

Foreign Languages: A Bridge to Innovations in Higher Education

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The Culture Specific Role of Frames in Corporate Communication

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The Culture Specific Role of Frames in Corporate Communication

Structure of the presentation

1. The 'black box' problem in intercultural communication
2. Coming to grips with the cultural dimension through frames of reference
3. Case example from corporate culture: brand profile communication and its culture specific adaptability
4. Case example from LSP (languages for special purposes):
culture specific frames in terminology
5. Conclusions

I. The 'black box' problem in intercultural communication

What do the definitions of 'culture' tell us?

Kluckhohn (1951): people's designs for living

Hofstede (1988): culture of a human collective = personality of an individual

Lewis (1999): the customs, beliefs, art and all the other products of human thought

Ward et al. (2008): behaviors, perceptions, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and self-references

Schein (2010): a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group

Etc. etc. ...

I. The 'black box' problem in intercultural communication

Nowadays there are innumerable definitions of 'culture'

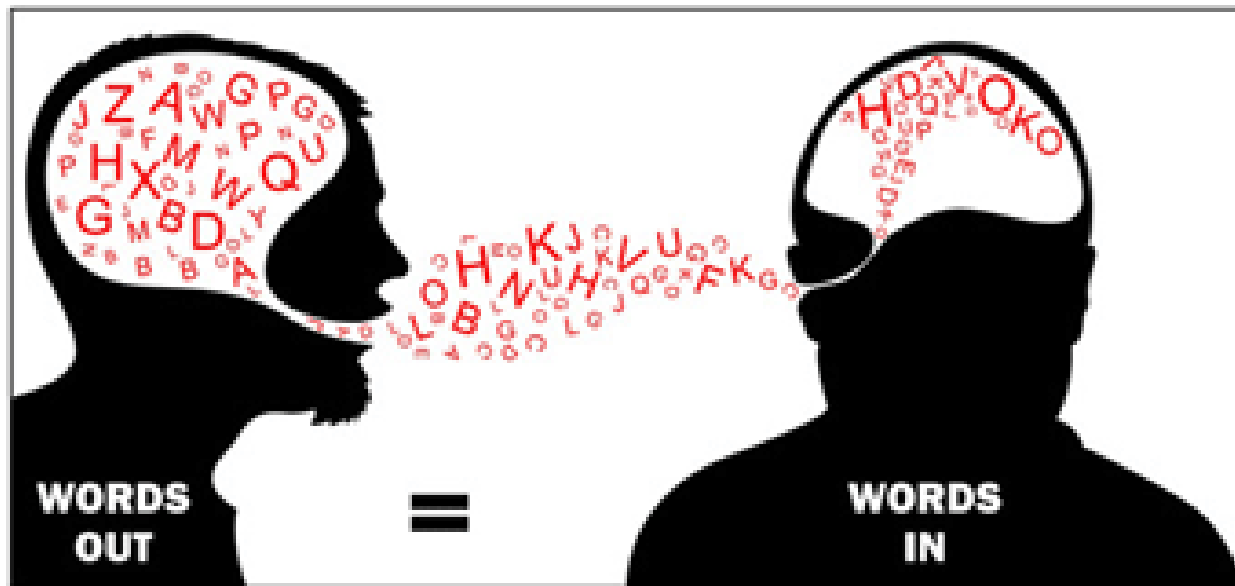
BUT: they all try to grasp the dichotomy between the cognitive dimension and our concrete world experience (the inside/outside dichotomy = black box syndrom)



