

# SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Sten K. Johnson Centre for Entrepreneurship

**Master of Science Thesis in Entrepreneurship**

## **How do non-native entrepreneurs enact leadership in (food) startups founded in Sweden?**

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*Jeffrey Morman*

*Maguy Leyzers Vis*

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Supervisors:	Claudio Fassio and Ziad el Awad

## **Abstract**

The world is becoming more globalized and people from various countries are starting their businesses abroad. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze cultural behaviors, norms, and values for foreigners to adapt to different cultures. As Sweden is known for being the global leader in innovation and recognized as the leader in modernization, the country offers numerous entrepreneurial opportunities for entrepreneurs, inviting foreigners to start their ventures in Sweden.

The research is conducted to create an insight on how non-native entrepreneurs enact leadership in food startups they have founded in Sweden. It considers the different forms of leadership and cultural behaviors using the theories of Hofstede, The Lewis Model, and elements of the GLOBE report; a study on diverse cultures took place and its relation to blending foreigner cultures in the Swedish entrepreneurial startup environment.

This qualitative research takes a cognitive approach in understanding how international leadership experiences shaped the non-native entrepreneurs' leadership styles in food startups, outside their own cultural business environment. By analyzing their cultural behaviors in leadership based on their international experiences and comparing such results with literature, the researchers were able to narrow the research gap of the different cultural behaviors with regards to leadership in the Swedish entrepreneurial environment.

It was found that non-native entrepreneurial leaders possess a key advantage having dealt with uncertainty while attaining experiences abroad. The non-native entrepreneurial leaders appear to interchange leadership styles, based on the situation. Then, it was also found that the perception of the non-native leaders regarding success does not match with the non-competitiveness within the Swedish business environment,

Based on the collected data, leaders who intend to start up their ventures in Sweden need a clearly defined vision and a clear purpose that matches with the individual team members' values. Individual team members should be allowed and encouraged to act autonomously and entrepreneurially, and accomplishments should be recognized and celebrated by leaders. Therefore, non-native entrepreneurial leaders need to create a sense of safety for individuals to openly share ideas and opinions, which must be considered by the entrepreneurial leader.

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**Key Words:** Leadership, Entrepreneurship, International entrepreneurs in Sweden, Startups, Cultural behaviors, Lewis Model, GLOBE of Leadership

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# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Research problem.....	1
1.2. Formulation of research question(s) .....	2
1.3. Aim of study .....	2
<b>2. Theoretical Framework .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. Entrepreneurship definition .....	4
2.2. Entrepreneurial Leadership .....	5
2.2.1. Entrepreneurial Leadership defined .....	5
2.2.2. Entrepreneurship and its relation to Leadership.....	6
2.2.3. Entrepreneurial Leader: Required Capabilities.....	8
2.2.4. Convergences and divergences between traditional and entrepreneurial leadership.....	9
2.3. Perception of Leadership .....	10
2.4. Culture .....	11
2.5. Multi-active, Linear-active and Reactive Cultures .....	13
2.6. Cross-culturalism in an international setting.....	15
2.7. SMEs and Startups and leadership .....	16
<b>3. Methodological Design .....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1. Empirical Context: Sweden .....	18
3.2. Research Strategy and methods .....	19
3.3. Population and Sample Selection.....	20
3.4. Research Questions .....	22
3.5. Recording and analyzing data .....	23
3.6. Duration of research.....	24
3.7. Limitations of research .....	24
<b>4. Findings and Discussion.....</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1. Findings.....	26

4.1.1.	Interviewee 1 .....	26
4.1.2.	Interviewee 2 .....	29
4.1.3.	Interviewee 3 .....	33
4.1.4.	Interviewee 4 .....	36
4.1.5.	Interviewee 5 .....	39
<b>4.2.</b>	<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>41</b>
4.2.1.	How does the non-native culture of Entrepreneurs affect the leadership style within startups they have founded in Sweden?.....	41
4.2.2.	How does the Swedish business culture influence the way the non-native entrepreneurs lead startups in Sweden?.....	44
<b>5.</b>	<b><i>Conclusions and Implications</i>.....</b>	<b>47</b>
5.1.	<b>Aim of the thesis and main research findings.....</b>	<b>47</b>
5.2.	<b>Implications for Practice .....</b>	<b>50</b>
5.3.	<b>Implications for Future Research .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b><i>References</i> .....</b>	<b>52</b>
	<b><i>Appendices</i>.....</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>Appendix 1: List of Definitions .....</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>Appendix 2: Interview Matrix .....</b>	<b>63</b>
	<b>Appendix 3: Coding Matrix.....</b>	<b>68</b>
	<b>Appendix 4: The different leadership styles based on culture.....</b>	<b>78</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> The Swedish Leadership Style .....	13
<b>Figure 2:</b> Respondents' Position in Lewis Model .....	22
<b>Figure 3:</b> Leadership Behavior Grid <i>INT1</i> .....	26
<b>Figure 4:</b> Leadership Behavior Grid <i>INT2</i> .....	29
<b>Figure 5:</b> Leadership Behavior Grid <i>INT3</i> .....	33
<b>Figure 6:</b> Leadership Behavior Grid <i>INT4</i> .....	36
<b>Figure 7:</b> Leadership Behavior Grid <i>INT5</i> .....	39

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1:</b> Cultural Behavior Characteristics .....	15
<b>Table 2:</b> Profiles of the interviewees .....	21

# **1. Introduction**

The following part introduces the research problem, which will be the focus for this paper, as well as the research questions that have been formulated based on the research problem and the aim of the study.

## **1.1. Research problem**

Globalization causes organizations to operate in a huge number of culturally diverse countries. It is a fact that understanding of national culture is a requirement to implement the leadership style for decision making and receiving optimal employee participation. Moreover, with the prospect of globalization continually proceeding, the Swedish Entrepreneurship Forum (2016) mentions that for SMEs that are in a nascent stage, it is important to aim to pierce non-native markets. Besides, it is also mentioned that, regardless of innovation facilitating the entering of new markets for startups, firms need to attain more human capital and other resources to enable expansion into new markets. Especially in the case of startups that emerged in countries with relatively small national markets.

As previous research shows very limited information regarding the relation to culture and environment in an international context with regards to SMEs, more specifically startups, the following sections will research the cultural impacts in leadership and entrepreneurial behavior in food startups in an international context, focusing on the Swedish business environment. Furthermore, as existing literature does not heed the Swedish entrepreneurial environment in relation to cultures, and existing research suggest to further research the need for a holistic framework that considers cultures, business culture and individual traits (Tlaiss, 2015). The researchers aim to narrow this gap between those interrelations and its effect on the leaders' behavior within the Swedish entrepreneurial environment. In addition, besides the researchers' great interest in food startups; the food sector is very dynamic, ongoing, and constantly changes over time. According to Beckeman, especially in Sweden there is great potential in innovation in the Swedish food sector (Beckeman, 2011). Since Sweden is known for its strong business climate, global competitiveness, supports the diversity of languages and commitment to innovation, entrepreneurs see great interest is starting a food venture in Sweden (Wolters Kluwer, 2020). Though the research is conducted with people from the food industry, the researchers are in opinion that the results of the research are also implacable for other industries.

As the research problem has now been revealed, the next section will build further upon the observed gaps, as presented previously.

## **1.2. Formulation of research question(s)**

Having witnessed the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Sweden from close by, it became apparent that there is little knowledge at hand about foreign entrepreneurs that are starting ventures in Sweden, let alone whether the more conventional leadership styles would be effective in a different context. For this reason, the research combines an abductive and deductive research.

With the given in mind, the following research question has been formulated:

***How do non-native entrepreneurs enact leadership in food startups that they have founded in Sweden?***

The research, a cross-cultural analysis on transnational entrepreneurship and leadership effectiveness is based on the main research question. Two additional sub-research questions have been devised:

1. How does the non-native culture of Entrepreneurs affect the leadership style within startups they have founded in Sweden?
2. How does the Swedish Business Culture influence the way the non-native entrepreneurs lead startups in Sweden?

Based on the established research question, the researchers were able to discover the different perspectives from international entrepreneurs that are currently living in Sweden within the food industry. Furthermore, this study is of a qualitative nature, given the fact that the different behaviors and perceptions of leaders and team members are being studied. Therefore, the primary data collection is done through in-depth, focus group interviews, upon which the data will be analyzed with the use of NVivo.

## **1.3. Aim of study**

The aim of the study is to reveal the leadership styles within startups led by leaders with a linear-active, multi-active or reactive cultural behavior, founded in the Swedish entrepreneurial

ecosystem and determine how the international leadership experience shaped the leadership style of the non-native entrepreneur and to what extent the leadership style has been adapted to the Swedish business culture. Since not many studies exist regarding entrepreneurship in an international context it will be relevant to find out what type of leadership styles will have the most impact on (food) startups within Sweden. Therefore, this research will reveal the internationally acquired leadership skills and way their habits may or may not have adapted to the Swedish leadership style. Additionally, this research intends to determine to what extent the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Sweden, as a context, impacts the relationship between leadership and the dynamics between team members that are not from Sweden, but have found their startup in Sweden. Since Sweden is known for being the global leader in innovation, founding a startup in the Swedish entrepreneurship context is popular (Hollanders, 2020). Furthermore, this research intends to reveal the initial differences of the international leadership experiences and compare this to the common leadership practices in Sweden. Eventually this research aims to expose the level of adaptation to the Swedish business culture as have been demonstrated in food startups founded in Sweden. As there is great potential in innovation in the Swedish food sector (Beckeman, 2011) and Sweden is known for its strong business climate, global competitiveness, supports the diversity of languages and commitment to innovation, entrepreneurs see great interest in starting a food venture in Sweden (Wolters Kluwer, 2020). For this reason, our research will help incubators and accelerators on how to advise their nonnative entrepreneurs to lead their (food) business in Sweden.

By making use of the different nine different dimensions (please refer to chapter 2.2.2) and labels of the GLOBE report (House et al., 2004) and analyzing the interviewees' cultural behaviors based on the Lewis model, the researchers can compare the Swedish culture to the different behaviors of various nationalities. This information will be of great use for other international entrepreneurs who are willing to start a new venture in the Swedish entrepreneurial environment.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The following chapter provides a discussion and synthesis of research/literature on the topics of the definition of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership, the perception of leadership, cross cultural and international settings, small and medium enterprises, and startups founded in Sweden.

### **2.1. Entrepreneurship definition**

Entrepreneurship has various meanings (Davidsson, 2005), especially when comparing the definition of entrepreneurship in different cultural settings (Northouse, 2019). As the concept of entrepreneurship has changed greatly over time in various historical cultural settings (Schumpeter, 1942; Sarasvathy, 2003; Shane, 2012), the thesis will focus on the modern definition of entrepreneurship in an international setting in comparison to a Swedish setting.

The rich definition of entrepreneurship in a broad context can bring many misunderstandings and uncommon understandings around the definition of entrepreneurship (Davidson, 2005). Despite its innumerable definitions, Davidson claims the definition of entrepreneurship as “the competitive behaviors that drive the market process” (Davidson, 2005). In addition, Stevenson and Jarillo (2001) state that entrepreneurship is “the process by which individuals - either on their own or inside organizations - pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control (1990). Sarasvathy (2001) builds upon the previous, introducing the principle of the effectuation process in entrepreneurship, in which an entrepreneur determines the next, most favorable action in an uncertain environment, with the resources that are available to an entrepreneur at that time. Focusing on the empirical approach of entrepreneurship, themes on the entrepreneurial concept vary from innovation, uniqueness to organization creation (Gartner, 1990). Furthermore, as the definition of entrepreneurship varies across countries, the definition of entrepreneurship depends on economic, political, cultural and climate factors (Verheul et al., 2001). Since Sweden’s unique trademarks focus on innovation, sustainability, co-creation and equality, such influences are secured in the most successful industrial companies; entrepreneurship in a Swedish context focuses greatly on innovation and sustainability (Beckeman, 2011).

