

Do you like the culture you are in?

- both the culture of the country and the company?

Rolf Kenmo takes an interesting grip, when he uses the personality theory of Eight boxes to describe country and corporate cultures. He offers a practical language to describe an important area. It works well as everyone can benefit from it to interpret the world and thus be well - both at work and in life.

Torsten Lalle Bergenholtz 80+,
Author of "The earth around in 80 years", will be launched 2021



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Do you like the culture you are in?

From time to time I do coaching. Usually when someone orders coaching for private money, you usually have some kind of problem, which you want to solve. Maybe of course... In any case, there can be different reasons, for example

- dissatisfied with their current job for one or more reasons
- do not know if you have chosen the right kind of job, i.e. you do not think the job is fun. You can't look forward to Monday morning...

An interesting group finds it difficult to pinpoint why they do not like it, because they like the content of the job. Then they usually have to do a so-called CultureProfile (a version of the HumanGuide test, which is the core of the HumanGuide concepts, which I have developed), i.e. describe in terms of personality the current corporate or organizational culture. A common result is then a bad cultural chemistry, i.e. in the same way that you can have a bad personal chemistry. This means that one's own personality does not fit well with the culture, i.e. the personality and culture clearly differ in one or more respects. We call it that you get a low passion index between your personality and culture.

What can be done about it?

Then you should first keep in mind that your own personality is fairly stable, which makes it easiest to change the culture for your own passion index to increase. If a lot needs to change, then the best solution is usually to get a job in another culture. If you work in a larger company, there is the advantage that there can be many subcultures and that one of them fits better.

The objective for this paper

The main purpose is to make it easier for people to have a good life, by realizing what kind of culture they thrive best in, both country cultures and corporate cultures. In addition to facilitating adaptation, when dealing with people from other cultures. The main tool is to use a personality theory to describe a culture in a simple way. The theory is based on eight factors and is described later.

In 1986, I began to develop a personality test in the form of a so-called personality questionnaire, because there was no such questionnaire in the whole world, which was based on Leopold Szondi's (1893-1986) theory. Gradually, I realized that it was also practical to be able to describe a culture in the theory's eight dimensions. Another way, when it came to quickly understand a corporate culture or organizational culture, was to realize who was the "hero" in the culture - the ideal personality there For example, the doctor is the hero in a hospital. It made the culture caring, helpful and soft. While at a construction company it is straightforward, concrete and practical.

When it comes to a country culture, I got my friend Göran's best tip to get a good contact quickly. He found out which sport was the favourite sport in the country – he was particularly interested in whether there were connections to Sweden in that sport. Göran has today been in 70 countries and his method has worked well. For example, I was advised by many: You who have so much to do with Brazil must learn more about



football. I have not done that, but it has actually gone well anyway. Hopefully it is because I have lived, as I teach, which I will address in this paper.

My first personal contact with Brazil was the psychologist Giselle Welter from Sao Paulo. We met in 1999 at a conference at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. Every three years, there is a global conference for the Szondi International Society (SIS). She then became interested in trying out the HumanGuide concept. She did so and was impressed that it was both fast and spotless. This led us to decide to collaborate to launch the HumanGuide concept in Brazil.

We initially had no collaboration agreement between us but decided to trust each other. What contributed a lot to us daring to make that decision was, that we understood each other's personality through the test result. Giselle has repeated several times that I commented as follows: “We have the strengths *Imagination*, *Quality* and *Power*, as common strengths - three of the eight dimensions in Szondi's theory. This is a good prerequisite for our collaboration, as most similarities work well together. However, it is important that you manage, when I can sometimes exaggerate my strength *Structure*. And that I can, when you exaggerate your strength *Power*. ” In fact, since 1999 we have never had a destructive conflict in our cooperation. Of course, we sometimes have different views, but we handle that constructively;-)

With the help of understanding others through the eight dimensions of the personality theory Eight boxes (more on that below), it is easier to realize both one's own and others' driving forces. By using the concepts in their communication, their own perceptions are concretized. It will also be easier to both realize and remove preconceived notions as well as incorrect interpretations. For example, if you see someone driving at a red light, you can think: What a bully! But it can also be because the driver has an injured person in the car and needs to get to hospital quickly. Or the brake has broken. Or...

Are cultures different and if so how?

For most people, it is obvious that there are different cultures, i.e. that there are norms and values, which are very strong for a certain group of people. Why is it like that? Well, it's practical to anticipate each other's reactions. It creates security. It simply becomes easier to collaborate.

Torbert et al., who have been interested in human mental development, have come to the important conclusion that mental development starts with being very self-oriented and the more you develop, the more we-oriented you become. Some never get that far in their development ... It is clearly noticeable that their basic attitude is that you either win or you lose. The we-oriented has instead the win-win attitude, i.e. that you balance different interests as well as possible. As an in-depth study, you can read "Basically good" by the Dutchman Rutger Bregman (2020). He emphasizes that we are empathetic.

