

## Research Article

### NORDIC AND FENNO-UGRIC BUSINESS CULTURE: ESTONIA AND SWEDEN –SOME NUANCES TO CONSIDER

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#### ABSTRACT

In fruitful cooperation and leadership, understanding the culture and background of the business partners is important. Our about decade's long experience of cooperation in different Nordic-Baltic cooperation, about seven years of this in the position of leading the teams, has offered us some unique insight into the intricacies of what may be important for different cultures. In general, most Nordic countries have rather similar business styles, based on punctuality, trust and transparency. However, due to some cultural and historic influences, there are also nuances that may differ. The article below takes a more specific look at some similarities and differences in the business and communication cultures of Estonia and Sweden. Although the two Nordic nations have many similarities, there exist some traits that are different for the Fenno-Ugric nations (like Estonia, but also e.g. Finland) on the one hand, and Sweden on the other hand. At the same time, the belonging of Estonia to also the Central and Eastern European Cultural Group, and having the Soviet legacy, may impose a third kind of "stamp" on some unwritten practices or understandings. A lot of research has earlier been carried out on Swedish and Finnish business and communication culture. This – as far as we know - has not been the case with Swedish and Estonian business culture. Thus, this article is to our knowledge one of the first scientific pieces to introduce research into the area, as concerns the Estonian cultural preferences. The goal is to further mutual understanding and be of support in cooperation for different current and future cooperation projects and partners, as well as in general diplomacy and cooperation.

**Keywords:** UNESCO, Estonian communication, Swedish communication, Global study.

#### INTRODUCTION

##### Relevance of the topic: Estonia and Sweden on the geopolitical map and as trade partners Intercultural communication in cooperation

In modern business culture due attention is given to the cultural intricacies of business partners. The right tone of communication often decides the success of a transaction, and the rhythm and success of a longer cooperation project depends on it even more.

This is clearly identified also by UNESCO. According to [Daniel Pascoe Aguilar](#),

Forbes Councils Member,

" UNESCO defines intercultural dialogue as a respectful cultural encounter, mutual understanding and constructive exchange of perspectives, whether "verbal or non-verbal, in-person or virtual, between two or more people, [or] between groups." UNESCO also recommends general intercultural dialogue approaches and expected outcomes including:

- Creating positive social relationships.
- Facilitating programs that benefit the well-being of all members of the community.
- Creating a sense of belonging and trust in the community.
- Fighting exclusion, marginalization and inequalities.
- Involving and engaging all audiences, "leaving no one behind."
- Building social cohesion and trust among diverse groups.
- Contributing to conflict prevention and resolution.
- Upholding human rights." ( 2024)".

When one works with representatives of different cultures, certain typical patterns of behaviour, values and beliefs about what is "right" and what not become visible. Oftentimes, people are themselves rather unaware of these, and would react with a surprise when hearing a generalisation like "*Estonians are in general...*" or "*Swedes tend to in general...*", if these go beyond the well-known stereotypes. But the more often and systematically the cooperation and meeting between the representatives of two cultures occurs, the more visible certain trends and patterns may become.

Business people have known this for centuries, and different "handbooks" in "*doing business with...*" have been given out for different cultures in the world for a long period of time. Today, you may spot similar advice in e.g. the "*Cultural Atlas on Swedish Culture*" – which also pays attention to issues like Communication Style in general, Turns, Personal Space, Eye-contact, Gestures – are all important categories in such overviews (<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/swedish-culture/swedish-culture-communication#:~:text=Communication%20Style%3A%20Communication%20in%20Sweden,looking%20away%20or%20stopping%20talking>). Seemingly "small things" matter a lot. And behaving completely wrong may be difficult to understand for the other culture.

It is clear that in the modern world, where everyone travels a lot and spends at least a few periods of their lives living abroad, the influences from all over the world are abundant, and the more flexible the person, the more flexible the identity and readiness to accept and adhere to different cultural norms.

Nevertheless, acceptance does not mean that the differences do not exist. It rather takes a keen eye to notice, accept and appreciate these differences, similarities, and patterns that might exist within and between cultures. The more we know about them, the better we can understand each other, and appreciate each other's behaviour.