The success of the creation of ventures, regardless of the size of the company, it is given that in the Swedish domestic market, “Swedish companies must “go global” from the beginning” (Medium, 2018). In addition, the Swedes encourage the international ecosystem where many

international events are organized within the context of entrepreneurship. The definition of entrepreneurship is mostly related to the concept themes of innovation, uniqueness, influencing and creating value in creating a new product/service or market (Beckeman, 2011; Shane, 2000).

Now that the concept of entrepreneurship has been explicated, the following part is dedicated to the concept ‘entrepreneurial leadership’.

## **2.2. Entrepreneurial Leadership**

Various academics mentioned that entrepreneurial leadership is a relatively new, contemporary concept of leadership that becomes subjected to more research annually (Gross, 2019; Renko et al., 2015; Simba & Thai, 2019). Furthermore, Ordu (2020) alleges that present, sizeable, and well-established firms were born because of the resourcefulness and exertions in what were once startups. In addition to this statement, multiple researchers have made assertions that this phenomenon is one of the fundamental elements of the success of every firm (Altuntas, 2014, as mentioned in Ordu, 2020). Since effective leadership is the major determinant of a firm’s growth, with but few investigations regarding the role of entrepreneurial leadership in small and medium-sized firms (SMEs), the need for more inquiries is clear.

Furthermore, upon closer inspection of scholarly works regarding leadership, many academics argue that contrary to the abundant availability of research on traditional leadership styles in established companies, the concept of entrepreneurial leadership is still in a rather formative stage, needing more groundbreaking discoveries to be done through extensive research, especially in SMEs (Gross, 2019; Renko et al., 2015; Leitch and Volery, 2017). Additionally, Simba et al. (2019) add that entrepreneurial leadership started becoming a research concept, as it was realized that research performed in larger corporations could not just simply be applied to SMEs.

### **2.2.1. Entrepreneurial Leadership defined**

The delineation of entrepreneurial leadership leaves academics without consensus, to name some examples, Altuntas (2014) as mentioned in Ordu (2020) stated that it is a form of control within firms, that merges activities that transpire during the start-up within firms at the personal level, together with inventive capabilities at a business level and activities of identifying exploitable opportunities at the market level. Alternatively, Renko et al., (2015) as cited in Ordu, 2020), claims that entrepreneurial leadership aims to accomplish the goals of a firm,

taking advantage of possibilities to generate revenues from a ventures' commercial opportunities, by influencing the functioning of workforces. Thus, this paper will focus on the definition of entrepreneurial leadership being a style that involves distinctive ways of cogitation and competences that assist leaders to recognize, cultivate and realize venture prospects (Thornberry, 2006, as mentioned in Simić, Slavković & Stojanović Aleksić, 2020) whilst at the same time allowing leaders to drive and incite the workforce significantly, to behave in an entrepreneurial manner, which in turn impacts the growth of an organization (Simić, Slavković & Stojanović Aleksić, 2020; Renko, El Tarabishy, Carsrud & Brännback (2015). Another perspective that has been shared with the regards to what entrepreneurial leadership is, has been shared by Roomi and Harisson (2011), who add to the previous delineations that it is a procedure of devising and conveying a vision and that successful entrepreneurial leadership practices results in the inspiration of workforces to act entrepreneurially, and procuring the competitive lead.

### **2.2.2. Entrepreneurship and its relation to Leadership**

Entrepreneurship and leadership are interwoven and for small firms to realize growth, resources must be devoted to the enhancement of leadership and management (Ordu, 2020). Furthermore, Cai et al., 2018 contend that the adopted leadership style within startup teams can either incite or constrain creativity and or entrepreneurial behavior of employees, that goes beyond the firm. This perspective on leadership has been echoed by Yukl (2013), articulating that leadership comprises inspiring other individuals, other than themselves. Furthermore, building upon the previous, Renko et al. (2015) posit that, between entrepreneurship and leadership, there are several commonalities, especially in terms of qualities, such as a captivating vision and strong concentration on opportunity recognition, but add more traits, such as flexibility, patience, persistence, an idea which is shared by more scholars (Cogliser et al., 2004; Fernald et al., 2005; Thornberry, 2006; and Becherer et al., 2008, as mentioned in Renko et al., 2015).

Besides, Harrison (2015) utters that entrepreneurial leadership started to be developed as a unique phenomenon, in which leadership practices are particularly found more often in SMEs, which are generally operating in more volatile and dynamic markets, due to the liability of newness and less resources being available in the venture, whether that be financial capital or human capital. Moreover, another view of Sklaveniti (2017), affirms that entrepreneurial leadership is a style that is rather dynamic, receptive of contribution by team members and practiced whilst bearing in mind the dependence of relationships, to be successful.

House et al. (2004) in a quantitative study, involving 62 countries globally, about national culture in relation to leadership for GLOBE, devised the “Culturally Endorsed Leadership Theory” (CLT), in which it was postulated that individuals from different cultures may act on various types of leadership inversely and that the expectations of how a leader should behave could be explained by one’s cultural context. In this study the researchers uncovered the way different cultures viewed leadership, by categorizing cultural behaviors within nine cultural behavioral dimensions, namely: *uncertainty avoidance*, *power distance*, *institutional collectivism*, *in-group collectivism*, *gender egalitarianism*, *assertiveness*, *future orientation*, *performance orientation*, and *humane orientation* (Northouse, 2019) which have been used for this thesis. These nine dimensions have been described briefly below.

*Uncertainty avoidance*: the degree to which a community or corporation depend on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events.

*Power distance*: the degree to which the society tolerates and approves of authority, status differences, and prestige benefits

*Institutional collectivism*: The degree to which organizational and institutional practices incite and praise collective allocation of assets and shared action.

*In-group collectivism*: The degree to which individuals convey pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or communities.

*Gender egalitarianism*: The degree to which a group or a society lessens gender disproportion.

*Assertiveness*: The degree to which individuals are firm, provocative, and forceful in their connection with others.

*Future orientation*: The extent to which individuals participate in future-oriented behaviours, such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification.

*Performance orientation*: The degree to which a collective incites and rewards members of a society for performance enhancement and superiority.

*Humane orientation*: The degree to which a group urges and rewards individuals for being just, selfless, charitable, compassionate, and sympathetic to others.

(House et al., 2004; Northouse, 2019)

The measuring of the cultural behaviors within the GLOBE study subsequently resulted in the classification of 21 different types of leadership, which in turn have then been subdivided into what the research team calls the six global leadership clusters (House et al., 2004).

These six leadership clusters have been defined as:

- *Compelling/value-centered leadership*: which incorporates a leader's capability to stimulate, persuade and encourage team members, and anticipate great achievements.
- *Team-focused leadership*: which underlines successful practices of team formation, employing a shared resolution or aspiration among individuals in a team.
- *Contributive leadership*: which depicts the extent to which involvement by team members in the decision-making is welcomed by leaders.
- *Benevolence-focused leadership*: which involves the degree of empathy and generosity.
- *Self-directive leadership*: which signifies the sovereign and personal leadership qualities.
- *Ego-defensive leadership*: Which aims to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of the individual team member, as well as the collective, by preserving and augmenting the reputation of the venture.

### **2.2.3. Entrepreneurial Leader: Required Capabilities**

Freeman and Siegfried (2015) argue that owner-managers of new ventures require three crucial abilities: strategic cogitation, edification, and self-assessment skills. Adding to the requisites of abilities possessed by successful entrepreneurial leaders, Renko et al. (2015) argues that persuasion and guidance of team members towards the joint business' goals is what characterizes an entrepreneurial leader, in the sense that they activate entrepreneurial behavior, meaning opportunity recognition and commercialization of potentially viable business opportunities. For the same investigation, the authors utilized and intended to validate the ENTRELEAD scale as an innovative measuring framework and learned that entrepreneurial leadership appears to be more conventional to adopt among leaders with experience in new venture creation than amongst leaders that do not have this experience.

Moreover, another academic articulates that within entrepreneurial leadership, it is the responsibility of the entrepreneurial leader to ask for opinions. When doing so, the leader needs to actively listen and welcome constructive criticism and advice. Furthermore, a good entrepreneurial leader gets stakeholders and buyers to trust in the entrepreneurial leader and the firm that the leader operates in, without weakening the venture's core vision (Ordu, 2020). Additionally, Renko et al. (2015) stated that the practice of entrepreneurial leadership is being exhibited to some extent within every firm, operating in whichever industry, regardless of the size and how long an organization has been in existence hitherto.

To be able to identify whether leadership within a firm is entrepreneurial, Ordu (2020) proposed three different levels of assessment, namely between (1) the behavioral traits of entrepreneurial leaders vs. traditional leaders, (2) the extent to which leaders can deal with perils and (3) the objectives and ambitions of entrepreneurs in terms of their venturing expeditions (Ordu, 2020).

Entrepreneurial leadership became subject to research as a phenomenon quite recently, whereas leadership has been well-researched for an extended time. The following section considers some of the traditional leadership styles that share some traits of entrepreneurial leadership. These traditional leadership styles will be contrasted with entrepreneurial leadership and thus disclosing the similarities and the differences between the two phenomena.

#### **2.2.4. Convergences and divergences between traditional and entrepreneurial leadership**

##### *Transformational Leadership*

Renko et al., (2015) argues that the transformational leadership style reveals some similarities in terms of characteristic elements and behaviors, but divulge some of the more apparent divergences, as transformational leaders tend to naturally be more enthralling, which make people want to follow the leader because of the way that this leader presents oneself and the organization that the leader represents. In contrast to the transformational leader, an entrepreneurial leader serves as an exemplar for intrinsic followers, often without knowing where to go or how to reach specific goals. In addition, transformative leadership commonly revolve around an assessment of oneself in terms of competencies and knowledge, whereas in entrepreneurial leadership, the leader also takes notice of the human resources present in the company, as well as the environmental and firm attributes (Antonatiks et al., 2006 as mentioned in Renko et al., 2015). A somewhat deviating view on transformational leadership has been shared by Shahraki and Bahraini (2013), stating that with this leadership type, the leader generally concentrates efforts on progressing and encouraging devotees, so that they may reap the benefits if achievements exceed the leader's initial beliefs.

##### *Autocratic Leadership and Democratic leadership*

Another traditional type of leadership is the autocratic leadership style, in which the individuals within a workforce have no voice when it comes to the firm's objectives and the strategy planning to accomplish organizational goals. Instead, the autocratic leader tries to maintain in

control of every aspect within the firm, often taking an exceptionally directive stance towards the workforce, a practice that has been proven to undesirably impacts emotions of individuals working with the leader and devastating connections (De Cremer, 2006; Caillier, 2020; Fiaz et al., 2017).

On the opposite side of this spectrum, is the democratic leadership style, which is characterized by the desire for involvement of the employees, asking for opinions and giving a voice to followers within the firm. This style can only exist within firms with flat hierarchies, allowing for employees to feel comfortable enough to actively share their opinions freely and act beyond the expectations of leaders (Ordu, 2020; Caillier, 2020; Fiaz et al., 2017).

### *Servant Leadership*

A further leadership tactic is the servant leadership approach, which focuses on seven fundamental behaviors which encourage this approach (Northouse, 2020). This approach proposes, amongst other things, that putting followers first and helping followers flourish and thrive and acting morally are some of the central behaviors. This type of leadership, supposedly, is influenced by the environment and culture and that this leadership style impacts performance and results on the personal, business, and communal level. Some criticism regarding this approach is that the notion appears to be rather idealistic (Gergen, 2006 as mentioned in Northouse, 2020; van Dierendonck, 2011).

### *Situational Leadership*

Finally, another well-known leadership approach is the situational leadership approach of Hersey and Blanchard (1969). This approach is constructed with both directive and supportive properties, which, according to the creators needs to be applied as the situation necessitates. It is mentioned that leaders that make use of this approach must assess the proficiency and level of devotion and should always match with the individual team members' requisites (Northouse, 2020)

## **2.3. Perception of Leadership**

Taking the previous assertions of into consideration, it becomes evident that leadership is not an exact science and that different opinions on the most effective leadership is a matter of perspective of the leader and the circumstances. The following section uncovers the aspects that shape the perception regarding leadership.