An important prerequisite for developing from self-oriented to becoming more we-oriented is that you continuously improve your self-esteem. Then it must be value-based, i.e. that you answer yes to the question: Is it OK that I exist? Unfortunately,



many have a performance-based self-esteem, i.e I am only OK, if my performance is OK. Then you get a continuous stress in your life, by constantly having to be OK.

Now some examples of differences in country cultures, because that is where it is easiest to clearly see cultural differences.

Several years ago I was in Hungary and was going to shop in a bakery. I pointed out what I wanted to buy. When it was ready, I expected to pay. That was not the case. Instead, I received a note, which I had to pay. I kindly agreed to stand in the checkout line to pay. When I had paid, I had to stand in the "pick up queue" to get my goods. Took a lot of extra time. Expensive handling, I thought as a Swede. BUT probably it was designed this way, because you did not want to trust, when it comes to money, to all employees...

A consulting colleague of mine had a weekly course in a city. On Wednesday evening, there was dancing after dinner at the hotel, where the course was conducted. The next morning, one of the course participants arrived at the course leader already during breakfast. He was overjoyed. Why? Yes, he had danced with women for the first time in his life! The course leader was amazed: A man in his 40s is thrilled to dance with women? He then asked: Why was that so? Well, in the Faroe Islands, only men dance with each other...

The story of the man from the Faroe Islands gradually gave me an Aha experience: Those who live on relatively isolated islands (or isolated) have traditions, which change very slowly. In general, country cultures are slowly changing. In a book by Solzhenitsyn, he considered that it took 1000 years for a culture to change. Geert Hofstede, who has developed a concept for describing cultures, has a similar view. My opinion is that today, it does not take as long, but it takes longer than most people think - especially if the change is to be generally accepted.

My friend Torsten Lalle Bergenholtz (soon to be 90), who has been active in the travel industry throughout his whole life and around the world, cites Australia as an example of a major cultural change. Lalle was there for the first time in 1969. This is how he writes in his forthcoming book "Around the World in 80 Years" (probable title): "When I first came to the country's largest city - Sydney, the outside world thought it was a godforsaken place. , inhabited by beer-drinking descendants of convicts. Then it developed in stages into the cosmopolitan, confident city that it is today. " His view was that in 1969, culture in Australia was very introverted.

It can be shocking to experience a cultural difference. For example, when I was 9 years old (1955) I was in Denmark. I then saw an elderly woman smoking a cigar in a bus! Another example... When I was 16, my father had arranged, so I got an internship in Germany. I lived with a friend of my father, who had been his co-worker in Sweden, so he and his wife could speak Swedish. One day his brother was visiting. When he was about to go on, he said to me: "Aber du spricht ein furchtbar Deutsch" (you speak a terrible German). I felt annihilated. I had studied German in school for four years... My father's friend then immediately said: That's not how it is said in Sweden. His brother became remorseful and said: "I just wanted to encourage Rolf to improve his German." One year I had 13 course weeks in team leadership for a Swedish company on a vineyard in France. When the course participants after a week would sum up the course



results in a few minutes, one of the participants said: If we were to introduce the French way of greeting each other in the factory in Sundsvall (Sweden), productivity would increase by at least 10%. He was amazed at the continuous cheek-kissing...

That same year, my colleague and I had another very interesting experience. None of us could speak French. Well, we could say good morning and such. Therefore, we were warned by many: You will be treated rudely, when it is noticed that you can't speak French. It never happened. It was a myth, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for many. Unfortunately, there are plenty of such myths. The probable cause of the myth was that someone had shopped in Paris or in another big French city and met an exhausted/unmotivated employee, who was unpleasant, which led to a misinterpretation, which was spread and continues to spread.

The important differences between cultures are the basic values with great universality, such as the relationship to time. In Western Europe and North America - mainly, people think that time is disappearing all the time. In Africa, it is said to be the opposite. It is believed that new time come all the time. Who gets the most stressed? I discussed this with a Swede, who is married to an Indian woman. He then informed me that in India it is much worse off than in Africa. Hmmm? Well, for an Indian, time arises only in the transportation between two meetings. I thought about that information for a month or so. Then I realized that this is also the case here in Sweden, i.e when you have a good meeting, time stands still;-)

Another interesting aspect of cultures is that it is difficult to study a culture when you are in it. You have to reflect on your culture, when you are in another culture, because that is when you can notice the difference. The parable is usually used: It is difficult for the fish to understand the water in the water...

How is a culture created?

The conditions for people to live vary with the area where you live, etc. In summary, the following aspects are important for how a culture arises and develops

- Geographical location, e.g. opportunities for agriculture, climate, solar time, etc
- History, i.e how the historical development has been for the group
- Religion/philosophy
- The language

Sometimes changes occur, which have very big consequences. Not just for one country but for several countries. A good example is how Christianity gradually began to affect Europe, for example that polygamy was banned. That children were given more and more free choices, such as who to marry. These changes and several other changes led to the break-up of European clan societies from the 5th century. Read more in the book "The Weirdest People in the World" (2020) by Joseph Henrich. He is a professor of evolutionary biology at Harvard.