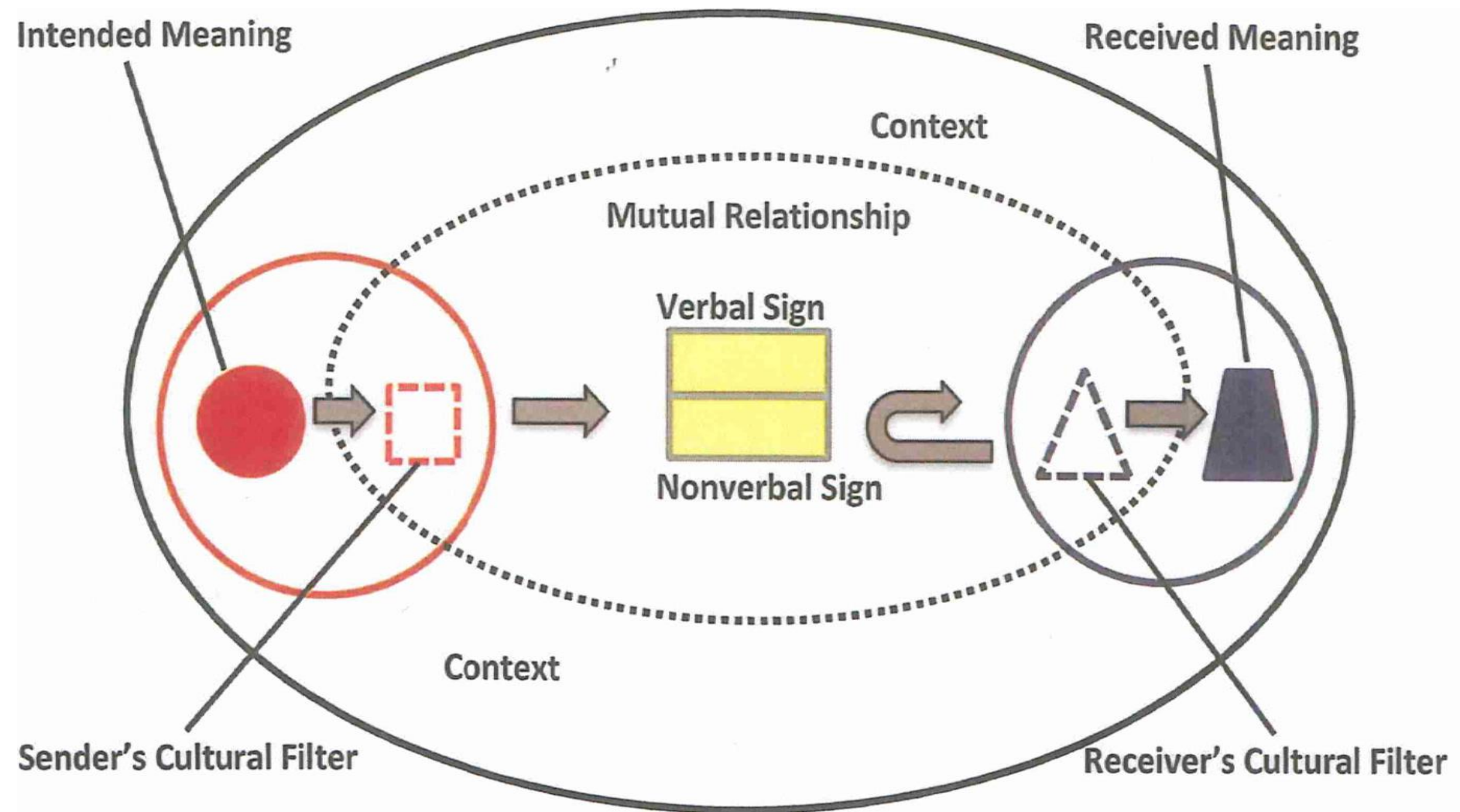
I. The 'black box' problem in intercultural communication

- Is it really that simple?

Transmitter Communication Model



The Cultural Filter Model (according to Ø. Dahl 2001)



2. Coming to grips with the cultural dimension through frames of reference

Cultural filters = 'gate keeper' function to culture specific associations, beliefs, values, ways of thinking etc.

Question:

How to get access to this dimension of communication and then use it in e.g. business communication, branding etc. ?

2. Coming to grips with the cultural dimension through frames of reference

- **Answer:** Frames in corporate and national cultures

WHY FRAMES?

Helps us to get a grip on our beliefs, feelings, self-references, identities, values, basic assumptions

by looking at what is said and in which way

Access to the 'black box' of frames of reference through verbal and nonverbal signs

2. Coming to grips with the cultural dimension through frames of reference

- Predecessors in frame theory:

Frederic C. Bartlett: schema theory (memory)

Charles J. Fillmore: frame semantics (linguistics)

Marvin Minsky: cognition, artificial intelligence

Basic for all scholars:

All human understanding is organized through schemata = knowledge frames (more than context!)