Kakabadse et al. (2018) articulates the importance to consider the context in which entrepreneurial activities, but also in which leadership takes place. Additionally, similarly to Tlaiss (2015), the authors concur that there is a need for a holistic framework, that considers the interrelation between the macro (e.g., national, and regional culture), meso (e.g., business culture) and micro influences (e.g., individual traits), as they are believed to all influence the context in which an entrepreneurial leader operates and thus affecting the leader's behavior. In line with the aforesaid, Miller (2018) found that there is a delicate boundary that separates culture and setting, mentioning that national culture heavily affects the operations of an organization, whereas national culture is a standalone concept, that can exist on its own, nurturing national circumstances. What is more, it is mentioned by Yusuf (2018) that moral values should be considered by leaders of organizations and needs to be instilled in the workforce, so that each individual works towards the same organizational goal. Thus, entrepreneurial leadership will be most effective and perceived as appropriate when the ethical values of the entrepreneurial leader and the firm in which the leader operates, and the morals of all team members are aligned. The opposite, however, is also true, as employees with mismatching values may inhibit the attainment of the venture's goals. Moreover, according to Kennedy et al. (2003) and Shafer (2006), as mentioned in Kakabadse et al. (2018), entrepreneurial leadership is subject to gender preconceptions, as the authors find that in the understanding of this concept, there is generally a fundamental when men or women are examined in the position as a leader.

Having exposed the perception regarding leadership within the food startups, assists in contrasting the ideal leadership as expressed by the entrepreneurial leaders with the current enactment. Furthermore, these previously explained perceptions of leadership are related to culture, which will be explicated on in the next parts.

## **2.4. Culture**

### *Business Culture in an International Setting*

Today's teams are different from the past. Businesses aim for more diverse teams and are often more internationally focused. Although organizations aim for diverse cultural backgrounds within an organization, there is no consent definition of the term 'culture' within an organization. Some academics consider culture as the "values shared by individuals from a human group (such as societies, nations and ethnic groups) that influence the perceptions,

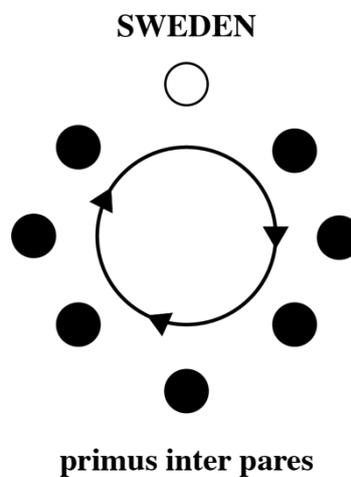
understandings and behaviors of individuals and social relationships that stand out among them in organizations” (Hofstede, 1980). However, Schaffer and Riordan (2003) define culture as two phenomenal perspectives of the ‘individual’ and ‘societal’. Within a diverse organization, “what matters most to collaboration is not the personalities, attitudes, or behavioral styles of team members. Instead, what teams need to thrive are certain “enabling conditions” (Haas & Mortensen, 2016). Since team members from diverse backgrounds often interpret a group's goals differently, it is important for organizations to choose people with a compelling direction, strong structure, supportive context, shared mindset (Haas and Mortensen, 2016). Within an international organization, the problems within dispersed teams are mainly due to having differences in the availability of resources. Therefore, it is important to not choose team members based on cultural backgrounds, but rather look at the culture’s preferred decision employment setting which is necessary for “*successfully engaging in intercultural business interactions*” (Glazer & Karpati, 2014, p 25). In contrast to this statement, Radziszewska (2014) argues that understanding a national culture is a strong determinant of the differences in the levels of entrepreneurial pursuits internationally. Furthermore, Gupta, MacMillan & Surie. (2004) argue that the differences in power distances between cultures, as well as the enabling conditions, such as technology, expertise and funding can hugely influence the level of entrepreneurial leadership in cultures.

### *Business Culture in a Swedish Setting*

Analyzing the Swedish business culture, a survey conducted (among 100 Swedish businesspeople) among the compilation of their values yielded the following: conscientiousness, loyalty, equality, love of nature, kindness, honesty, tolerance, love of peace, cleanliness, and modesty (Lewis, 2015). In addition, Swedish cultural values relate to high indulgence and individualism but low on masculinity (Hofstede, 2020). As the Swedes are part of a femininity society, they are seen as a caring society focusing more on the interpersonal aspects, quality of life, the physical environment, rendering services and nurturance (Hofstede, 2020). Their caring culture is even shown in the business environment as a Swedish law the ‘Co-determination at Work Act’ (MBL) stipulates that all important decisions must be discussed with all staff members before being implemented. The Swedes believe the rationale that when people are informed, that employees are more motivated to work and perform better. Despite their caring culture, Swedes’ behavior in the business environment can be an obstacle when working with competitive cultural environments. Furthermore, their avoidance of competition with others in a business environment as well as avoiding choosing sides and

conflict and highly relying on team decisions, often leads to delayed decisions and many frustrations with other cultures (Lewis, 2006).

Regarding Swedish leadership, as unusual in comparison to most countries around the globe, the Swedish concept of leadership differs greatly to other countries and their approach is rather ‘lagom’ and base their values on equality. As shown in **Figure 1**, a Swedish leader or manager sees themselves equal to the other people within the team and everyone is as important regardless of their position in the company (Lewis, 2006). (Refer to **appendix 4** for further explanation on the different cultural leadership styles in relation to the interviewees’ cultural backgrounds)



*Figure 1: The Swedish Leadership style adapted from Lewis (2006)*

## 2.5. Multi-active, Linear-active and Reactive Cultures

Due to globalization of world businesses, coming with the complexities of merging cultures within a company, knowledge of cultural differences is increasingly growing among leaders. Moreover, complexities in leadership, planning, decision making, recruitment, etc. all originate from different individual behaviors that originate from the diversity of nationalities involved within a company.

Furthermore, the Lewis Model has analyzed such behaviors and has categorized it in three characteristics: linear active, multi-active and reactive (see **Table 1**). Despite every person possessing behavioral traits from each section, the Lewis Model helps to analyze a person’s dominant factors, which is somehow related to culture.

### *Multi-active*

Multi-active people are seen as people orientated people who spontaneously like to do multiple things at the same time. These behavioral traits are often paired from the regions of Southern Europe, South America, India, Pakistan, and Arabs among other cultures in the Middle East (Lewis, 2015). Relating multi-active behaviors to leadership, previous studies revealed that Latin American countries value charismatic/value-based, team-oriented, and self-protective leadership most, whereas participation and humane-oriented factors are very significant (Northouse, 2020). In addition, a successful leader is somewhat self-serving, collaborative, and inspiring whereas leaders need to show interest in others and participate in discussion when making decisions.

### *Linear-active*

Linear active cultures are people with great listening skills and interests in other's opinions and stories. The behavioral traits are low on improvident action and ideas to mature. Furthermore, such behaviors are often experienced among North Americans, Brits, Australians, New Zealand, and Northern Europeans. Regarding leadership, these countries aim highly for charismatic/value-based leadership and participative leadership while being diplomatic and independent. Furthermore, inspiration and involvement of others in decision making are key, though they do not aim for compassionate, status or self-centered attributes (Northouse, 2020). Though Germany is positioned as having linear active behaviors in the Lewis model (Lewis, 2006), their style of leadership differs greatly. Moreover, ideal leadership in Germany is very participative while also being inspirational and independent.

### *Reactive*

Reactive people dislike discussions and have strong preferences for listening rather than acting. Reactive behavior is often paired with Asian cultures (except for India). Successful leadership in cultures having reactive behaviors are often linked to self-protective leadership and team-oriented leadership (Northouse, 2020). In contrast to more linear-active behaviors, participative leadership is not important whereas decisions are made independent without input of others.

Table 1: Cultural Behavior Characteristics (Lewis, 2006)

Linear-Active	Multi-Active	Reactive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk half the time</li> <li>• Does one thing at the time</li> <li>• Plans ahead step by step</li> <li>• Polite but direct</li> <li>• Partly conceals feelings</li> <li>• Confronts with logic</li> <li>• Dislikes losing</li> <li>• Rarely interrupt</li> <li>• Job oriented</li> <li>• Ticks to facts</li> <li>• Truth before diplomacy</li> <li>• Sometimes impatient</li> <li>• Limited body language</li> <li>• Respects officialdom</li> <li>• Separates the social and professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks most of the time</li> <li>• Does several things at once</li> <li>• Plans grand outline only</li> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Displays feelings</li> <li>• Confronts emotionally</li> <li>• Has good excuses</li> <li>• Often interrupts</li> <li>• People oriented</li> <li>• Feelings before facts</li> <li>• Flexible truth</li> <li>• Impatient</li> <li>• Unlimited body language</li> <li>• Seeks out key person</li> <li>• Mixes the social and professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens most of the time</li> <li>• Reacts to partners' action</li> <li>• Looks at general principles</li> <li>• Polite, indirect</li> <li>• Conceals feelings</li> <li>• Never confronts</li> <li>• Must not lose face</li> <li>• Doesn't interrupt</li> <li>• Very people orientated</li> <li>• Statements are promises</li> <li>• Diplomacy over truth</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Subtle body language</li> <li>• Uses connections</li> <li>• Connects the social and professional</li> </ul>

By analyzing the various global leadership styles and analyzing the nine behavioral dimensions presented from the GLOBE report, the researchers were able to analyze the transforming behaviors of the foreign interviewees living in Sweden and comparing such transforming behaviors using the Lewis model. Furthermore, through comparing results of the interviewees' answers (those that were categorized on Hofstede's six cultural dimensions to cross cultural management (see next chapter on cross-culturalism) and its transformation of behaviors over time, the results of environmental change per culture have been identified and recorded.

## 2.6. Cross-culturalism in an international setting

Multi-culturalism in organizations is increasing. As diversity is highly encouraged in the Swedish ecosystem for long term successful outcomes, companies today aim for demographic and informational diversity (Brattström, 2020). Hofstede proposed the six cultural dimensions to cross cultural management: power distance (PD), uncertainty avoidance (UA), individualism/collectivism (I/C), masculinity/femininity (M/F), long term/short term orientation (LTO/STO) and indulgence) and the level of participative decision making (PDM) within the organizations studied (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). As diverse teams are much more pro-subgrouping than homogeneous teams (Brattström, 2020), leadership styles need to be tailored to organizations needs and company culture. Doing so, an organization needs to

measure the different cultural backgrounds in an organization adjusting company culture on employees' diversity.

As Ely and Thomas (2020) mention: “*learning from cultural differences is more likely once leaders have created trust, begun to dismantle systems of discrimination and subordination, and embraced a range of styles*”. For this reason, understanding employees' backgrounds results in a high level of employee participation and will benefit the organization's modernized work systems and obtain benefits in terms of productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness (Euromonitor, 2013). Based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, research claims that “indulgence and masculinity are the most influential cultural dimensions” for success in cross cultural management (Valverde-Moreno, Torres-Jimenez & Lucia-Casademunt, 2020). As the Swedish culture scores high on indulgence and individualism but low on masculinity (Hofstede, 2020), Sweden has a femininity culture and therefore aims for ‘*lagom*’ and an uncompetitive environment. This is a significant touch point for establishing an international organizational culture within the Swedish working environment. It is therefore significant for foreign entrepreneurs to be aware of the Swedish cultural values in leadership to adapt well to the business culture, be *lagom* and successful in communication in the Swedish startup scene.

## **2.7. SMEs and Startups and leadership**

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are firms from which the number of employees falls under a certain limit (Harvie & Lee, 2005). According to the OECD (2013), SMEs, are not all the same, a statement that is echoed by Bijaoui (2017), who argues that the growth rate, the size in terms of the number of employees and the valuation of a venture plays an important role within the classification of SMEs (e.g., gazelles and unicorns). The same author stated that the performance of small ventures in European countries differs from case to case, with only 8 nations contributing to job creation after the economic crisis in 2008. Deijl, de Kok & Veldhuis-Van Essen (2013) found that 85% of the employment opportunities that are created, can be ascribed to ventures comprising 1-250 individuals.