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This is also the goal of the current article: to mention some observations on different cultures: in this case, Estonian and Swedish, in semi-formal meeting and cooperation situations. It does not mean that the differences are absolute –the individual level, decisions ensuing from one's personality or behavioural patterns, can be much more decisive in choosing one or another approach. It definitely does not mean that one approach is better than the other. But simply trying to describe some tendencies, we hope, we can help cooperation partners to be better prepared for certain behaviours, to better understand each other, and thus – have a fruitful and positive cooperation together. The current article here focuses on the issue of cultural styles and business styles, cultural patterns and preferences. It generalizes the processes and cultural trends we have been able to notice and discuss about at a broader cultural level. It is written as a descriptive analysis.

**Methodology:** The methodological framework of our study is *ethnographic research*.

**Methods:** It is based on *action research and participant-observations* as well as literature review and text analysis of a collection of articles on the topic.

**More specifically:** Focus Group Interviews; Semi-structured interviews; Analysis of a collection of texts on the issue.

**Empirical quantifiable data:** a) *focus group interviews* and *individual interviews* have been used to analyse some processes, attitudes and values that may lie behind some communication patterns.

**Participants:** The participants in individual interviews are students at Tartu University, Estonia as well as teachers and colleagues from Estonia, Sweden, Finland and in other different international cooperation groups that we have had together for the past seven to ten years, including colleagues from other Baltic countries like Latvia and Lithuania, as well as other Nordic countries: Finland, Sweden and Iceland.

**Novelty of research and contribution to science:** As mentioned above, to our knowledge, very little scientific research has been carried out on this topic before.

## 1. The Estonian communication style

In general, the Estonian communication style may be characterised by a rather concise way of expressing oneself. It is adhering to rather laconic communication patterns which is also advised in on-line "communication guides", like "*Passport to trade – Business Communication in Estonia*" (<https://businessculture.org/eastern-europe/estonia/business-communication/>). It is a rather modest communication style, which the Guide describes as: "*Showing emotions or excessive talking is not considered acceptable*". Thus the style is short. Concise answers, directly answering the question, and not involving too many emotions are considered to be the way to behave – "*efficient, prudent, up to the point*"(ibid.).

In a similar line, also the recent guide "*Estonia – Culture, Etiquette and Business Practices*" (<https://www.commisceo-global.com/resources/country-guides/estonia-guide>) states:

"passive silence is very much part of the communication style. Estonians are not fond of conversational overlap and will not think highly of someone who interrupts them while they are speaking publicly".

In tune with this, it follows that typical international (in its essence and origin Anglo-American) communication style that includes "warm-up" topics, and introduction phrases, an exchange of several politeness formulae and some personal questions, may sometimes be perceived as "redundant, fake, wasting the time" or "off the point" by some Estonians. Correspondingly, the "monosyllabic", short communication style of Estonians, only focusing directly to the question, may sometimes come across as abrupt, unfriendly or even rude to foreigners.

In the beginning of the 1990s the communication processes were thus often made smoother by interpreters. Only 32-39% of the population spoke a foreign language other than Russian in 1987 (Vihalemm *et al.*, 2004: 59). Interpreters, mediating between "two different worlds and languages", clearly point out that in that period, they assisted in communication to a considerable degree, helping to bridge the waters between the cultural and other aspects important in communication. Behavioural patterns, conversation markers, etc. were of essential importance in furthering understanding in this period (Mullamaa 1996).

As language learning increased, and more and more Estonians acquired some new foreign language, also their knowledge of the international (as well as language and culture-specific) formulae, communication styles and politeness phrases, as well as -so-to-say - "cultural games", increased along the other "Westernisation processes" that we see described in e.g. Lauristin & Vihalemm 2020.

Thus, by today we may say that rather many of the initial discrepancies have been left behind. Communication between cooperation partners follows traditional (Western, Anglo-American) standards, and foreigners need not be surprised by a local difference. Such influence has been analysed as importation of culture, or even "colonisation", in some sources. Other agents (typically, the international organisations or TNC establishing themselves in the region) see this as the importation of Western values and democracy (cf. Kalmus *et al.*, 2004). A deeper level analysis might show us that it is both. But if this can be seen as an illustration of cultural colonisation, in its essence eroding the "native" peculiarities – as some researchers claim, or just part of the regular generalisation and democratisation/ individualisation processes in the world -is another issue to be discussed in other papers.

## 2. The Swedish communication style

The Swedish communication style has its roots in the old peasant culture that tended to focus on clarity, information exchange as well as sometimes some philosophical generalisations (folk wisdoms), added as a "*knorr*" (the special point) at the end of the conversation.