Language is a social phenomenon! Language is systematically interwoven with world experience

Consequences for communication:

- **Language evokes background knowledge**
- **We understand texts, utterances on the basis of what we already have experienced**

2. Coming to grips with the cultural dimension through frames of reference

Frame: knowledge background (pattern) that serves as basis for understanding and communication (conventionalized, external to the situation)

Example FIN: Frame **'business negotiations'**

Default values of a frame:

- parts of a frame, evoked by using the frame;
- standardized assumptions about meaning/reference that the hearer/reader can make depending on her/his previous knowledge
- **culturally bound**

Ex FIN: **silence** is mostly **positively** connotated = **silence is a virtue!!**
Listen first; speak when you've got something to tell,
consequences e.g. for turn taking etc.

3. CASEI Frames in Branding Strategies

www.hitachi.com. 23rd of September 2004

| Top | about Hitachi | investors | global network | products & services | customer service | news releases | **GLOBAL**



Philosophy & Strategy

| → Corporate Philosophy | → Management Strategy |

Corporate Philosophy

Since its founding in 1910, Hitachi has acted from a corporate philosophy of contributing to society through technology. In the intervening years, the world and society have changed greatly, but we have never lost our pioneering spirit, based on the principles of harmony and sincerity.

Now, as we embark upon the new century, global change is becoming ever more dynamic. We have adopted the phrase "Inspire the Next" as a declaration of our vow that the Hitachi brand will meet the expectations of our customers and society in this new age. This statement embodies Hitachi's commitment to continue to inspire coming generations with the latest products, systems and services, for a more vibrant society. It is also an expression of our strong commitment to boldly face whatever new challenges the times bring us: whatever comes "Next."

Search by Google

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Organization of Hitachi, Ltd.

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3. CASEI Frames in Branding Strategies

Frames used in the Hitachi Corporate Brand

The following three frames constitute the brand slogan “Inspire the Next”:

- **Frame 1:** Hitachi’s technology

default values: Hitachi delivers **constantly innovative, reliable** and **relevant** technology

- **Frame 2:** The future world

default values: Hitachi will play a **crucial role** for future **society**, which is in a **constant change**