Johan Norberg has written another interesting book - Open/Closed (2020) - about two basic approaches, which have a radically different impact on society.

The language is interesting from several aspects, for example because it concretizes the culture. If the culture changes, it often leads to changes in the language. Some words



only exist in certain languages, because they are necessary in that culture, for example, it is usually said that an Eskimo has a hundred words for snow. That may not be entirely true, but they definitely have more words than people in Africa.

The languages are structured in different ways. For example, in German, the verb can be placed at the end of a sentence, which means that it is not smart to interrupt someone in a conversation. While in other languages it is not a problem. But, for example in Sweden, there is a norm that you should not interrupt someone, who is speaking. This means that a well-educated Swede hasn't the opportunity to say much in a country with a Latin language, where most people interrupt...

How can you describe a culture?

A very widespread concept comes from Geert Hofstede. He examined cultural differences within IBM with 100,000 employees in the 1970s. His concept is now based on the following six dimensions

- **Small or large power distance**, i.e if it is small, it is more equal and democratic, while at large power distance it is authoritarian. Among the former are countries such as Austria, Israel, New Zealand and Sweden. Countries with great power distances are Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and the Arab countries
- **Individualism or collectivism**. Individualistic are then the United States, other English-speaking countries and Western Europe. Latin American countries are the most collectivist
- **Masculinity or femininity**. In masculine cultures, self-confidence, ambition, competition and having large material assets are valued. In the feminine, it is the opposite, i.e. you value more relationships and quality of life. Gender roles are more fixed in the former and fluid in the latter. The highest ranked masculine cultures are Japan and Slovakia. Sweden has the most feminine culture
- **Avoidance of uncertainty**, i.e if you want to maximize safety or if you are more risk-averse. If you strive for a high level of security, there will be more rules and religion and structure in social contexts. In Japan, you want high security while you are more risk-averse in Jamaica, Singapore, Denmark and Sweden (I doubt that is true for Sweden...)
- **Long or short time orientation**. Long time orientation is characterized by frugality, perseverance, orderly relationships through status. While the more short-term are characterized by personal stability, respect for traditions and the return of gifts and favours. China, Taiwan and Japan have a long focus. Short-focus has western countries. Many low-developed countries also have low values. It is lowest in Pakistan and West Africa
- **Satisfaction or restraint**. In a society with high satisfaction, you can to a large extent do what you like, for example in Sweden and other countries in northern Europe. While in some other countries, you have clear social norms what is OK. Here is an example of a big change according to Lalle. This applies to Spain. Very restrained family life in the 1950s and 60s. The opposite two generations later...

There are also other cultural concepts, such as one by Erin Meyer, who is a consultant in cross-cultural communication. It is published in the book "Culture Map" (2014). Erin has a pragmatic approach when it comes to collaborating across cultural boundaries. It consists of the following eight dimensions



- Communicating, i.e small - highly context dependent, e.g. USA - Japan
- Evaluating, i.e direct - indirect negative feedback, e.g. Germany - Japan
- Persuading, i.e principles first - application first, e.g. France - USA
- Leading, i.e equal - hierarchically, e.g. Sweden - Japan
- Deciding, i.e consensus - top-down, e.g. Sweden - China
- Trusting, i.e task-oriented - relationship-oriented, e.g. USA - China
- Disagreeing, i.e confrontation - avoid confrontation, e.g. France - Japan
- Scheduling, i.e linear time - flex time, e.g. Switzerland - Brazil

In this paper, we will instead use the personality theory Eight boxes to describe cultures.

The personality theory Eight boxes

The personality theory Eight boxes is a simplification of L Szondi's (1893-1986) theory. The purpose of the simplification is for a layman to be able to quickly learn it, as a distinct language to describe the personality. This is because you can benefit from it in many ways, not only for choosing a suitable candidate in a recruitment, but also for personal development, team development, conflict management, etc. The theory also has a strong advantage compared to many other theories. It consists of eight basic dimensions (factors), so the test result is more nuanced compared to, for example, DISC (four dimensions) and the like, as well as tests based on the Big Five model (five dimensions).

However, it is not so common to use terms from a personality theory to describe a culture, but why not? People form a culture and their personalities have a great influence on how a culture develops. A big advantage of this way is that you do not have to learn an additional concept. Such use is sufficient for most needs...

Personality theory is the basis for a personality test, which is the core of the HumanGuide concepts. The development started in 1986. The test is now available in 15 languages. It is mostly used in Brazil, where between 2010-2019, 500,000 tests were performed with their IT systems. The test became there in 2009 the first approved internet-based test with forced-choice. The test has been validated several times in Brazil. Last time 2016 with 110,000 tests.

On the next page are explanations of the eight dimensions of the theory. All this information and more can be found in the web app your.humanguide.se, when you have done a test and have got a login. The purpose of the symbols and colours is to more quickly learn to use the theory, i.e. that personality theory should also be useful for lay people... Further information on the website humanguide.com.