When considering Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as a concept of research, it is mentioned that there generally is a scarcity of financial resources, equipment, and human resources, especially in the early startup phase of new venture (Townsend, Busenitz & Arthurs, 2010, as mentioned in Simić, 2020). Furthermore, when linking this to leadership, it is believed that leadership is one of most important elements within new ventures as it appears to fulfil an

arbitrating function, but also because of the indistinct boundaries between managers and leaders (Watson et al., 1994 as mentioned in Simić, 2020). Additionally, within SMEs, an entrepreneur is considered as the inducing force for novelty, opportunity recognition and value creation (Gupta et al., 2004). However, Leitch and Volery. (2017) expressed some criticism towards the existing academic works regarding entrepreneurial leadership in SMEs, as entrepreneurs are often portrayed as bold individuals, that establish new ventures, against all odds, conquering the market fearlessly, bypassing all risks as they proceed.

When describing the role of leaders within SMEs, Kuratko (2007) alleged that leaders require both entrepreneurial and management skills and that properly applying entrepreneurial leadership within SMEs results in the creation of employment opportunities and economic development and allows for new capabilities to be formed that assist in dealing with the volatility of today's environment and the continuity of organizations.

For this paper, the 6 global leadership styles will be measured, using the 9 behavioral dimensions, as presented in the GLOBE report. These facets will later be put in context with the use of the Lewis model, comparing the primary data collected with the multi- active, linear active and reactive cultural behaviors, as will be presented shortly.

Now that the relevant concepts have been displayed, the following segment will explain the methodological design for this study.

### **3. Methodological Design**

This chapter contains the methodological design for this thesis. It starts off with the empirical context. After this, the research strategy and methods will be presented, followed by the population and sample selection. Furthermore, the methods of analysis of the data, the duration of the data collection and the limitations for this research will be presented. Sweden, known to be one of the most successful countries globally in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship (Hollanders, 2020); the researchers were able to answer on how foreigner entrepreneurs enact leadership in food startups in Sweden using the GLOBE reports, the Lewis model and analyzing the different types of leadership.

#### **3.1. Empirical Context: Sweden**

Sweden is globally known as the second most innovative country in the world (Hollanders, 2020). Furthermore, the country offers high governmental support, focuses on gender equality and is known as one of the leading countries for startups while providing supportive environments for entrepreneurs (Peak Capital, 2020). As investors in Sweden help businesses grow at different stage of their growth and 57% of wealth stimulating growth comes from private investors (Peak Capital, 2020), foreigners see Sweden as an attractive place to begin as startup and grow their business.

In addition, as Sweden is globally known to be as one of the best places to start a food startup (Nordic Foodtech, 2021), having great focus on technology and sustainability, Sweden provides many networking opportunities as well as information regarding tech and plant-based products. Though Sweden is generally small in population, the Swedes share the cultural traits that make them more likely to collaborate of having high trust in one another relative to other countries around the world, resulting to stimulation in flexibility and new ideas in the workplace (Semuels, 2017). As startups in Sweden generally have a relatively fast growth and a high survival rate (Calvino, 2020), and the Swedes are used to multi-culturalism and are tolerant towards foreigners (European Commission, 2019); it is of interest for foreigner food entrepreneurs to start their venture in Sweden.

### **3.2. Research Strategy and methods**

This thesis comprises a combination of *secondary research*, which involved reviewing and contrasting academic sources and a report from GLOBE regarding cultural dimensions, the Lewis model and leadership styles. The primary research is of *qualitative nature*, in which the data has been collected by conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews, where the participants disclose more subjective information, explaining personal opinions and experiences in a more dynamic manner. Using semi-structured interviews, the researchers created a situation in which it allowed for receiving more specific insights, rather than only covering the general topic questions (Keller & Conradin, 2019).

As extensive research has already been conducted regarding leadership styles, as posited in the GLOBE report and cultural contexts, such as the *Lewis Model*, this study is referred as an abductive research; also known as a form of reasoning where an empirical fact cannot be clarified by an existing theory and the research process begins with unexpected facts or challenges (Yin, 2003). In other words, incomplete observations in the research have resulted to conclusions with the best possible prediction. Abductive research is important as it known to be the only logical operation allowing to focus on creativity and introducing new ideas (O'Reilly, 2016). By using existing theories of the abductive research, we are encouraging the result of the interviewees as a starting point for the deductive study.

Based on our chosen labels of research, the researchers will investigate the current and desired situation of leading a team expressing different behaviors (multi-active, linear-active, and reactive) within the Swedish environment. By using Otter.ai, the researchers were able to record and automatically transcribe interviewee answers. Furthermore, the tools used for the categorizing and analyzing of the interviewees' answers data was NVIVO. Furthermore, the different topics of the conversations were categorized in the following subjects: performance orientation, assertiveness, future orientation, human orientation, institutional collectivism, in group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Using the nine labels inspired by the GLOBE report, the researchers can clearly identify the similarities and differences of the individual leadership traits, relate their behaviors to their cultural background and international experiences and compare it to the Swedish entrepreneurial environment. In that way, it becomes more apparent what level of adaptation is required of the entrepreneurial leaders, for each individual dimension.

Based on the differences found between the current and desired situation on leadership, the researchers are narrowing the gap between the different styles of leadership within startups in a cross-cultural context. Furthermore, this paper intends to gauge the level of adaptation to the Swedish business culture, by entrepreneurial leaders within food startups founded in Sweden. Five leadership teams with multi-active, linear-active, and reactive cultural behaviors have been selected and interviewed.

The intention behind the selection of qualitative research is to disclose the initial difference of international leadership experience and the adaptation to the Swedish business culture by non-native entrepreneurs within food startups in Sweden. By using existing academic literature in combination with our own findings, we were able to narrow the gap between existing theories, academic literature, and practice, supporting and understanding the effectiveness of leadership styles within heterogeneous teams in a cross-cultural context. It was imperative for the interviewees to share their thoughts and feelings freely, so that the connections and disparities between theory and practice would become evident. This would then allow us to map out the most suitable leadership practices for non-native entrepreneurs, coming to Sweden to find their startups, to effectively lead their teams and instigate entrepreneurial behavior within the employees of startups, linking to a combination of abductive and deductive research.

Regarding the interviews, we conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews, based on the impression of having a regular day to day social dialogue, so that respondents are more eager to share information. To achieve this, the focus was placed on finding participants, that were leaders/founders of a food startup in Sweden. One thing that had also been considered for this study is that the English language is not the native language of the participants and therefore all questions have been formulated as clearly and unambiguously as possible, to prevent miscommunications.

In the following paragraph the researchers will elaborate on the population size of the qualitative interviews as well as the sample selection of the primary data.

### **3.3. Population and Sample Selection**

This research investigated food startups founded in Sweden. The scope of this research required interviewees of food startups founded in Sweden, having different cultural backgrounds and international professional experiences. Additionally, to avoid miscommunication between the

researchers and the interviewees, the official language in which the team communicates had to be English. In the end, five entrepreneurial leaders have been interviewed, for which the profiles have been presented in *Table 1*.

For this study, a combination of sampling methods has been applied to find suitable interviewees within Sweden. Firstly, *criterion sampling* has been applied, as the interviewees needed to have a different cultural background than the Swedish. Another criterion was that the interviewees would have experience in leading teams in an international context, other than the Swedish and that the interviewees must have had founded a startup operating in the food industry. Secondly, *convenience sampling* has been applied by making use of personal networks. This included personal networks on LinkedIn, the mentor pools of the Sten K. Johnson Centre for Entrepreneurship, as well as friends, family relatives and acquaintances. After conducting each interview, the researchers have asked interviewees for advice and recommendations to get in contact with other interviewees. Using *snowball sampling*, the researchers had to put minimal effort into finding suitable interviewees for the research. Furthermore, we enquired with Minq, Scienparc, Medical Village and Xplot to find interviewees for our project. In the end, for comparisons between the different leadership styles, we were able to conduct three interviews with people having a cultural background related to multi-active behaviors and two interviewees relating to linear-active behaviors.

*Table 2: Profiles of the Interviewees*

Interviewee	Nationality of founder	International Leadership experience in...	Gender	Type of food startup	N° of team members in startup	Found via / Referred by
INT1	German	Germany & Mexico	Female	Ecommerce	3	Personal Network
INT2	Italian	Italy & France	Female	Food-Science	2	Venture Lab
INT3	Indonesian	Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam & Laos	Male	Sustainable food development	4	Recommendation by INT1
INT4	Indian	India, Ireland & U.S.	Female	Alternative to paper drinking straws	5	Venture Lab
INT5	Iranian	U.K. & Denmark	Male	Upcycling of	2	Recommendation by INT2 and INT3

The table above presents the profiles of the interviewees. This has been done in a way that the anonymity of the interviewees is still guaranteed (as was agreed with the respondents). The male/female ratio of the interviewees that participated in this research was 40/60, meaning that it was relatively balanced out.

Below in *Figure 2*, the *Lewis Model* can be witnessed with the respondents being presented in this model, based on their native cultures.

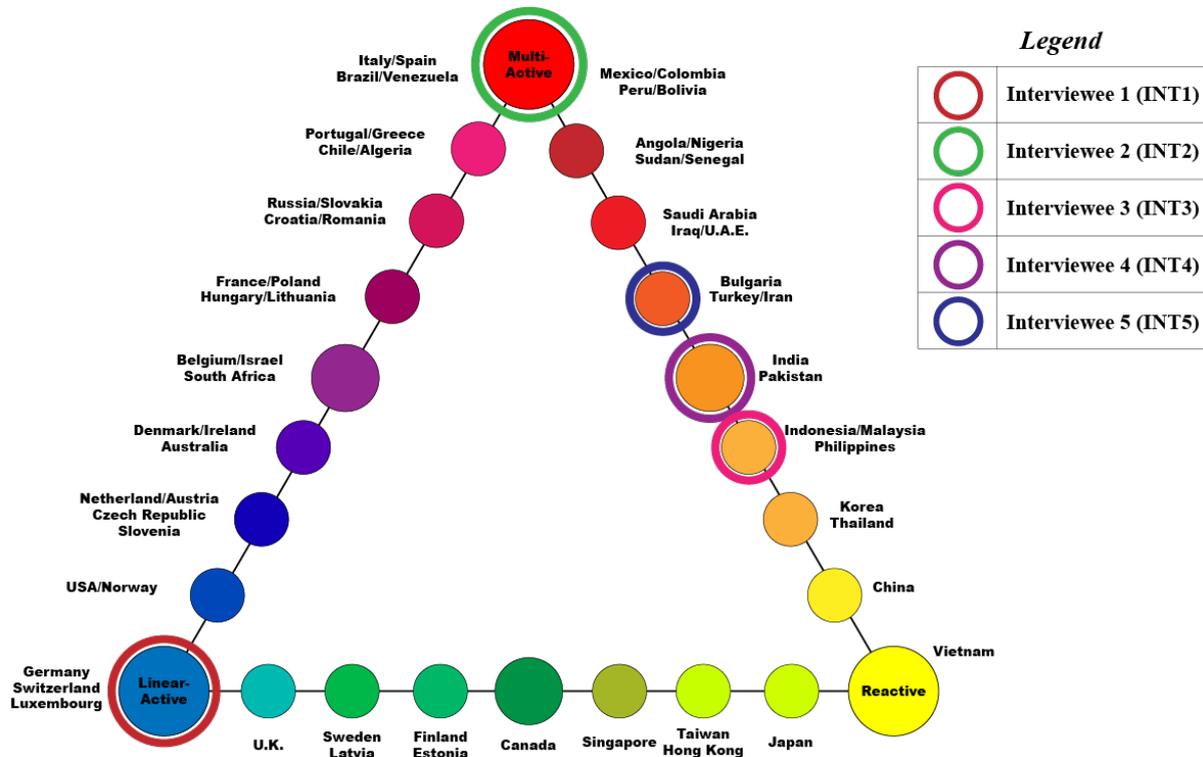


Figure 2: Respondents Position in Lewis Model, as presented by Lewis (2006)

### 3.4. Research Questions

Based on the MRQ and the literature review, two research questions have been formulated, which have been presented below. These research questions have been devised as the aim was to uncover what skills and experiences previous international leadership positions carried with them, prior to coming to Sweden, but also what learnings the entrepreneurial leaders acquired within the Swedish business environment. The importance for this research is for future foreign entrepreneurs who are considering starting a venture in the Swedish entrepreneurial business environment, more specifically on the food industry. For this reason, the researchers came up with the following research questions:

**MRQ: How do non-native entrepreneurs enact leadership in food startups founded in Sweden?**

Based on the main research question, two sub-research questions had been devised:

1. How does the non-native culture of Entrepreneurs affect the leadership style within startups they have founded in Sweden?
2. How does the Swedish business culture influence the way the non-native entrepreneurs lead startups in Sweden?