- **Frame 3:** Peoples’ way of life

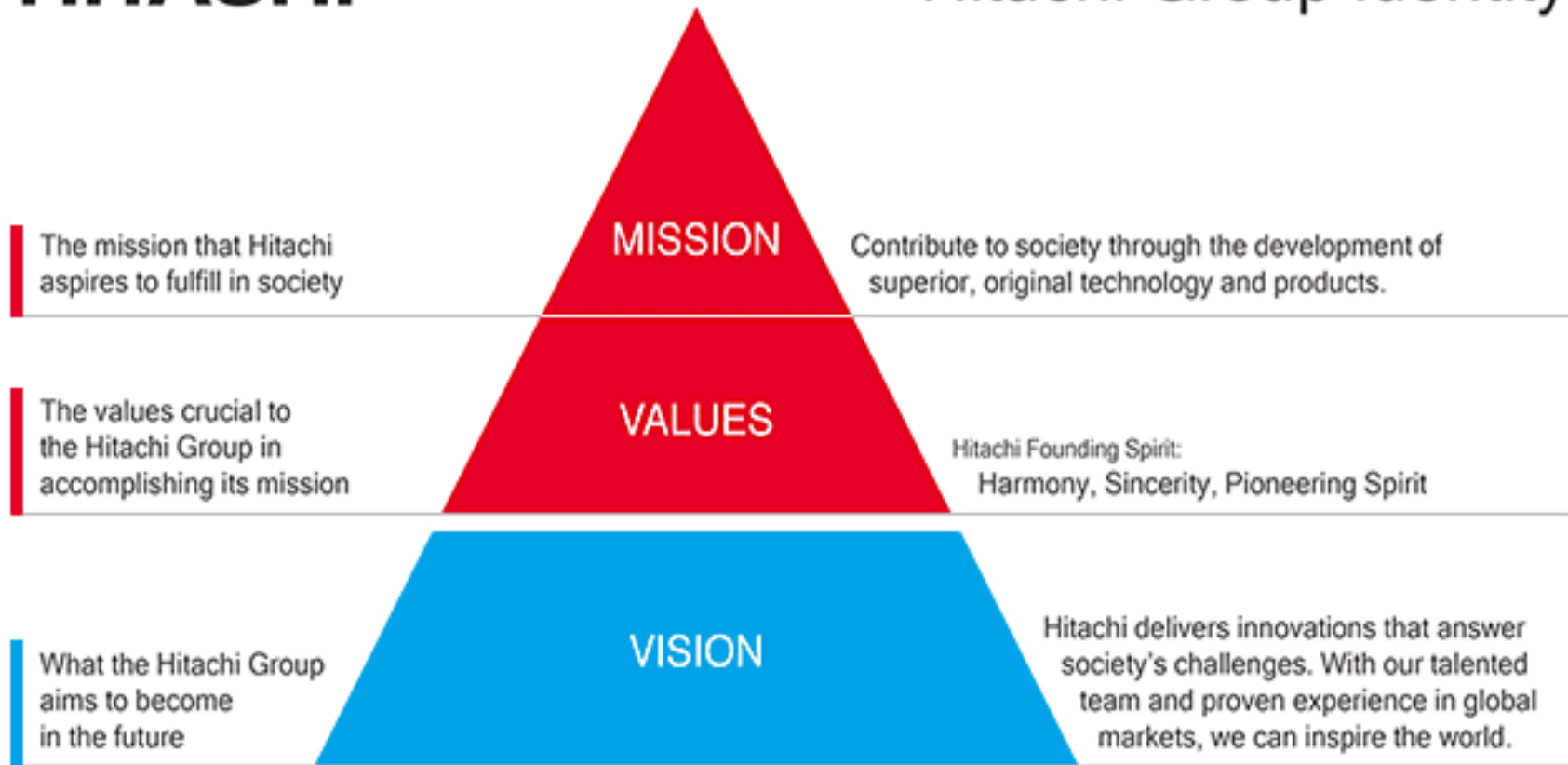
default values: Hitachi will **actively contribute** to the change in **everyday life** in society (**impact on way of life by delivering what generations need**)

TECHNOLOGIE IN AKTION



Forellen überleben nur in völlig sauberem Wasser. Mit einem revolutionären Wasseraufbereitungssystem nutzt Hitachi Technologie, um diesen Schatz der Natur zu erhalten. Und um sich damit gleichzeitig um andere wichtige Umweltfragen zu kümmern, wie der Reduzierung von CO₂ in der Atmosphäre. Ob es um moderne Batterien, elektrische Fahrzeugmanagementsysteme oder energiesparende Gebäude- und Fabriklösungen geht, Hitachi glaubt an ein einfaches Prinzip: Technologie nicht um ihrer selbst willen, sondern Technologie, die allen nützt.





The Hitachi Group will continue to contribute to society based on this Hitachi Group Identity.

<http://www.hitachi.com/about/corporate/identity/index.html>, 24th of September 2014

4. CASE 2 Frames in national cultures

Question:

What relevance can frame-semantics have for foreign language teaching in the area of LSP, for corporate management or organizational thinking etc. ?