Since the 1960s' "du"-reform, making all people use the *tous*-form to each other, an enforced egalitarianism in the socialist spirit was spread as an ideology and practice. Today, this has become a commonplace in most communication patterns, and there is an increased focus on the individual. The style is transparent and friendly. There is some small-talk, and personal talk to make the conversation partners feel comfortable and take away some stress in the communication.

## 3. The Estonian and the Sweden business styles: a brief comparison

Below, let us take a look at some general differences in Estonian and Swedish communication styles and differences in perception of each other's communication styles.

## a. Planning and organising cooperation

In planning and organising cooperation, the two cultures may be seen as relatively similar. The focus is on efficiency, finding the partner who would be able to carry out the project, who is respectable and professional.

In general partner search, earlier professional contacts or meetings can serve as a starting point. For the *Swedish* part, possibly, the earlier personal contacts and recommendations, may seem more important. Swedes prefer a rather meticulous background control, and may surprise the Estonian expert they finally contact, with their detailed knowledge of their past and present.

The *Estonians*, rather, tend to be satisfied with professional databases, e-mail lists or professional organisations, official conference meetings or digital official partner search environments for contacts.

## b. Planning a meeting

### ▪ Setting the time

The planning of a meeting starts earlier and is, possibly, more detailed earlier on for the *Swedish* side. For *Estonians*, having had prior cooperation or not, it often suffices to agree on the fact that the (next) meeting is due to take place within a year, half year, or, say three months. More precise details are preferred to be negotiated once the time approaches, to avoid eventual changes or collisions in calendar.

This may also concern “nailing” the exact dates for the meeting: while the *Swedish* communication style may sometimes wish to have a definite date in calendar already about half a year earlier, *Estonians* may rather wish to keep their calendars free for eventual unexpected obligations: be it, e.g. last-minute notice conference invitations, assignments or meetings. Thus, the preferable time-frame for the final and detailed settlement of dates and times for Estonia can be about a month (or two, with some flexibility) before the event, depending on its weight.

### ▪ Setting the agenda

In both countries, it is important to decide on the general topic of the meeting. Together with the information on the meeting taking place, the general topic and preliminary schedule for the day is usually mentioned.

In *Estonia*, in general, it is not essential to go into great detail about the contents. If the general topics are given, this is considered enough. The meeting will enable one to go deeper into the details and specify the aspects.

In *Swedish* meeting style, one may notice a tendency to specify the subtopics a little bit more. Sometimes this can be a period in e-mail exchange when a person concerned actually wants to introduce their agenda, or persuade colleagues to follow their standpoints.

For *Estonians* not too detailed specification is not wishful, as – according to their logic - the whole point with the meeting is to discuss further and find solutions to the issues. As for *Swedes*, it may sometimes be difficult for outsiders to differentiate between their discussion-decision making stage – everything seems to be merged into an ongoing cycle, internationally known as the Swedish “consensus discussion” style.

## MEETING LENGTH AND FREQUENCY

### EST

In tune with the communication style and its origins described above, *Estonians* like their meetings to be short, up to the point and not too many. We prefer to have a clear “result” from the meeting. It may be e.g. a decision on what will have to be achieved in future plans, and by which date. The general *modus operandi* can also be discussed, as well as in which teams one goes on with the specific tasks. Usually, after that, work continues in those specific work groups with their own specific task management, deadlines, and communication directly between that team’s leader and the members (depending on the task, and the character of work, this can often be on the individual basis). Everyone is responsible for their work. The work is measured (quality, deadlines, results during work process). Both extensive optimism, including aggressive ideology or dedication, as well as extensive pessimism, including complaining or delaying – are considered a waste of others’ time, as well as a burden on “work”, requiring extra processing capacity, time and effort from both that person, as well as others. People succumbing to either of these (too much eagerness or too much complaining) are usually not considered the most efficient among the staff.

If there is a change of plan – e.g. a new solution is agreed upon, or a new division of work – then from that moment on, it is what matters. It is not acceptable in the *Estonian* style to come back to the earlier plan and change back from plan B to plan A without a clear reason that is accepted and understood by everyone in the team. Work only continues on plan B, and it is these results and processes that are relevant since the day plan B was adopted.

Similar trends in cultural patterns have been also described by *Finnish* researchers focusing on different areas in the *Swedish* and *Finnish* communication and professional styles – be it academic communication between supervisors and students, communication at meetings, and even buying tickets for the theatre performance (cf. Tolvanen 2022, Stolt and Bergström 2022). Things get more concrete when we speak business (<https://innovestorgroup.com/finnish-leader-and-leadership-in-sweden-lessons-learned/>).