The results of the research questions will contribute to the existing academic research on entrepreneurship. As there is limited research on the Swedish entrepreneurial environment with regards to foreign entrepreneurs founding a startup in Sweden, the researchers want to further investigate the different styles of leadership regarding cultural behaviors. The research will be beneficial for academics that want to gain a deeper understand of the challenges that international entrepreneurs, starting their venture in the Swedish business environment, are facing. Therefore, this paper divulges possible cultural and behavioral challenges within the Swedish startup environment.

### **3.5. Recording and analyzing data**

The research comprised of a combination of deductive and abductive approaches. As we have used semi-structured interview questions to collect data, we devised a framework of themes to be covered in the research (see **Appendix 2**), though, we have formulated open questions, that allowed for sharing examples, experiences and new topics and ideas to arise during the interview. Furthermore, the deductive approach is related to the planned questions within the research, whereas unplanned topics covered within the dialogue are related to the abductive approach, as incomplete observations will result to the best possible prediction for concluding results.

The recording of the interviews was performed using Zoom and the integrated recording system of Otter.ai, an automatic, online transcription program. By doing so, we were able to capture audio, visuals, and a narrative script of the conversations, avoiding the failure of missing important data. As the recordings were then uploaded on Otter.ai, the researchers had to manually improve any errors in the transcripts. Furthermore, the interview data has been coded using NVIVO, which assisted in structurally analyzing the qualitative data.

Based on the five interviewee results, the researchers were able to further analyze the behaviors of mostly linear-active and multi-active food startup founders that were founded in Sweden.

For further information regarding the different leadership styles relating to cultural behaviors of the interviewees, see *appendix 4*.

### **3.6. Duration of research**

The duration of total research was three months, including two weeks of contacting the incubators and accelerators to find respondents and two weeks of collecting data based on qualitative interviews in Sweden. The data has been collected from the 27<sup>th</sup> of March until the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April.

### **3.7. Limitations of research**

As with every other research, some limitations exist within this study as well. These limitations will be outlined in this section.

First and foremost, the biggest limitation within this research is the time constraint. As there was but little time to collect primary data, the richness of the data is not as vast as could be when the study would run for a longer period. Moreover, the researchers are dependent on the respondents' availability of time.

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that, due to the nature of this research, a limitation would be the generalizability. Only a small sample has been selected to participate in this research. This even though there are several commonalities that can be found in the data.

Within the five interview founders of food startups, the researchers have interviewed three interviewees with multi-active cultural behaviors and two interviewees with linear-active cultural behaviors. As the research is missing a participant with reactive cultural behaviors, the research is limited to covering only two out of three aspects of the Lewis model.

Taking the gender of the interviewees into account, 40% of the interviewees is male and 60% of the interviewees is female. For this reason, gender is not balanced for this study, though this difference is not significant, as only a small sample had been selected for this paper.

For this study, the researchers have only considered entrepreneurs operating in the food industry, without considering whether these findings would also apply to non-native entrepreneurs operating in different industries.

Furthermore, another limitation within this research are the regulations regarding privacy. Accelerators and Incubators, such as Minc, Xplot and Venture Lab are, as per the EU GDPR not allowed to share contact details from startups and/or their founders without consent, which means that communication cannot proceed as smoothly as desired, as the researchers are dependent on these organizations to share the announcement with the food startups.

The last limitation is related to the period of researching, during the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers only conducted interviews using Zoom. Interviewing through video calling sometimes led to small technical complications which may have influenced conversation dynamics while interviewing.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Findings

The following section comprises of the empirical data collected during the primary data collection of this research, as well as the findings. The data that had been collected was split up into nine cultural dimensions, as was devised by GLOBE, which will also be presented in a similar fashion. These dimensions are *uncertainty avoidance*, *assertiveness*, *gender differentiation*, *performance orientation*, *human orientation*, *power distance*, *institutional collectivism*, *in-group collectivism* and *future orientation*. Additionally, the interviewees (referred to as *INTX*) have been asked for their personal advice for non-natives that wish to start up their ventures in Sweden. The findings are presented per interviewee, with a grid as per the cultural dimensions presented in the GLOBE report and the Lewis Model, in which the dimensions are placed into context.

#### 4.1.1. Interviewee 1

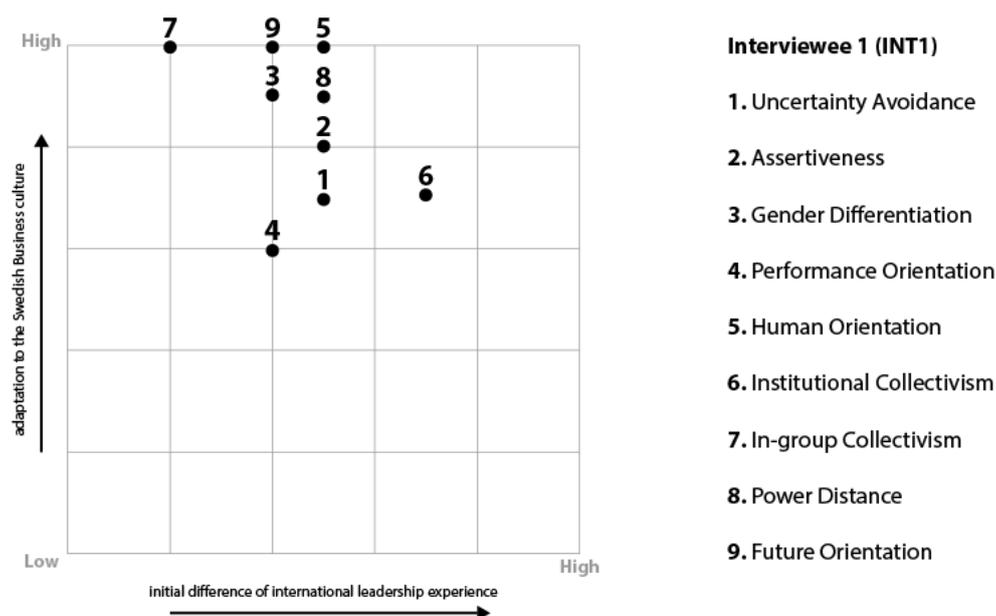


Figure 3: Leadership Behavior Grid INT1

*“Germans look a lot like at security and everything else, like financial stability, and insurance, this is really important. So, I would say they’re not really willing to take big risks”*

– Interviewee 1

*INT1* explains that in terms of **uncertainty avoidance** and risk-taking behavior, she used to plan everything very carefully and has also witnessed that team members within Germany tend

to look for security, like orderliness and make use of insurances to cover any possible risk. Her experience in Sweden made her, in her own words “*more relaxed*”, though she mentions that she still tries to get as much security as possible and still plans things ahead.

Regarding the **assertiveness**, *INTI* mentions that it is uncommon to go against the word of the leaders in Germany. Shared a personal experience about a relative that is too afraid to point out the things that go wrong, as well as another experience in Germany where the interns were reluctant to have a conversation with one another, when she as a leader would be around, even though she did not have a problem with personal relationships whilst working. The experience gathered in Mexico created more awareness of this, as the boundary between professional and personal life are blurrier. She voices that when conflicts arise, they are addressed and resolved immediately within the startup, but became aware that the German directness and the tone of voice are very important aspects to consider when conducting business in Sweden.

*“(...) I always try to address the problem and to talk about it. And I think in my first team, we waited a bit too long to address these [problems]. I don’t know why we didn’t address it in the past (...)”*

*– Interviewee 1*

When being asked about **gender equality** in Germany, *INTI* asserts that she was initially not aware of the differences in genders. However, *INTI* became more aware of the fact that more men have higher positions in Germany and had taken this for granted at first. The experience in Sweden showed her a different perspective that she seemed to embrace very much, where men and women are more seen as equals. She aims to find more male team members soon to balance the male/female ratio.

Furthermore, *INTI* did not believe in the mentality of Germans on **performance**, where people are expected to see things through, even though it does not match with the future goals of the individual.

*“I think in Germany, it’s really bad to do something wrong (...) if you did something which is not normal, or which is not the right way of doing things, then you always have to explain yourself”*

*– Interviewee 1*

Though it does not seem that *INTI* adapted too much to the Swedish business culture. Related to the **performance orientation**, *INTI* expresses that she feels that the international leadership

experience has made her realize that giving praise and acknowledging the success of the individual within the startup is extremely important for people to be proud of the workplace and want to reach new heights within the company. Furthermore, though *INT1* expressed the feeling that team members should be rewarded for achievements by giving compliments, there has not been any mention about distribution of resources.

*“I think it’s really important, as a leader, to reflect on the work of your employees [and team members] and also talk about it with them.”*

**– Interviewee 1**

The native culture of *INT1* created a foundation, but experiences in Mexico and Sweden made her aware of the importance of having people share their feedback. She attributes this to a flatter hierarchy in Sweden.

*“I think it’s a really depends on the hierarchy. And, yeah, I think in general, I think that there’s a flatter hierarchy [in Sweden], so it’s easier, probably, to address these things”*

**– Interviewee 1**

Lastly, *INT1* has always been carefully planning the future, but feels that the experience in Mexico and now also Sweden has made her more relaxed and be more acceptant of the events in life and within the startup which she cannot control.

#### 4.1.2. Interviewee 2

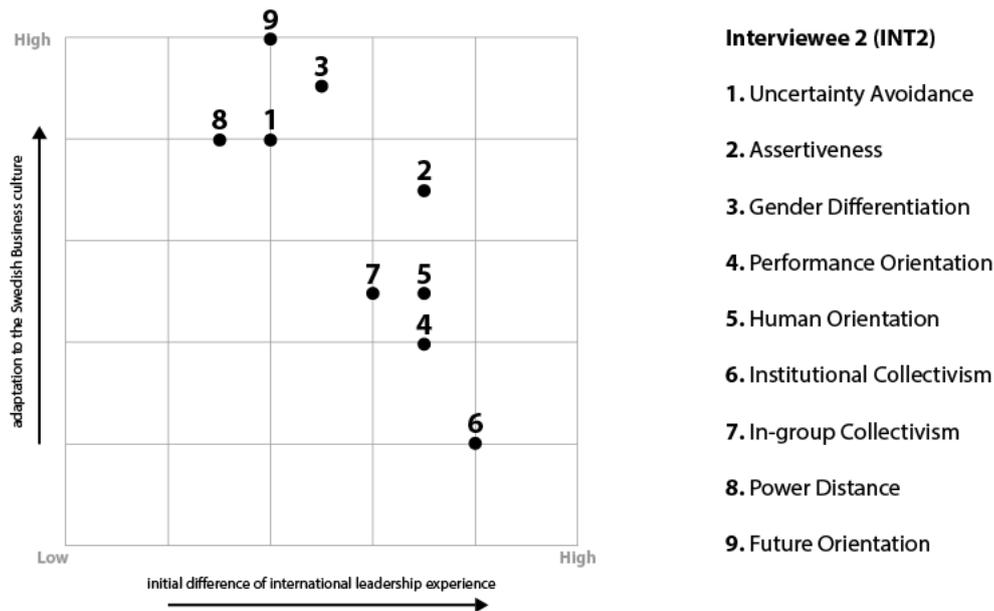


Figure 4: Leadership Behavior Grid INT2

With regards to *uncertainty avoidance*, the interviewee’s view, based on her international leadership experiences abroad, had moderate influence on her. Though, when moving to Sweden, INT2’s perspective on this subject became highly influenced when starting a new venture. Furthermore, she mentions that:

*“(…) moving to another country and trying to start up your own business is a huge risk” already, whereas [Swedes], when it comes to developing their startup (….) they are embedded in a certain welfare system… they have some sort of stability, which may not be the case for foreigners”*

– *Interviewee 2*

For this reason, the Swedish business culture had a high impact on INT2. Also, regarding *assertiveness* and *gender differentiation*, INT2 was highly influenced by Sweden (with a special focus on gender equality). As her previous international leadership and cultural background encouraged the interviewee to be confrontational and rather disagree to others using many emotions, she feels that Sweden has influenced her greatly in showing less emotions but state rather factual opinions when disagreeing with one another. Regarding the subject of gender differentiation, the interviewee feels that Sweden has much more respect toward the women gender in comparison to Italy and France where she lived before. In Italy gender equality is even “a swear word” whereas diversity in gender in leadership roles is not even considered in her previous working experiences in Italy:

*“I also experienced sexism in an, in a very small startup like ours like when I was working there (...) there have been these episodes of microaggressions where they would make comments on our appearance or there was this other guy, the cofounder, would even sometimes come behind us and like touch us on shoulders and I was like: What the (\*) is this shit?!”*

**- Interviewee 2**

INT2 explains that gender equality and respect towards women is still an issue in Italy whereas she feels that the men in Sweden are very different in this prospect and very much respect women regardless of their power in the business environment.