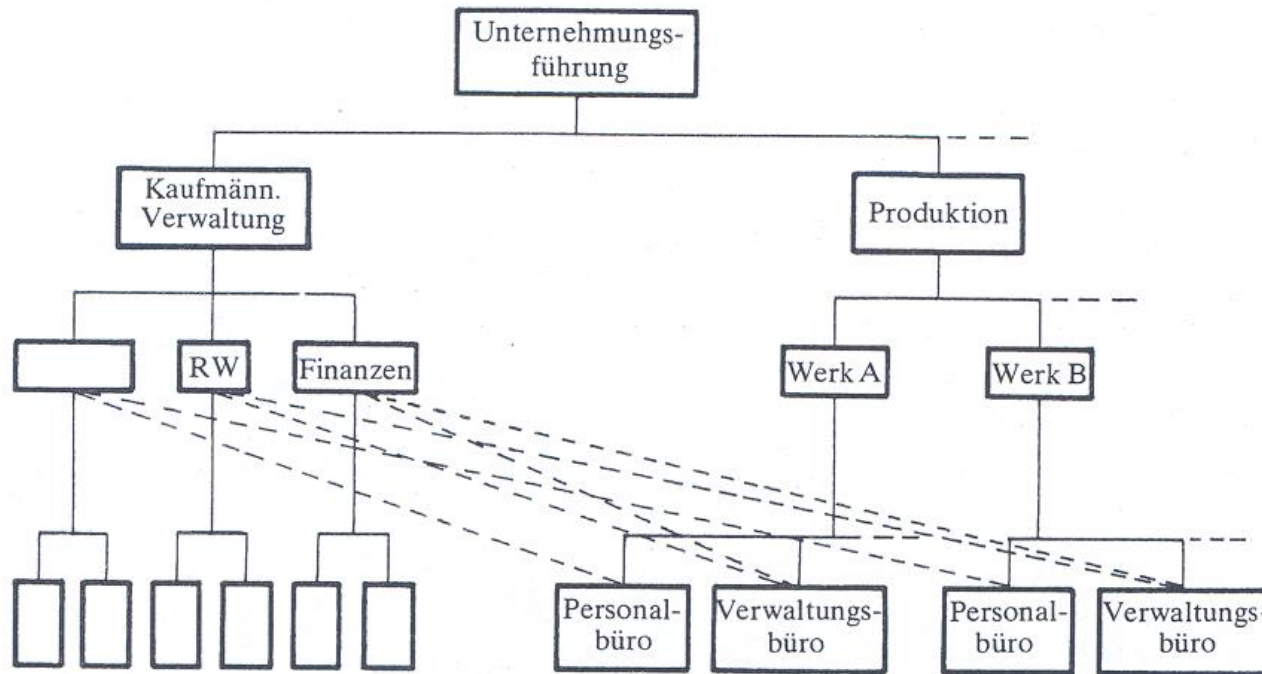
Case example:

German vs. Swedish organizational
frames and default values

(survey of several decades of textbooks in
organizational management, Schmidt 2010)

4. CASE 2 Frames in national cultures

What kind of concepts, ways of thinking, values, beliefs etc. are promoted through German LSP in organizational behavior?



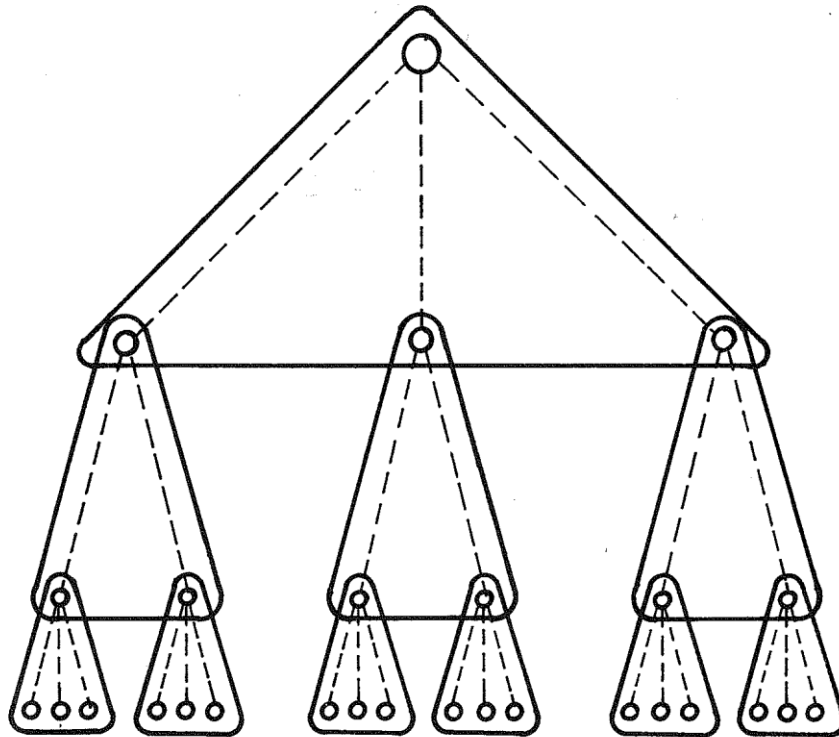
Legende: — Disziplinarische Weisungsbefugnisse und Gesamtverantwortung
 - - - Funktionale Weisungsbefugnisse und fachliche Verantwortung