Factor	Symbol	Characteristics
Sensibility		Perceptive, considerate, careful, accommodating, complaisant, sensual, diplomatic, obliging, likes closeness
Power		Energetic, speedy, driving, eager, competitive, strong, active, result-orientated, straightforward, fearless
Quality		Reliable, quality-conscious, conscientious, supportive, persevering, comprehensive, thorough, unselfish, caring, dutiful
Exposure		Spontaneous, charming, witty, proud, likes attention, trendy, charismatic, colourful, dramatic, ready-witted
Structure		Orderly, methodical, likes planning, neutral, distinct, correct, realistic, objective, disciplined, forethoughtful
Imagination		Imaginative, inventive, improvises easily, clever, likes to experiment, ingenious, development-orientated, freedom-orientated, visionary, artistic
Stability		Stable, economical, wary, creature of habit, thrifty, down-to-earth, tradition-bound, conservative, cautious
Contacts		Outgoing, sociable, open-hearted, easy-going, playful, humorous, food-loving, contact-orientated, optimistic, cheerful

Driving and reflecting factors

The factors can be arranged according to two basic approaches, namely

- Driving, i.e Power, Exposure, Imagination and Contacts
- Reflective, i.e Sensibility, Quality, Structure and Stability

The drivers are extroverts and the reflectors are introverts. The driving forces are also more active and want things to happen. The reflective are more passive and want to think more before they act...

Here I want to mention that of course I do not have experience from all the world's country cultures, but *I primarily want to present a model of how to communicate about different cultures, by using concepts from a personality theory with eight basic dimensions.*



Country cultures

In the following, some examples of cultures are presented, where the theory Eight boxes is used to describe the cultures. First the ones that are most driving and then the most reflective.

Some people think that there are many different cultures in a country, so can you really say that there is a typical culture? Of course, it is true that there are several cultures in one country, but if you are in another country culture, you can always see certain behaviours, which are more typical of those who grew up in that culture for most compared to other country cultures.

Is USA's culture most driving?

When it comes to US culture, it is important to think about how the "staffing" of the country was done. The currently dominated part of the population has come via the oceans, for example during difficult years in many European countries. For example, 25% of the population in Sweden emigrated at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. I listened to a Swedish-American of the Year about 20 years ago. He then said that the descendants of these Swedish immigrants were today about 9 million in the United States, i.e. as many inhabitants, as we had at that time in Sweden.

What will be the consequences of such extensive immigration and in that way? To make that assessment based on the personality theory Eight boxes, so are typical factors in order to justify moving

- *Power*, i.e. it needs courage
- *Quality* can be twofold. On the one hand, some may choose to persevere despite poverty, through their patience and loyalty. On the other hand, some may consider that it is more responsible to emigrate and that as many as possible survive
- *Exposure* can of course be like becoming a "hero" - being the one who travels across the Atlantic and builds a new life in the US, but it probably depends on other parts of the personality, if it is implemented...
- *Structure* does not like to go out into the unknown without a good plan. In this case, it is difficult to predict and thus have a good plan. On the other hand, if people around you die of starvation, you will not be so inclined to be passive. In addition, *Structure* is good at taking calculated risks
- *Imagination* likes to discover, so they are the first to want to emigrate. To be involved from the start. Today, USA is considered to have one of the most entrepreneurial cultures in the world
- *Contacts* are optimistic, but they do not like to be alone, so they need one or more with them, then they do not mind emigrating