## Meeting styles

### Sweden

The *Swedish* are very proud of their meeting style. The idea is that everyone must be able to have their say. In the long contemplations and discussions, “truth” will settle out, and the optimal solution will be found. The flat organisation requires a careful circulation of the topic, giving also way for longer ponderings.

### Estonia

*Estonian* business and meeting style rather resembles the *Finnish* one. It means that there are rather clear hierarchies, and it is the boss who is given the trust and also responsibility for leading the team. As we see from the sentence, it is rather straight forward. Issues are discussed according to agenda as punctually and concerning facts and objective results as possible. Perhaps a description of a dialogue from *Swedish* business style could look like the following:

SWE: “So, Anders, how do you feel about the past three months?  
Vs.

The Estonian style, in contrast, only wants to know the numbers and realities:

EST: "So, how many projects have we completed and what is the revenue of the three last months? Project leader, numbers?"

I would say that the Swedish style is more process oriented, while the Estonian style is more product oriented. Also, people are definitely more important, and are thus also more valued in the Swedish style.

#### 4. Possible Clashing points

##### Meeting length, focus and who gets to speak

It is obvious that for Estonians the Swedish style may seem friendly, outgoing and pleasant at first. Soon, however, the Estonians sometimes get restless during lengthy meetings. Thus – the focus point, and time devoted to the discussion of different by-parts of a project can be a problem for Estonians.

Also, the extensive time allotted to different people ( and there are often the same people who typically use it) at meetings can be painful to bear for Estonians. In an Estonian meeting, when a decision needs to be reached, the boss, or project leader presents the scenario, and this is what will be followed. The democratic part includes "are there any questions?", and reasonable points will be given some brief attention to, or will be added to the points to be taken in consideration in the next stages of working with the project.

#### 5. Working on the task: Achievement styles

##### 5.1. Estonia Work and achieve – one person responsibility

Estonians don't like to work in groups, discuss too long in groups, or achieve in groups. Hofstede's famous World Culture Review (Country Comparison Tool: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=estonia%2Cfinland%2Csweden>) puts it like this:

"Estonia is an Individualist country with a score of 62. Among Estonians, there is a solid conviction about personal responsibility and everybody's achievement and contribution to be self-fulfilled. Most Estonians believe that everyone should be allowed to do his/her own thing, reach new heights, or even dig their graves. Work situations are driven more by a task orientation than by a relationship orientation, which is to say that for Estonians, work relations serve a functional purpose. Achievement is reflected directly on the person responsible. Given the loosely knit social framework of Individualist countries where progress in life does not depend on how well connected you are, transparency and honesty rather than harmony and loyalty are virtues. For this reason, Estonians tend to be direct communicators. They usually say what they mean and mean what they say and there is limited time for small talk".

##### 5.2. Sweden "Alla tillsammans" ("Let's do it together")

Interestingly, the Hofstede Cultural Tool (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=finland,sweden>) does not mention Sweden's work preferences, but rather discusses their family preferences ( Individualistic, non-dependent) under the *Individualist* measurement scale description. Hence, we do not have the measurements on this criterion in this Global quantifiable tool.

This can be supported also by Participant views, cf.;

P5: "In work-culture, I would rather estimate the ideal for a typical Swedish approach as more collective than the work style for

Estonians. The Swedish work-style seems to adhere to semi-obligatory and obligatory regular meetings, where you are pressed to share what you are dealing with, plan to deal with, working at or dreaming about".

In some cases this is even seen as too much of an obligation:

P5 "The intensity of some of the experiences have made some of our Focus Group Interview members draw even parallels with the Soviet Union where meetings were an obligatory tool for pressing out information for the Nomenklatura under the "meeting" name. For Estonians it can feel as stressful if everyone needs to know everything, and if they don't like what they hear, they may also stop or hinder the person going one's own way thus "deviating" from the group" – which for Estonians is rather seen as liberation from group-think" (Participant 5).

Sharing everything before "the individual part of your work is ready" is an attitude that is indeed not always appreciated in Estonia, and is rather labelled "Groupthink" or "Herd thinking" (cf. Vadi, Pulk 2020). Also in our research results many participants explicitly stated "we like to work alone; " We like to achieve alone" (cf. the articles available in Mullamaa 2004 c).