The frame 'delegation of work responsibility'

Schierenbeck 1989, 95

4. CASE 2 Frames in national cultures

The frame 'teamwork' in German organisational logic



Meyer/Stopp 2004

4. CASE 2 Frames in national cultures

German Organization LSP (some examples)

Central terminology (default values of German organizational logic: e.g. **centrifugality** and **verticality** that serve as **structuring logic** for the terminology):

Ablauforganisation

Aufbauorganisation

Einliniensystem

Mehrliniensystem

Etc.

German organizational frame: work is best organized through vertical centrifugality, where different responsibilities are distributed downwards to different individuals dealing with them on a personally responsible level

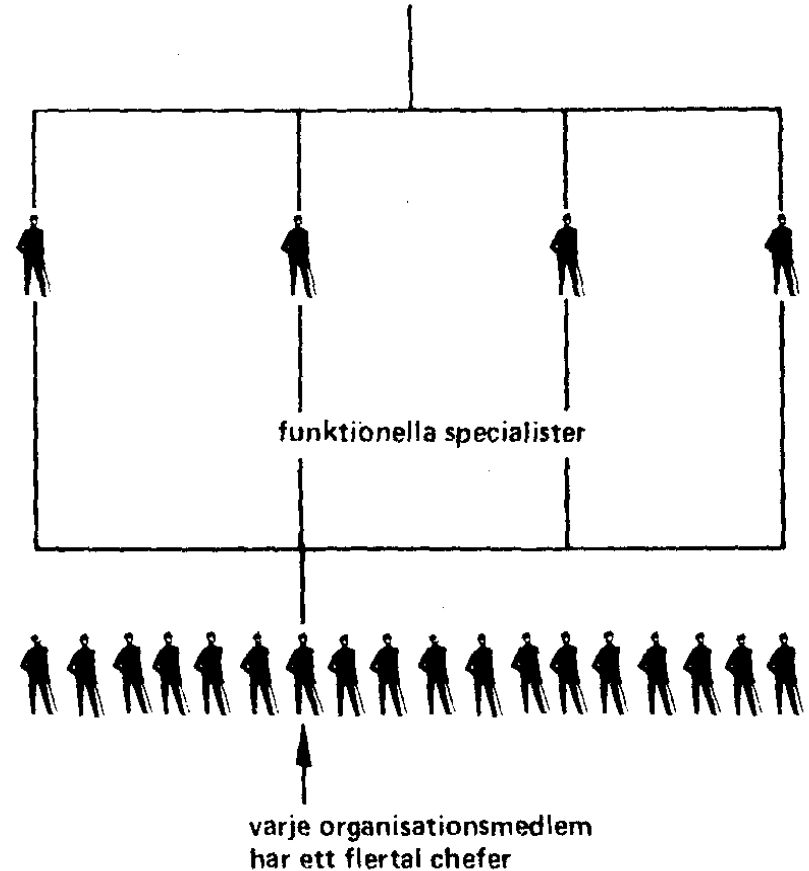
4. CASE 2 Frames in national cultures

Swedish organizational logic

- Swedish organizational logic
Everybody is working with more than one boss. The CEO is a 'primus inter pares'

Teamwork as horizontal logic

Sjöstrand 1991



4. CASE 2 Frames in national cultures

Swedish Organization LSP (some examples)

Central terminology (default values of Swedish organisational logic: **centripetality** and **horizontality** that serve as **structuring logic** for the terminology):

- samspel
- samverkan
- samarbete
- kollektiva resurser
- samordning

Etc.

Swedish Organizational frame: work is best organized through horizontal centripetality, where every individual contributes through her/his individual capabilities to a common goal

5. Consequences

- Frames:
 - allow us to understand what is crucial but not outspoken (maximum of implicitness in communication)
 - serve as a bridge to the cognitive dimension (black box)
 - give us means for understanding relevant implications in communication (spoken/written)
 - analytic tool for both verbal and nonverbal text elements (holistic method)
 - can be used in both corporate and national settings (all sorts of cultural filters)

Look for the default values established in frames!

- Thank you for your attention!

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