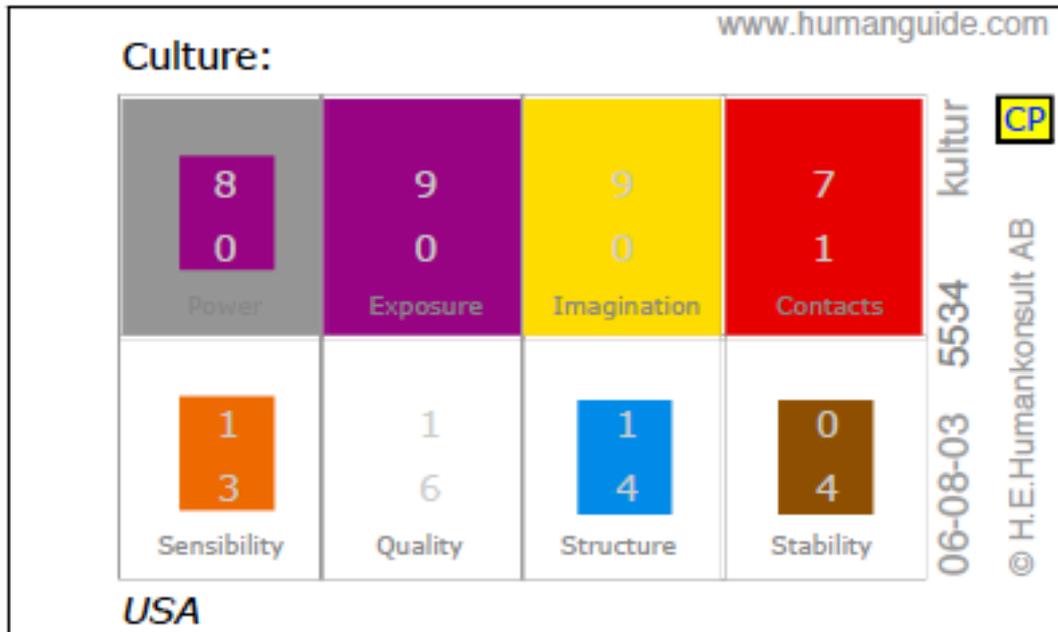
What about the two remaining factors

- *Sensibility* probably thinks it seems dangerous, but if you have a relationship with someone who, for example, has *Power*, then maybe you dare to follow along...
- *Stability* are probably the ones who have the hardest time daring, but they can of course just like *Sensibility* have a relationship with someone with *Power* ...



I have had someone to describe how they perceive USA's culture á la HumanGuide. Below is an example. The upper value in the boxes shows that this is a typical behaviour (maximum is 9). The lower value shows that this is not typical. The colours in the boxes are the symbolic colours, which were described earlier. The colour filling means the following

- Primary factors have the entire box filled. Between them there is a ranking, i.e a two-coloured box shows that this is the strongest factor (the core factor) and the colour of the inner box shows the second strongest factor (the co-factor)
- Secondary factors have only the inner box filled
- "Unneeds", i.e then there is no colour



It is interesting that, when someone does a CultureProfile á la HumanGuide, you often have a fairly categorical view - either or. This is likely to be the case, as some factors dominate and then they intensify more and more over time. And vice versa for those with a low value...

Of course, there are many cultures in all countries. However, there is often a dominant culture at the national level, but of course - especially if there are strong minorities, who stick together - there may be other cultures in the country, which are as clear as the dominant one at the national level.

Is Brazil's culture most driving?

Since I have had a collaboration with partners in Brazil since 1999, I have quite a lot of experience of that culture. It is very different from Swedish culture. Normally, differences lead to difficulties in collaborating. This is what makes diversity difficult to handle in practice. This is not good, because diversity normally leads to the best problem solving and decisions. Therefore, it is good to use concepts such as HumanGuide to increase understanding of each other. This is especially true if the group members have a low self-esteem, i.e have not come so far in their mental



development. How then can the Brazilian culture be described? Then still note that no research is reported here - just examples of how to look at culture.

By the way... My cooperation partner Giselle Welter in Brazil has a German father and a Brazilian mother. I am sure that her German origins have facilitated collaboration with me as a Swede;-)



The culture is amazingly similar to the culture of USA, BUT with one important difference - *Power* is exchanged for *Sensibility*. Think samba...

Once I would lecture on Brazilian and Swedish culture during a welcome event for a new Brazilian ambassador in Sweden. Then I wanted to summarize the perception of culture in a single image. Then it became natural to choose a picture from a carnival group in Rio's "sambodrom". It was in my opinion on the spot!

Speaking of USA, there is a certain antagonism against the USA in Brazil. After 9-11, the USA started with careful checks for all entrants. In Brazil, it was not thought that one would need to be checked upon entry into the USA. Therefore, extra entry controls was introduced for all US citizens, when they came to Brazil. I happened to be in that checking time. I then saw a crew from an airline from the USA, which went the usual way. They were hindered and referred to a special passage. It became chaos. I was later told that a US pilot got so angry in the obligatory photography, so he made a face. The result was that the airline was fined a considerable amount and the pilot was never allowed to enter Brazil again.

One of my partners in Brazil usually likes to reprimand people from the USA... When she's traveling the world, it's not uncommon to meet someone from the USA in a hotel. Then there can be a dialogue like this one...

- I'm from America. Where are you from? asks the US person.
- I also come from America, she says.
- Which state? asks the US person.
- Brazil, she answers.

A little more about Brazil... How was that country "staffed"? From the beginning, there were Indians. When Columbus then discovered and began to exploit America, it



“happened” that Portugal "got" Brazil, among other things, after the intervention of the pope. This led to that the King of Portugal assigning different noble families to different territories in Brazil. Compare then with the United States, which was "staffed" mainly with people who fled the famine in Europe. Note then, at least in my and others' opinion, that both Brazil and USA have the strengths *Exposure*, *Imagination* and *Contacts*. The important difference is that USA has the strength *Power* and not *Sensibility*. For Brazil, it is the opposite. Look at the example of the US pilot. It is a challenge, when it comes to managing cultural chemistry.

Is Mongolia's culture most driving?