In the case of **performance orientation**, the level of international leadership experience as well as Swedish leadership was medium and therefore indicating that she did get influenced by the Swedish environment. Furthermore, she states that the Swedish environment is very supportive where there is no anxiety to failure but rather encouragement. In comparison to her own background in Italy, she feels that the Italian culture is:

*“(...) a lot of a blame culture... I have never liked it in my work” (...) the Swedish culture has encouraged my strong traits to be more of a harmonizer... if I literally see confusion in people’s face because someone not really following, or you can see that they are tired and need a break... I will try to understand what other people are saying and help them.... I like to understand what is happening in that specific moment with people”*

**- Interviewee 2**

Whereas she explains that in Italy, people would be less helpful, and people would rather blame each other than helping each other out in business situations.

Regarding **human orientation**, the interviewee has not much been influenced by the Swedish environment. Comparing the interviewees setting of Italy and Sweden, she finds it a big difference how people making encouragements to getting to know each other. Furthermore, in Italy it is common for professionals to invite colleagues home for dinner, when interested in the other person and getting to know people on a different level. In Sweden, on the other side, people are more reluctant to invite colleagues to their homes when not knowing each other, neither will they go out for dinner but will rather do a ‘fika’. The interviewee says:

*“When you eat with the people it’s like, you open yourself to other people, this is how I see it. So, I mean, we have a term in Italian, it is a companion,*

*which means comes from Latin, like you share bread. You share bread with people. Companionship and eating together is really kind of the same thing”*

**- Interviewee 2**

The interviewee’s explanation of building personal relationships involving foods and beverages as well as inviting people to their personal property, illustrates the cultural difference between the Swedes and Italians. Furthermore, the interviewee’s Italian roots in this aspect are so strong that she has not yet been influenced by the Swedish business setting in this aspect, though she is not sure whether this is related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The element of **power distance** significantly influenced the interviewee as an entrepreneur now living in Sweden. Moreover, based on her international experiences in Italy and Sweden, she was very much used to the hierarchical structure. Especially of what the interviewee experienced in Italy, people must listen to their boss and there is not much information coming from the lower part of the hierarchical structure, which is a big contrast of her experiences she had in a startup when working in Sweden. She mentions:

*“Sometimes it’s more like your boss gives you orders, and you just execute them and you are kind of living in fear. That’s not my experience in the startup in Sweden. Here we are really focusing a lot on developing our skills and like even when we maybe had some troubles, we are always very calm and tell a few things in a very nice way, giving direction and leaving a lot of room to explore and be creative. This is not common in Italy... in Italy it’s execution of an organizational vision, they are not contributors”*

**- Interviewee 2**

The interviewee described her personal character as rebellious, because she used to speak up for her mind in the Italian business environment. Though both environments in which she gathered professional experience are complete opposites, the interviewee mentions to have behaved differently from the norm in her native culture, thus there was no to minimal change in behavior when moving to Sweden. However, the startup experience allowed for witnessing and executing leadership from different perspectives.

The degree to which organizations and societal institutional practices encourage and reward, also known as **institutional collectivism**, had low impact on INT2 when moving to Sweden in relation to her experiences abroad in France. Furthermore, she mentions that competition is not visible in the Swedish culture, but people rather go forward in the organization rather emerging.

As a foreigner however, the interviewee feels that emerging is key for moving forward in Sweden:

*“I think it’s really the fact that we have to emerge as foreigners here. We have to be different; we have to be excellent. This is something always in the back of my head, because we have to be favored, when we get to the workplace, we have to emerge and be different, we have to be super special”*

**- Interviewee 2**

This ***institutional collectivism*** is somehow also related to the ***in-group collectivism*** as the impression that in Sweden, the collective is far stronger than the individual and that change is difficult to achieve individually. This has made *INT2* aware of the fact that that acting differently than the ordinary norms set by the dominant culture, will make the dominant culture treat you as an outcast.

In the case of ***future orientation***, the interviewee was more influenced by the Swedish business culture than her international experiences Italy. Interpreting the interviewees view on the Italian aspect of such, the researchers got the impression that in general people in the food industry do not plan well ahead in their competitive strategies and if wanting to compete as a startup they compare themselves with big brands. In comparison to Sweden, the interviewee feels that startups have more of a chance for survival: “a lot of restaurants can still receive governmental money for funding and then if the restaurant does not leave for 20 years, who cares”.

### 4.1.3. Interviewee 3

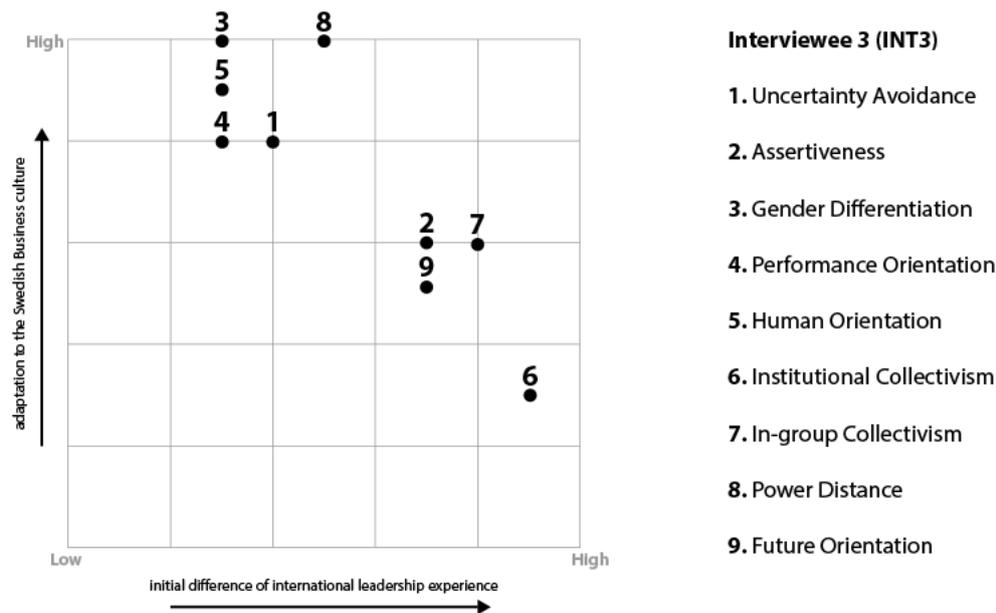


Figure 5: Leadership Behavior Grid INT3

For this entrepreneur the interviewees view on *uncertainty avoidance* were initially very different in his previous international experiences before coming to Sweden. Furthermore, the interviewee explains that

*“Indonesian people are actually more willing to take risks in a sense that they don’t have that much to lose either”*

**- Interviewee 3**

Though INT3 feels that the Swedish environment very much encourages the entrepreneurial environment and encourages people to take risks, the interviewee does feel that in Asia people take more risks as they don’t have a social system that supports people:

*“My life is full of uncertainty in a sense that when I lived in Thailand, I did not really have any safety net (...) I did not have any legal security there (...) I’ve been living day by day and that experience is now helping me a lot in my current startup as well (...) I’ve been experiencing all this uncertainty in Thailand, and now in Sweden... I am basically just repeating the same thing again but now I feel more prepared, because I have been there before”*

**- Interviewee 3**

In other words, though the circumstances generally differ greatly comparing the Asian countries to Sweden, INT3 has mostly been influenced by his previous entrepreneurial

experiences and he the Swedish business environment influenced him to an extent that he feels more secure in taking entrepreneurial risks.

Regarding *assertiveness*, the interviewee has not much been influenced by the Swedish business culture, as the interviewee mentions that:

*“In Indonesia they tend to avoid the conflict, because in Thailand, they believe in the peace and harmony and all of this, Buddhism culture in a sense, so eh... in any way possible, we try to avoid any arguments. So, everything must be discussed and everything has to be agreed, and everything has to be solved properly without any offence or something”*

**- Interviewee 3**

As the interviewee feels that this approach is very similar to the Swedish culture, he feels that the Swedish business environment has not much influenced him. Though the assertiveness has not much influenced him, *gender differentiation* in Sweden was a big eyeopener for INT3. His previous working experiences in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Laos, and Vietnam had a different cultural perspective towards the women gender. INT3 mentions:

*“In Indonesia you have to show your masculinity if you want to be considered as a leader (...) I just felt like, instead of gender as in sex is more into like the trait of the gender itself, which is the patriarchal (...) you have to be straightforward, and you have to be able to control your employees and subordinates. It’s really masculinity trait in a sense that we don’t really do anything when it comes to the gender... the culture is basically created for men so be prepared act like a man if you want a leadership role”*

**- Interviewee 3**

As the Asian countries are rather build on masculinity, INT3 was very influenced by the Swedish business culture in gender equality on the workforce and as an entrepreneur, founder, and CEO of a company himself he finds gender equality significant for having a healthy company structure.

About performance *orientation*, the interviewee also experienced a great transition in influence as the Swedes have a different approach looking at failure. Furthermore, INT3 states that in the Asian countries people need to exactly follow the rules of what is written in their job contract whereas in Sweden people are rather free to an extent that they initiate themselves to drive their own performance. Though INT3 is very much influenced by his previous Asian orientated

working experiences of clear goal and expectation setting, the Swedish business environment has influenced him on assisting each other and to achieve performance as a team. Now in his current company the company culture has been a mix of his Asian and Swedish working experiences:

*“We have clear goal and expectation setting and we say let’s do our best and then if you cannot make it, then we’re going to help each other. So, (...) that’s the mentality that we have is helping us a lot to, to achieve the performance that we want”.*

**- Interviewee 3**

Regarding **human orientation**, the interviewee was very much influenced by the Swedish business culture on leadership. As from his perspective on the Asian business culture:

*“it’s a big no for meeting each other outside working hours.... Because like in Indonesia, it’s more into putting your own structure to not talk outside the contracts”.*

**- Interviewee 3**

As for the Swedish business environment, he mentions that people are willing to meet each other outside of company hours on a friendship level. Now the entrepreneur has its own venture in Sweden, he feels that his colleagues are also his friends, though they do not meet outside of the working hours as they have long working hours and already “*hang out*” while working.

The element of **power distance** also influenced the entrepreneur now living in Sweden. Moreover, the values the acceptance of openly sharing feedback is something that is prevalent in the Swedish business culture, but also mentions that his exertion of power within his venture and in employment are dependent on the sector and the context.

The degree to which organizations and societal institutional practices encourage and reward, also known as **institutional collectivism**, had low impact on the interviewee when moving to Sweden in relation to his previous professional experiences in the Asian countries. Furthermore, INT3 mentions that the Indonesian and Thai business culture are relatively like the Swedish business culture and therefore do not bring major influences in his behavior (as already described in the subject of being assertive). In this subject, the interviewee managed to fit in quite easily. This similar to the topic of **group collectivism**; INT3 learnt in previous experience that giving people ownership over tasks and responsibilities and thus delegating

responsibility adds to a sense of collectiveness amongst team members. This behavior has not changed during his time in Sweden as he continued to express the same behavior in the food startup in Sweden.

