risk communication and are mainly used in business meetings between different cultures.

4 Conclusion

In order to achieve good risk communication you first and foremost need a good relationship and trust between the emergency services and the cultural group. By using the cultural model it is possible to partially overcome the problems that arise. The Thought Sphere also enable the site-specific factors can be taken into account, which will also make risk communication more effective.

Much of today's work on risk communication between emergency services and immigrants derives from practical works. There are no or very few theoretical studies on this subject and it probably explains the wide variance in the approach on this subject among the various emergency services.

The problem with much of the practical work carried out in today's society is that they are not directly linked to other cultures' values. In the current situation employing people with foreign background is the only time when values are taken into account. Of course you can go a long way to build relationships and understand cultural differences. As a Swede it should be possible to have good risk communication through knowledge of cultural values and environmental factors. But the Fire and Rescue Services is not there yet. There is still a lack of understanding, practice and knowledge around cultures. Values can also be decisive in many risk communications. Values are one of the greatest problems in today's risk communication. It is therefore important to provide all persons in the emergency services with an insight into how different cultures behave in order to eventually create a Fire and Rescue Service where all cultures feel they understand.

5 Further work

This report has basically only dealt with the theoretical data available on the subject. It would therefore be useful to verify the conclusions reached in the report by making quantitative studies in the community.

What is needed is a more practical approach to information gathering and evaluation to determine the best strategies in the future. To have a proper factual basis offers excellent opportunities to cross the barriers that can arise. To explore ways to collect, store and use information about groups and cultures' behaviour and values is something that is vital and which need further analysis.

It would require a closer look at whether it is possible to create sufficiently homogeneous groups in Swedish society in order to make effective targeted interventions, or if it is so heterogeneous that each individual must obtain customized risk information.

To develop the exchange of experiences between different agencies can be an interesting area. Some authorities have gone further than others in their communication to people with foreign backgrounds. It could also be effective to mix social services with the emergency services, similar to what has been done in Merseyside.

Immigrants usually receive a large flow of information when they come to Sweden. This means that they are not always able to absorb all the information given to them. It may therefore be desirable to place more responsibility on municipalities and property owners on risk prevention. Therefore, an investigation whether it is appropriate to make a change in the law on this would be of interest.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to give my aunt, Ylva Moln Page big thanks for helping me with the translation of this report.

APPENDIX I (translated from Swedish)

Results from the survey on Råslätt by Suzan Rashid and Jasmita Jansari, 2006

1. What do you do if you detect smoke in the stairwell?
2. What do you do if a fire starts in a saucepan on the stove?
3. What do you do if the fire has already spread, and you cannot extinguish it yourself?
4. What numbers do you alert the emergency services on (fire department)?

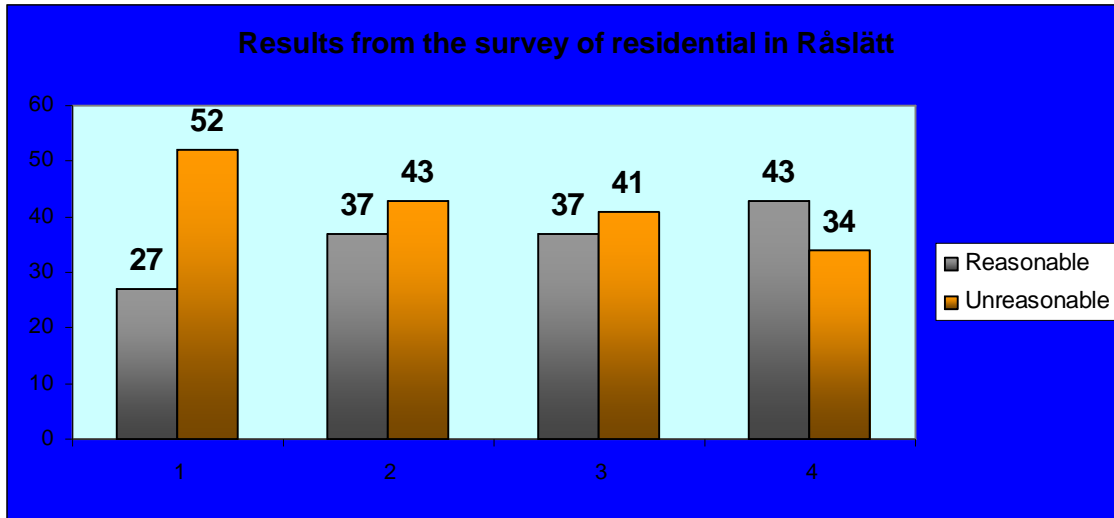


Figure 6. Number of reasonable/unreasonable answers from the survey.

APPENDIX II (translated from Swedish)

Questions that have been used in the interviews:

How can the emergency services reach out to people with a foreign origin?

What are your views on the Fire and Rescue Services?

Why do people with foreign backgrounds not apply for the Fire and Rescue Services?

How do you give risk information to your network?

Have you had or do you think there is a problem with communications to the authorities?

What is the perception of your own country / other countries' rescue services?

Do you have some other people you can recommend for an interview?

Interviewed the summer of 2009:

Bengt Martinsson, Head of Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services

Braemar Sager, social worker, stationed Rosengard, rescue South

David Högberg, Fire protection engineer, Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services

Fredrik Jonsson, Fire protection engineer, Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services

Göran Melin, Deputy Director, Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services

Mohamed Virani, chairman at Shia Muslim Jonkoping

Thomas Wibble, Emergency Coordinator, Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services

Tina Petersson, Information Officer, Jonkoping Fire and Rescue Services