I happened to meet a man from Mongolia in 1998 when he was participating in a development program for business leaders from developing countries. We became friends and thus I have learned a lot about Mongolian culture. Today I see it more as an example of a nomadic culture. In my network there is an ecotourism consultant, who has had a lot to do with nomads all over the world - especially in Mongolia, because during the summers he produces journeys for various travel agencies.

What then, is typical of a nomadic culture in my opinion? Well, the following

- It is very divided between what men and women do. More like it was in Sweden several years ago. Today, Sweden's culture is probably strange for a Mongol, when, for example, it is common for men to go out and walk alone with a pram. The man is on paternity leave. This has been increasingly the case since the 1970s...
- Men in Mongolia are often high on *Power* and women high on *Structure*

I can't say more, because of my limited experience. These very factors were very clear, when I participated in a journey with Mongols for two weeks. We travelled around Mongolia and usually lived in yurts.

During that journey, I observed several times how creative the men were. Especially, when one of our Swedish-made tents got into trouble. It was quickly handled by the Mongols, who had never seen the tent before. Even less could read the instruction manual. This is of course a very important feature, when you are alone and far from buildings and get a problem. It can be about survival...

As for *Structure*, I noticed especially in the kitchens that it was a very good order. Of course, very important. However, when men were to do something together, it was not always so well planned. A lot of improvisation and not so perfect.

Other driving cultures?

I do not have sufficient experience of the cultures of so many countries, so that I can describe and comment on them as above. As a Swede, however, I have a lot of experience of Finnish culture.

Finnish culture is characterized mainly by *Power* and low on *Sensibility*. When we developed a Finnish version of the personality test in 2020, it was interesting that the



Finnish language has no words for being sensitive. In Finland, there is a lot of talk about *sisu*, i.e *Power*. You like to be straightforward. It is interesting that they like their melancholic tango a lot. Maybe that's how emotions can "sniff out".

The Argentine author Borge's view of tango is that those who feel isolated - outside - dance tango. For example, immigrants in Argentina, Finns and Japanese.

Is Sweden's culture most reflecting?

If one is to summarize Swedish culture, it is very reflective. They are friendly (and shy), responsible, disciplined and careful. Note then that this is very typical for many Swedes, but increasingly, they become more and more entrepreneurial. Maybe because we are becoming more and more secular, so the church's (hierarchical) influence diminishes. IKEA's and all startup's cultures are spreading more and more.

When, during the welcome event for the new Brazilian ambassador, who was mentioned earlier, I was to summarize the Swedish culture in a picture, I chose a charcoal hut. It is a small "house", where the responsible charcoal man can get into protection and heat, while producing charcoal for about a week (24-7). Why did I choose a charcoal hut? Yes,

- *Sensibility* may not be clear as a bell, but the men do care for something and provide service. A concern for each other in the coal team
- *Quality* is definitely there, because you have a big responsibility. If you misbehave, the all wood can burn up and all work is in vain
- *Structure* is also clear as a bell. You have to be disciplined and pay attention to details and their consequences
- *Stability* is relevant to the tasks, as it is very practical and routine work

A description of Swedish culture á la HumanGuide will then be like this

3	1	2	2	kultur
4	6	1	3	
Kraft	Exponering	Fantasi	Kontakter	
6	8	7	7	
2	1	0	1	08-10-15 7804
Sensibilitet	Kvalitet	Struktur	Stabilitet	

To reconnect to the collaboration between Brazilian and Swedish culture, which was discussed earlier. How can it be that Brazilians and Swedes usually work well together, despite the cultures being so different? The secret is that both hate conflicts, i.e *Sensibility* becomes the bridge between cultures. Popularly speaking, you could say



- that Brazilians think that Swedes are a bit boring, but they are friendly and caring
- that Swedes think that Brazilians are almost crazy (*Imagination, Exposure and Contacts*)

Speaking of conflicts, Sweden has had peace since 1809. Furthermore, we received the most refugees per capita in Europe in 2015. Several thought we were exemplary. But the main reason was that no politician wanted to be a bad guy and say: We do not have the capacity to receive so many in a short time. As for Brazil, the country has the most borders with other countries in South America, but least conflicts...

Is Germany's culture most reflecting?

My partner Giselle in Brazil is of German origin, which is why I have gained a lot of experience of German culture. I have also worked there a whole summer in my youth. What then is German culture like? Well, here is my opinion and some more...

7 0 Força	2 4 Exposição	0 4 Imaginação	1 3 Contatos	kultur 7110
1 6 Sensibilidade	9 0 Qualidade	9 0 Estrutura	7 1 Estabilidade	
				07-11-30

It is similar to Swedish, BUT *Sensibility* is exchanged for *Power*, which has powerful consequences...

Here, my partner in Brazil has completed many years ago an interesting assignment for the German school in Sao Paulo. It is Germany's largest school outside Germany. The principal quit and a new one was to be recruited. That job has a particular difficulty in dealing with the two cultures, as there are several different roles and all can be from one of these cultures, i.e students, teachers, staff and parents. The fact that CultureProfiles were made for the two cultures were a very good support for making a good selection, including giving support during the introduction process for the new principal.