#### 6. Individuality-Collectivism

There are some differences in the general conduct of some type of meetings, where the Swedish negotiation-consensus model has received attention internationally. The differences are also to be noted on the individuality-responsibility level of task solving, where the Estonians rather prefer the individuality, the Swedish the group responsibility model. Decision processes may thus also be somewhat quicker in the Estonian style, as there it is often the person in charge, who has to make the final decision (cf. Meeting-leading section above).

In the Swedish style, decisions go often again into the consensus-coordination cycle, which adds some time (or even days & weeks) before the final decision is made. With some generalisation, I would say that the Estonian style rather focuses on the product, while the Swedish style rather focuses on the process.

#### 7. Work vs "real life" – "let's stick from here"!

Estonians, in general, rather tend to keep their work and private life separate. There may be some good friends from work, for whom one also shares (some) free time. But this is not always the case. Being a good and close colleague does not mean that you share your private life. In many, higher-end positions, it is even considered unprofessional and "nepotism"-like.

For Swedish partners this attitude may be not familiar. The attitude that work is OK, but "real life" is somewhere "out there" may even seem hurtful for a strongly collective culture of theirs that rather wishes to tie the two together, bring people to work-place for different events even after working hours.

This may be more difficult for Estonians, who might even, in some cases, consider this invading their privacy and "unlawfully pushing them to work beyond working hours" (Participant 12). Estonians are rather private when it comes to their home and family, and if they wish to share the time with work-colleagues (which of course does happen, and in some constellations rather often), they prefer the person to definitely "be also a friend". It means – a closely chosen soul-mate, rather than a person that happens to sit at the same department.

However, ideally, an official event must be time-managed to fit into the working hours. This rule is even clearly expressed in the Estonian "Law on Employment and free time". This prohibits one organising events after official work hours. It also prohibits bosses make events that are obligatory to participate, or "where employees might *get the feeling* that it would be *advisory to participate*". Thus, weekends, afternoon times and holidays are clearly not for work-related trainings, events or get-togethers.

### Office or home office?

The same is true for the work in the office. For example, even the academic institutions in the Nordic countries, enforce the *collective* communication style and work culture, while academics are supposed to create and conduct their research at their office during working hours. *Process* matters. In Estonia, by contrast, it is *the result* that matters (cf. also Mullamaa 2023 ab, Mullamaa 2024ab). The fact that a person has published a remarkable monograph, a good scientific article published in a respected international journal, etc. – is proof enough of the fact that the person "has worked", dedicated time, gained the results.

*How* one does this, is considered everyone's personal matter, and observation and following of the working styles – like who prefers working from home, or who sits at the office – is considered to be "no-one's business". "Obligation to be reachable by e-mail, but not present in the office" is part of many work agreements. By default this means that *work tasks* still have to be completed. And – depending on the personality type, some people might produce more effectively once not disturbed by noise or action around one. Again – a topic gone global with the Corona period that made people around the World rethink traditional work patterns and habits.

### 8. What is "early" for fixing a meeting time and schedule: Flexibility and change of plans

As proceeds from the previous sections, the Estonians generally rather prefer to have the final smaller details not fixed until a rather recent point before the proposed meeting or event – as unexpected changes can occur, and they would prefer to be able to make minor adjustments without having to change the whole plan. For example – it is OK to agree that a meeting takes place "in the second half of October" in March. In September it is OK to decide on the more exact days, and about 2 weeks before the date to "lock" the exact time and place for beginning.

For the Swedish partners it is oftentimes rather preferred that all details are sealed half a year (or sometimes a year) earlier.

This, inevitably, can cause problems for Estonians:

- they don't want to give out promises that they can't keep
- they don't know if they can keep the promise, as things change rapidly, and no-one knows in detail about "half year in the future"
- they clearly prefer their cultural work model – schematic, preliminary plan first, when details are clear and time closer, more details and settling of the date, time, location
- the problem becomes: how to explain this to your cooperation partner? On the one hand, one wants to be concise, clear and easy to communicate with.  
On the other hand, if you *don't know*, then you don't know.

For Scandinavians, keeping the thing preliminary not fully sealed until a month or 2 weeks earlier, is usually uncomfortable. They sincerely don't understand that life changes all the time in Estonia, and events

are informed about at ( what seems for them) relatively short notice.