In the case of *future orientation*, the interviewee was not highly impacted by the Swedish future orientated behaviors such as planning and investing in the future and did consider strategies for his current startup.

#### 4.1.4. Interviewee 4

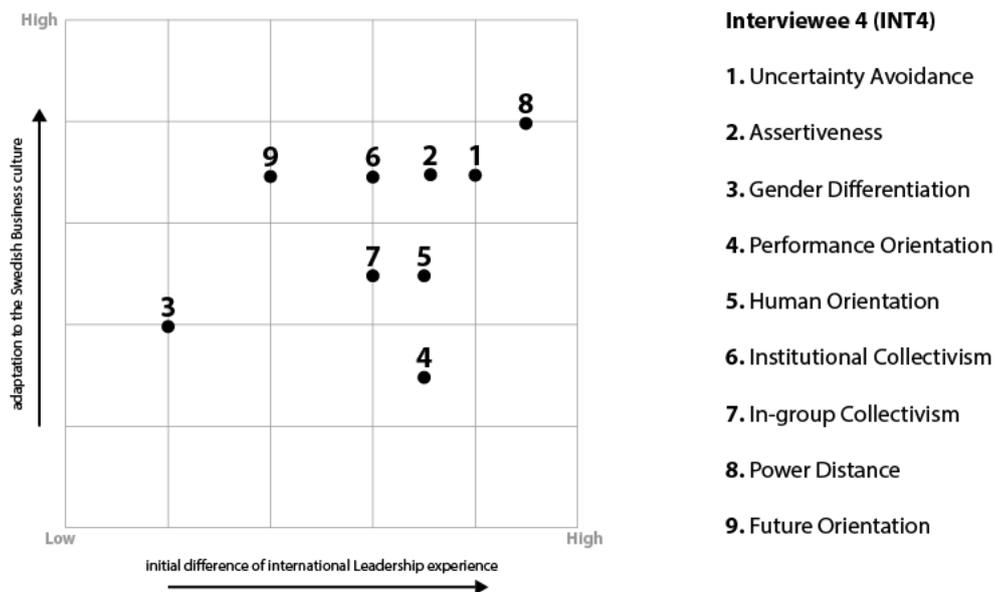


Figure 6: Leadership Behavior Grid INT4

With regards to *uncertainty avoidance*, the interviewees’ view based on her international leadership experiences abroad had more of an influence on her rather than her experiences in Sweden. Though, when moving to Sweden, the interviewees perspective on avoiding risks and considering everyone’s opinion in decision making, has extended her way of thinking and considering other people’s point of views. Furthermore, she mentions that:

*“It’s a lot more time consuming as a process because you really, the effort is put to take a bit of everyone’s opinion, come up with the most sound solution at the very end, which can be good and bad in, depending on how urgent the solution is needed”*

– Interviewee 4

In her current venture INT4 is moving fast forward, though the Swedish environment has influenced her by also asking others for opinions in decision making.

Regarding *assertiveness*, INT4 did not get much impacted by the current Swedish environment in regard to her previous experiences internationally. Furthermore, the interviewee learnings on handling disagreements, were rather abroad in her first jobs in Ireland and Paris rather than in Sweden. The Swedish environment has therefore not particularly changed her perspective on dealing with disagreements. On the topic of *gender differentiation*, however, did influence the interviewee opinion of gender equality. Though most companies currently seek for gender balance, INT4 strongly disagrees on hiring women just for the sake of being a woman. Furthermore, she mentions:

*“Wanting to see 50% women and 50% men in a company, that makes no sense to me! I’m like: what does that even mean? You need to hire people based on how good they are, not based on anything else.... So, I think I’m a little bit conflicted in the whole area”*

**– Interviewee 4**

For this reason, despite international experience and experience in Sweden, the views and conducts on gender differentiation have not changed her for making decision for her own company. Having a balance between the two genders should not be a criterion to select a team member.

In the case of *performance orientation*, the level of her previous international leadership experiences has brought her more of an influence rather than the Swedish business environment. In fact, the interviewee disagrees with the general Swedish rewarding system of ‘lagom’ and giving everyone similar rewards regardless of their accomplishments. She mentions that she has grown up in a competitive environment where you get rewarded for your accomplishments:

*“You work hard, and you get a certain reward. So yeah, that’s something that I enjoy from, from my growing up in India, that’s something that’s in my value system, I do believe, you have to work hard to get somewhere it’s not something that comes easy. You can’t just sit around and hope for a miracle”*

**– Interviewee 4**

Though the interviewee disagrees with the Swedish rewarding of performance perspectives, she did get influenced by the generous culture on improving things as a team where everyone has a say and contribution to a decision making and there is no right or wrong:

*“There is nothing, something called success and failure. You either succeed or you do something, and it doesn’t work, and then you do it better. Still doesn’t work, you do it better.”*

– *Interviewee 4*

Regarding **human orientation**, on the topic whether people in the business environment would meet each other outside of working hours and spend time with colleagues in their free time; the interviewee did not see much difference from her working experiences in Sweden in comparison to her experiences in Germany, India, and the US. Furthermore, she explains that in her previous working experiences the working hours were very long, and she already spent a lot of time with her colleagues. For this reason, people did not feel the urge to spend time with each other on free will.

*“In the general attitude I see that people like to go back home. It’s rare that you would just go for drinks after work, and everybody goes out... I think people like to be individuals and you their own life, you’re not just dedicated to one sitting and working and doing this is not you, you have more than that”*

– *Interviewee 4*

The interviewee wonders if this rather has to do with the working culture environment she has been working in or perhaps related to the country, though she has experienced this in the US, Germany, India, and France. In addition, she feels that it can also somehow be related to the **power distance**, though the Swedish business culture in big companies has not really influenced her in comparison her other abroad experiences as they were all like her. Due to the arrogance and shallow minds of other leaders in her experience internationally made her shift away from certain leadership styles. The Swedish business culture made her realize that smaller startups allow for a certain open-mindedness, which is generally not possible in large companies.

Regarding **institutional collectivism**, the Swedish business environment did make an impact on her, though she feels this has rather to do with the company a person work in and less to do with the country. Furthermore, she feels that a compelling direction and transparency in communication with team members allows for individuals feeling more connected to the startup and therefore wanting to perform better. Not because it is necessarily expected, but also because they believe in the purpose and the vision of the entrepreneurial leader.

“Why does everybody want to work for Oatly? Because everybody knows the ‘why’ behind the company. It is so strong that everybody is running behind that one purpose. In a purpose driven company, I feel that people that are more close-knit and looking as a unit, as opposed to company that are more working towards commodities (...) I think human beings are the happiest when they feel like they’re doing something bigger than them and have a purpose”.

– Interviewee 4

In the case of *in group collectivism* she believes it is very important to keep your employees satisfied. Something she learned in Sweden is to give employees the tools needed to grow themselves personally as well as creating loyalty among employees and have good communication with each other based on expectations.

Regarding *future orientation*, the interviewee was highly influenced by the Swedish business culture. Moreover, based on her previous international experiences she felt that in terms of leadership styles and positioning and how people looked at the future was rather individualistic, especially in India, Germany, and the U.S. The Swedish business culture when she started working in smaller companies has taught her to be more open minded and change her mind set by helping each other out and make use of each other’s expertise to grow together and aim for successful future achievements.

#### 4.1.5. Interviewee 5

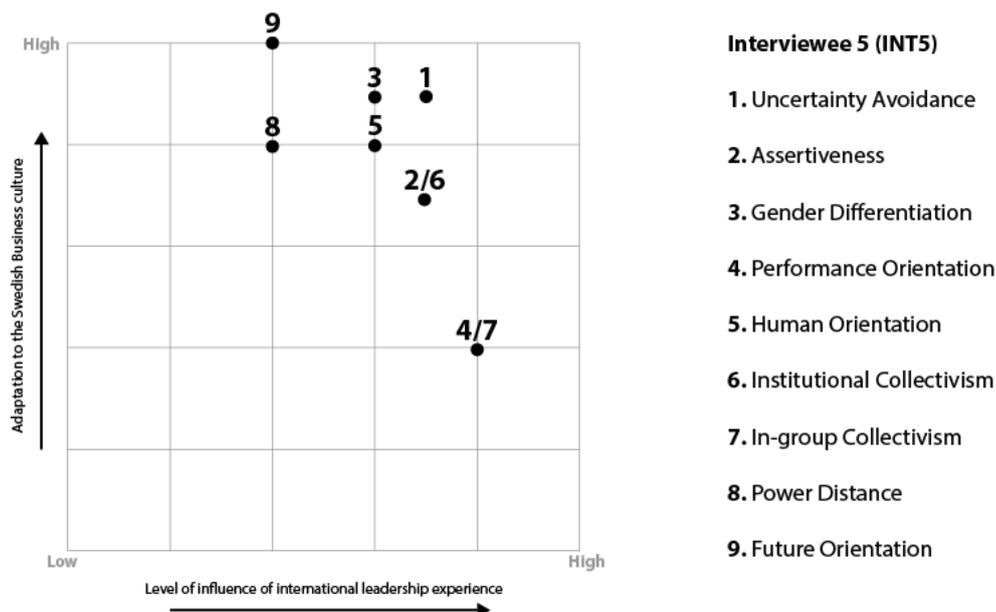


Figure 7: Leadership Behavior Grid INT5

*INT5* explains that he is quite acceptant of **risks** and **uncertainty**, whether it be business risk or financial risk and jokingly shared that his startup might go bankrupt within two years. However, this does not seem to bother him. He quit his fulltime job before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, so that he could focus his efforts on the startup. In his previous experience in the hospitality industry in the UK and Denmark he has led teams of over 100 employees and explains that what he considered to be the biggest risk in this experience, is the fact that people did not always agree with the visions of the company or of *INT5* as a leader and that not addressing this affected the performance of the business negatively.

*“I mean, I started off my company with the idea of tired, being tired of working for somebody else, and building company for somebody. So, I resigned my position last year before the corona started, two weeks before the corona started”*

**– Interviewee 5**

Furthermore, *INT5* explains regarding the level of **assertiveness** as a leader, that he has always valued opinions of team members, even when the team was as large as 100 members, but made unpopular decisions, if this meant bringing the business further. His past and present experience made him aware of the fact that, through voicing a clear vision for the company and creating a sense of community, he could avoid conflict, as people grew more understanding of the ideas that he had for the food startup.

When it comes to the **gender differentiation**, *INT5* mentions to have managed teams that consisted completely of males. He then articulated that his experience of having managed teams that had

*“[Teams consisting of] only men or only women can really be a disaster”*

**- Interviewee 5**

Having had this experience made *INT5*, as a leader of his own food startup, look for a female co-founder for his team of two, as he found that it brings serenity and different perspectives to the team. Which is a major shift that happened whilst in Sweden. Furthermore, *INT5* mentions that diversity in teams allows for advantageous possibilities for the venture.

Regarding the institutional collectivism and the in-group collectivism, his international leadership experience made *INT5* aware of the importance of creating a sense of ‘we’, the

startup experience taught him to share the achievements with the employees, by celebrating their personal and professional successes that added to the success of the venture, or of the person.

Through his leadership experience gathered in the UK and Denmark in the hospitality industry, *INT5* shares:

*“In my previous working experiences, especially in the hospitality industry, you learn to say ‘we’ instead of ‘I’. You learn that from the beginning, there simply is no ‘I’. I built my whole career based on ‘we’.”*

**– Interviewee 5**

With this statement, *INT5* clearly deems this to be important to adhere as a leader. His entrepreneurial journey and his role as a leader within *INT5*'s current startup created awareness regarding the importance of his network and helping his network thrive as well. He considers himself as a mentor rather than a manager and feels that this could be burdensome as there is no “margin for errors”

Finally, regarding the **future orientation**, *INT5* makes a notion of the importance of family in Iran and as the family is generally the only security that individuals from Iran have, helping when necessary. He then continues drawing a comparison between Iran and the securities of the Swedish welfare system that *INT5* enjoys. These securities have allowed him, as an entrepreneur and leader of the startup, to plan a strategy 10 years into the future, something that would be highly unusual in Iran.