Is Japan's culture most reflecting?

I do not have a HumanGuide profile here, but many testify that Japanese culture and Swedish culture have many similarities. I have the same opinion, but that Japanese culture has even higher values for reflective factors. In Sweden, we have the special word "lagom", i.e you should not exaggerate ... You should neither do too much nor too little. Japanese culture is more extreme.



I have attended a Japanese tea ceremony. That was interesting. Very considerate. If I should illustrate Japanese culture with a picture, it would be from a tea ceremony...

Speaking of consideration, I have learned from a Japanese professor that people generally do not mind following Christian traditions, even though only 1% are Christians in Japan. They have respect for all religions and the traditions in them. It is also likely to be difficult to get a "No answer" from a Japanese. Lalle confirms this from his visits to Japan. He calls Japan "the land of constant consensus."

Is China' culture most reflecting?

China's culture also has similarities with Swedish culture. This is what it looks like in an example

4 3 Kraft	1 6 Exponering	1 6 Fantasi	3 1 Kontakter	kultur 13-06-13 11632
7 0 Sensibilitet	6 1 Kvalitet	7 1 Struktur	7 0 Stabilitet	

Here it is lower on *Imagination* than in Swedish culture. This may seem contradictory to the developments that have taken place in recent years. Then you have to keep in mind that there are many people living in China, so even if there is a low proportion with *Imagination*, there will still be many people. Furthermore, it is a very large market, which facilitates rapid and powerful expansion. Add also that the Communist Party has in the past hindered much development and still does, but those who have had their *Imagination* on the back burner have let it go with a message, so now they have begun to rebuke some who have become too bold in their development e.g. Jack Ma.

Speaking of reflective, many have testified that it is usually very long processes before reaching an agreement in China. It can also be very personal, so if there is a new person, who replaces the previous one, it can take a long time again before there is a new agreement and that is needed.

If I think of cultural chemistry between USA and China, then it is easy to become pessimistic, when it comes to constructive collaboration. Then you have to put your forehead in deep folds to arrive at a constructive collaboration strategy...

Other reflecting or mixed cultures?

I do not have enough experience to exemplify with anyone. Possibly I would guess



- that Norwegian culture is not as clearly reflective as Swedish culture. It is probably more in the nomadic direction - especially on the coast and the mountainous parts, which are quite extensive
- that Danish culture is not so distinctly reflective either, but more *Power* and *Contacts*
- that Portuguese culture is more reflective than Spanish culture

Company cultures

All companies and organizations have a culture. The big difference is whether it is deliberately designed or not. Companies usually get a culture, which is characterized by the founder's personality and values.

With the HumanGuide concept, there is a version of the test, where you can measure the culture's "personality". When you do the test for a person, an item can be "I am straightforward". When describing a culture, the same item is called "Straightforwardness".

When we used the HumanGuide concept in an assignment in Brazil for an entrepreneur, it was interesting to note that for many it was strange to think that the company had a culture. Instead, culture was seen as being about song, music, dance and the like. In any case, the culture became more or less a copy of the founder's personality. Natural, isn't it?

Speaking of culture, one must always realize that there are several in a company. Also depending on the country in which the company is located.

An example: Korean Airlines. The airline had had several accidents and thus travellers began to avoid the company. It became a problem. A consultant was hired. The result was that it was decided that from now on all communication at work will be in English. Hmm. Why? Well, Korean culture is very authoritarian. For example, if the flight captain had chosen an inappropriate route, no one could question it. With English, they "disconnected" the Korean culture.

What do you gain from having a conscious company culture?

When you have a clear profile, you stand out in today's enormous information noise. Those who are attracted then become strong "followers". In addition, it has another important effect, which became clear in a study at Harvard. The most profitable companies have long relationships with their customers, employees and other partners. To have a long relationship with someone, two things are mainly required: Trust and commitment. Trust, in turn, arises through being predictable. Commitment is given as a bonus to companies with a conscious culture, because they have made sure that those, who are employed like the culture. This in turn leads to you getting involved in your job. Simply like the job, which leads to committed service for customers.

This was confirmed, for example, today (21-04-12) by Volvo Car's CEO Håkan Samuelsson: "Brands and values are the horsepower of the future. In the past, a car was



chosen based on double camshafts and horsepower. Now you choose a car more and more based on what values the brand has. ”

There is a great benefit to having a conscious culture. The world is changing faster and faster. It can also happen suddenly. For example, pandemic... Then it becomes important to be able to adapt quickly. It requires a high degree of delegation. If you then have a conscious and well-established culture, it can serve as a guiding light for decision-making. You can give much more confidence to employees to be independent. They do not have to go to the boss to the same extent to get help with decision making. It provides an additional benefit - mainly for younger employees - who don't want controlling managers. And another advantage... Fewer managers are needed!

Going from a control-driven company to a company, which is based much more on trust, is easier in Sweden compared to many other countries. Why? Well, according to Hofstede-based surveys, the power gap is low in Sweden. It will also be easier in companies, where the founder has ownership control...