### 9. Communication in live informal meetings

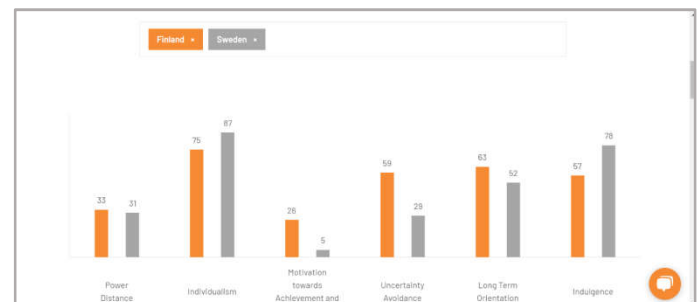
In informal meetings, the Swedish style may entail a somewhat longer introduction with small-talk. Then, the issues are discussed in efficient and concrete terms.

For Estonians, starting straight with the discussion matter is more usual. In some situations this may even come across as a bit "abrupt". At the same time, what they bear in mind is "being efficient", and "being right on the point". In recent years, a small introductory *sentence* or story is added, thus being more similar to our Western colleagues. After this, though, the way of handling issues is still rather concrete.

### 10. Fenno-Ugric and Scandinavian traits?

In our earlier research (Mullamaa 2023 a, b, Mullamaa 2024 c) we have suggested that similarities occur in the Finnish and Estonian communication and business style. We further hypothesised that these might be seen as a common Fenno-Ugric "layer" in our typical behavioural and communication patterns ( *ibid.*). If we take a look at the semi-annual World cultural habits and values measure, we see similar results.

The country comparison tool (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=finland.sweden>), shows us:



And for a comparison between all three countries <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=estonia%2Cfinland%2Csweden> :



As we see, similarly to the results in our research, also this Global study shows that in many respects, the traits typically associated with the Finnish style, can be closely associated with the Estonian style as well.

### Analysis

In the article above..

As pointed out in Aguilar ( 2024, emphasis mine):

".../ intercultural communication is defined by the *Encyclopaedia of Critical Psychology* as a field of study that examines communication across different cultures, experiences and perspectives, and how diverse backgrounds and beliefs affect communication."

It is obvious that similarly to other life experiences also the experience in cultural backgrounds affects us. Some generalisations by some representatives of certain cultural backgrounds (Estonian and Swedish) have been discussed above.

The hedging done above valid, we may still generalise some of the results. Based on the current feedback we've got, while doing this research, it seems that in broad terms:

- the Estonian (Fenno-Ugric) business and communication style is more laconic
- in Sweden the consensus culture causes longer discussions and a slower decision making process
- In Estonia decisions are taken quicker, it is the leadership who is in charge but ( mostly ) also bears the responsibility
- The Estonian business and administration culture is more hierarchical
- Also inside work roles: there are defined set rules, professional descriptions, and people tend to follow this, not embarking on other sides outside their domain
- Pushing oneself into others' domains is not acceptable
- Due to the above, the Estonian work environment seems more efficient

## CONCLUSION

In the article above we have sketched some typical traits of Estonian and Swedish business and communication styles. As far as we know, no thorough research has been conducted nor published on this issue before, except for the preliminary collection of view-point articles earlier this year (Mullamaa 2024 c). At the same time, our Focus group participants and individual interview participants have pointed to interesting aspects in our cultures, some of which have been mentioned also above.

The topic has been thoroughly researched in contexts between Finland and Sweden, and the conclusions concerning the Finnish style being – in general - more laconic and concrete, etc., are rather similar to the observations we have shared above about the Estonian culture. This suggests a similarity between the Fenno-Ugric business styles – and offers interesting perspectives on how these ancient "ways of being" crop up in modern business life.

On the other hand, there is definitely and clearly an Estonian business style in its own right, partly resting on the Fenno-Ugric individuality layer, partly the authoritarian state experience, the German "Kinderzimmer", and some Russian "let's enjoy the life!" views on behaviour and communication. Needless to say, all this is in constant evolving and change.

In general, we may say that although the Estonian and Swedish communication styles are rather similar, despite being close neighbours geographically, there are some nuances that may be different. More product and result focused work culture in Estonia can sometimes feel more brief and even abrupt. The Swedish consensus style on the other hand may seem to challenge the individuality and the "right to have one's own, different, opinion" – so much cherished by Estonians. Being detailed about future meetings already at a rather early point in time in Sweden, versus coming to details as the deadline approaches, in Estonia, may be another area attracting the

attention. This is what found room for discussion in this, preliminary results, article. We hope that one can bear in mind in order to understand, support and even better cooperate with each other. In general, though, the similarities, and shared understanding of the basic values, makes a good basis for cooperation and business between the representatives.

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