Speaking of Swedish culture, Per Mattsson writes in Di (business paper) today (21-04-12) about the benefits of the Swedish automotive industry's transformation: Instead of initiating collaboration by writing in bundles of legal text, which is to be nailed down by corporate lawyers, the Swedish model starts... ”.

IKEA – An example of a conscious company culture

The furniture company IKEA is an excellent example of a company with a conscious culture. The culture is also very strongly influenced by the founder - Ingvar Kamprad. His vision with the company became more and more "to create a better everyday life for the many people". That meant they would have low prices. This presupposed that one needed to be very cost-conscious in the company. To cope with that, Ingvar pointed out that in the Småland culture (Småland is a region in southern Sweden) people are very cost-conscious - even stingy;-)He was born there. He lived fairly consistently, as he learned. He also made sure that stories came out, about how he lived cheaply in different ways, for example no nice car. He also produced the publication "A furniture dealer's will" to concretize his leadership and IKEA's culture.

For it to work with a conscious culture, it must be manifested and maintained. Managers must learn extra carefully what culture means in everyday life. When you then manifest the culture in everyday life, it is called symbolic leadership. Employees also need to be trained in culture.

A warning for attractive companies

Some companies become particularly attractive. Many want to work there. It can be due to many things. Once I went through a PersonProfile (HumanGuide) for a flight attendant. I was then surprised. It was not what I thought it should be. I then asked why she had that job. Got the answer then: "The job is not fun, but I like to be in big cities abroad". Not primarily to provide service to passengers...



Then I realized that companies or organizations, which are attractive, must be careful, so that you do not want to work there for an inappropriate motive. This is especially true during strong expansion and when you need to hire many. Then it is important not to be careless with the selection. A good strategy comes from the successful companies, which were reported in the bestseller "Good to Great". If they were unsure, it became a no - even if they could not give a clear answer as to why...

A first little step for a conscious company culture

If you do not have a conscious culture and want to go in that direction, then of course you can't get up to IKEA's level directly. Where to start then? Many choose to agree on some value words, such as three. Why exactly three. A strong reason is that you can't focus on many words... How to choose words? There are certainly thousands of nice words, so which ones to choose? Principles can then be that the words are

- strengthening our vision and business concept
- right in time
- suitable for something, which it would be especially good for us to get better at, i.e focus on improvements in certain areas
- etc

Everything you choose must then pass the nonsense test, i.e you then put "not" in front and then it must be a real alternative. For example, it is not OK to have "The customer in our focus"...

In the HumanGuide concept, there is the tool HumanGuide Cards, which consists of the test in card game format and the associated web app cards.humanguide.se. With the help of Cards, you can in a group come up with three particularly suitable qualities to describe the culture in a concise way. These could then give guidance in all actions.

With Cards, you can then easily check in a group, if you in the company live up to the characteristics of the established culture.

Finally, an interesting experience about country cultures ... A manager in Switzerland had made a PersonProfile with the HumanGuide test. He worked for a company in Zurich. He did the test in German. When he found out that the test could also be done in French, he wanted to do the test in French, because he came from the French part of Switzerland.

The interesting thing then was that the German test result had

- *Power* 3 more
- *Quality* 3 more
- *Contacts* 2 less

The other factors had roughly equal values. A difference of 3 is significant with the test.

The conclusion in this case was that the manager fitted better into the German more straightforward culture than into the slightly more talkative French culture.

It can go wrong when you do not take culture into account. An example from a nice hotel in Bali, which belongs to an international chain. They had a hotel manager from



Europe. He thought it was ridiculous to take into account the local culture, for example that when repairing a bungalow, you needed to take a priest there, who moved the spirits of the house to another bungalow. One day the local managers at the hotel got enough. Then they entered the boss's room. Helped carry him away and then they threw him in the hotel pool...

He who told me that story had a manager, who he thought handled the cultural aspect in a good way. That manager was always careful to present the foundation for his decision.

Hopefully I have now shown how the HumanGuide concepts and its personality theory in eight dimensions can be used in many ways in order to develop, handle and care cultures e.g. in order to support cooperation.

The examples show that you can benefit from our web app your.humanguide.se, where you can calculate passion index for different jobs, i.e how does my personality fit

- for the job
- in culture
- together with a certain person

Of course, similarities work best together, but when it comes to people, diversity is good. The challenge then will be to make diversity work. Then you can benefit greatly from using the HumanGuide concept to increase understanding of each other.

A very practical possibility with the HumanGuide concept is that you can relatively easily describe any culture with the web app your.humanguide.se. It is especially useful nowadays, by collaborating more and more in both virtual and global teams. Then you can easily examine what is the characteristic of the cultures involved. And the personalities;-) All to get the greatest possible understanding of each other's ways of being.

NOTE! Descriptions of cultures in e.g. Hofstede's app may be out of date or not relevant...

Good luck!

Rolf