## **4.2. Discussion**

The following part is dedicated to the discussion of the findings that have been presented previously. In this section, the findings will be correlated with the theoretical framework, on which this paper has been based. Adding on to the findings, the discussion section will be written up, combining the different dimensions from the GLOBE report and the Lewis Model, answering the two sub-research questions that were formulated for the purpose of answering the main research question.

### **4.2.1. How does the non-native culture of Entrepreneurs affect the leadership style within startups they have founded in Sweden?**

It is unquestionable that all interviewees exhibit cultural behaviors of their native culture. *INT1* for instance, mentions that she still likes to plan things carefully, behavior that is pretty much

related to the linear-active cultural behavior of German individuals, as presented by Lewis (2015), however, her experience in Mexico impacted the way that she enacts leadership in her startup, as she now embraces **uncertainty** more, than when she was a leader in Germany. Though her cultural background has influenced the entrepreneur to think out all steps before acting, she does not consider herself as the typical German as she is a risktaker and goes out of her comfort zone. Furthermore, this explains how the entrepreneur's behavior has changed over time based on new cultural experiences whereas she has moved her thinking processes from causations to effectuation on how the entrepreneur makes "decisions under conditions of uncertainty" (Sarasvathy, 2001). As effectuation entrepreneurial behavior goes rather in hand with the multi-active cultures, the entrepreneur is transferring from linear active behavior traits to multi-active (Lewis, 2015).

The same applies to *INT5*, whose native culture (Iranian) falls within the spectrum between the multi-active and reactive cultures, though most of his professional experience gathered were related to linear-active behaviors (U.K. and Denmark). These experiences seem to have impacted his perception of risk, whether that be business risk or financial risk. Moreover, his previous experience seems to have provided the entrepreneur with more confidence and allowed for the leader to be more acceptant of risk. Interestingly, *INT2* brought her non-native culture aspects of being "rebellious" (as she used to speak up for her own) to her own startup. Though the Italian business environment does not encourage women to speak up, *INT2* explains that when she was still in Italy, she felt as if she was already considered an outsider, as the interviewee already behaved 'differently than expected' in her native culture, thus there was no to minimal change in behavior when moving to Sweden. However, the startup experience allowed for witnessing and executing leadership from different perspectives. Connecting the topic of **uncertainty avoidance and risks** to the experiences of *INT3*, who has gained most of his business experiences in the Asian countries, *INT3* feels that his previous international experiences has taught him to rather behave reactive (Lewis, 2006). In addition, he learned to take risks and deal with uncertainty when growing up and having his first entrepreneurial working experiences in Asia. Moreover, he feels that Asian people take more risks and are keener on entrepreneurial behavior as they don't have much to lose anyways.

Generally comparing the Asian countries with the Swedish culture, *INT3* feels that his reactive behavior has helped him a lot in his entrepreneurial journey in the Swedish business environment. Furthermore, his **assertiveness**; tending to avoid conflicts, arguments and his aim for peace and harmony are like the Swedish business culture. For this reason, the Swedes did

not influence his reactive behavior but rather confirmed and built on his current behaviors he brought as an Asian entrepreneur to Sweden.

In relation to leadership, reactive behavioral cultures are often connected to team orientated leadership (Northouse, 2020) whereas the Swedish environment, linked to linear active behavioral traits (Lewis, 2006), is linked to participative leadership (Northouse, 2020; Lewis, 2006). Furthermore, the Swedish democratic leadership style that suits to flat hierarchies (Ordu, 2020; Caillier, 2020; Fiaz et al., 2017) in relation to *INT3* foreign cultural background bringing in reactive behavioral traits in his current entrepreneurial journey; his previous experiences very much complimented the Swedish culture he currently operates in.

In relation to **institutional collectivism**, *INT3* feels that the Asian culture of clear goal setting has helped him now for setting up his business in the Swedish environment. As Swedes do not prioritize on setting clear goals as the culture is rather build on trust and flexibility (Semuels, 2017), *INT3* feels that his foreign background has helped him adapt his current leadership style in Sweden. To add on Asian cultural behaviors in relation to **performance orientation**, *INT4* feels that her non-native background coming from a competitive Indian culture, has very much influenced her now as a co-founder setting up a business in Sweden. As a foreigner, she opposes the Swedish '*lagom*' rewarding system, and rather over performs and exceeds the social norm of standard to achieve successful results for the company. possessing this different working ethics can cause uneasiness and dissimilarities within a team. Moreover, the difficulties to adapt in Sweden for leaders who come from cultures that are highly competitive are due to the differences in work ethics (Hofstede, 2020). Though the definition of entrepreneurship is known as "the competitive behaviors that drive the market process" (Davidson, 2005), it is therefore important for internationals coming from a competitive background to Sweden, to communicate expectations clearly to team members from the beginning. When putting this into context, it was mentioned by academics that the effective collaboration should be ensured, and that, rather than focusing on the apparent differences in personality and attitudes, leaders should try and establish an environment that enables for team members to feel comfortable (Haas & Mortensen, 2016).

Regarding **power** in relation to the differences in gender in the business environment, *INT1* mentions not to be so much influenced by **gender equality** when living in Germany, though when moving abroad and seeing the difference in Sweden, she realized a major difference between gender in especially higher positions within the company. The interviewee realized

that the Swedish cultural values relate to high indulgence and individualism but low on masculinity (Hofstede, 2020), which is a contrast to Germany that has a high masculine culture (Lewis, 2006). As the interviewee took the German masculine culture for granted. Now, after being abroad and comparing her own culture to her international experiences, she is encouraging to have more women in leading positions.

Like *INT5*, who was astonished by the differences in power and gender, the interviewee realized only when coming to Sweden that he had just been working with males in his previous leading roles. These experiences abroad made the respondent recognize that his cultural background, when only working with men in leading positions, was perhaps better for faster communication, though for the long-term prospect did not bring much good to the team. This is related to entrepreneurial leadership and trust; team members from the same gender are a better predictor for collecting intelligence (Brattström, 2020). In other words, when a team of the same gender work together, they might have more effective communication in the short run, in the long run teams will lack lower creativity and lower problem solving (Brattström, 2020). For this reason, diversity in a company is very significant for successful outcomes in businesses for the long-term prospect.

Responses regarding this dimension revealed a strong interconnectedness between high **performance**, **institutional collectivism**, and the **power distance**, the dimensions mentioned by several academics (House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2020). Compared to the paper, this study reveals that a lower power distance, for instance, allows for team members to feel more comfortable to give feedback and thus making more of an effort to make the business thrive, something that is possible when entrepreneurial leaders ensure that team members are given the space and also feel comfortable enough to share their opinions, something that can be related back to the democratic/participative leadership style (Ordu, 2020; Caillier, 2020; Fiaz et al., 2017). All in all, all interviewees mention to have many influences from their previous international experiences and own cultural behaviors they are currently experiencing in leading their own venture in a Swedish business environment.

#### **4.2.2. How does the Swedish business culture influence the way the non-native entrepreneurs lead startups in Sweden?**

That entrepreneurial leadership shares some characteristics with transformational leadership, became apparent, as multiple entrepreneurs express that a leader should not micromanage and give a sense of ownership to team members. Furthermore, there is a consensus that the leader

should strongly communicate the vision of the startup (Renko et al., 2015; Shahraki, 2013). In line with the statement shared by Shahraki (2013), the entrepreneurial leaders that were subject to this study, devoted their efforts to translating their vision for the venture to the other team members.

Based on the data, one matter became noticeable in terms of the **uncertainty avoidance** and acceptance of risk: most leaders seem to be in consensus about the fact that the unalterable, external influences should be considered by entrepreneurs with leadership experience outside of Sweden, which is in line with what several academics state about the fact that the context strongly influences the way an entrepreneurial leaders should behave (Kakabadse et al., 2018; Tlaiss, 2015).

Then, when it comes to the level of **assertiveness** as expressed by the leaders, it was found that the leaders have experienced several situations with native individuals of Sweden, where the conflict avoidant behavior caused even more tension, as there was no means to address matters that bothered the leaders. Thus, the viewpoint as shared by Lewis (2006), appears to be accurate. Though the leaders embrace the flat hierarchy which is common in the Swedish business environment and seem to yearn for a certain level of assertiveness, the leaders do not seem to agree with the democratic approach in terms of decision-making, with several exertions being made that a leader should sometimes make unpopular decisions, even if some of the team members do not agree, this in accordance with the situational leadership approach as devised by Hersey and Blanchard (1969). Previous studies argue that micromanaging and directive behaviors within the autocratic leadership spectrum can have negative effects on the morale of team members. However, some entrepreneurs consider this approach as a ‘necessary evil’ to achieve the desired results faster, revealing a perceptible disconnection between theory and practice (De Cremer, 2006; Caillier, 2020; Fiaz et al., 2017).

Furthermore, considering **gender differentiating** behaviors of the non-native leaders, the opinions are rather divided. However, the male respondents in this research did seem to find it more important that there is a balance within teams, demonstrating the influence of the feminine business culture of Sweden, as mentioned by Lewis (2006). Whereas the female respondents, despite being women themselves, strongly voiced their opinions about the common fallacy in gender differentiation within teams, expressing that one’s skills should matter more than balancing out the male/female ratios in teams.

Additionally, relating to the **performance orientation**, none of the respondents seemed to have been influenced by the non-competitiveness within the Swedish business culture, as expressed by Lewis (2015). Instead, the respondents find that high performance is equally as important, if not more important than the human orientation within startup teams in Sweden. However, instead of forcefully demanding high performance from team members, they lead by example, through a strong and compelling vision, in accordance with the theory of Haas and Mortensen (2016).

Related to the **human orientation** that has been mentioned previously, all leaders seem to have been influenced by the values of the Swedish culture as mentioned by Lewis (2015), though they do express that the human orientation should not inhibit high performance. Instead, the interviewees, as leaders of their own ventures, explain that **power** should be exerted at times, to achieve the results they are aiming for, but that a leader should remain approachable, a learning that came out of the leaders' startup experiences in Sweden. Thus, it is mentioned that all opinions should be considered, but the decisions should eventually be made by the leader according to the leaders, this contrary to the statements of Lewis (2006).

In terms of the **institutional collectivism** and **in-group collectivism**, all interviewees expressed to some extent that an entrepreneurial leader needs to have a vision for the venture that speaks to the values of each individual team member within the startup. Here it is important that this vision serves a higher purpose, in line with the personal values of the individual team members. This in line with the statement of Renko et al. (2015), who argues that a compelling vision is imperative in a startup with little resources and little rewards to share throughout the venture.

Finally, regarding the future orientation, Northouse (2020) argues that Sweden, as a part of the Nordic countries, belongs to some of the most future oriented societies. The non-native leaders, not being part of the Swedish system, or at least not fully, feel that because they are not part of the welfare system it is difficult to focus on the longer term and feel as if they must plan almost day by day. This demonstrates the importance of the enabling conditions being in place, so that entrepreneurial leaders can plan and make minor adjustments to their strategies over time, instead of devising several smaller short-term strategies.

## **5. Conclusions and Implications**

The following part gives an answer to the main research question on how non-native entrepreneurial leaders enact leadership in food startups in Sweden. This section starts off with the aim of the thesis and the main research findings. After this, the implications for the scientific community, the implications for practice and the implications for future research will be disclosed.

### **5.1. Aim of the thesis and main research findings**

The report aimed to examine how non-native entrepreneurs enact leadership in food startups founded in Sweden. By researching how the Swedish business culture influences the way non-native entrepreneurs lead startups in Sweden and discovering how the non-native culture of entrepreneurs affect the leadership style within startups they have founded in Sweden, we covered the following topics for research: uncertainty avoidance, assertiveness, gender differentiation, performance orientation, human orientation, power distance, institutional and in-group collectivism and future orientation. The conclusions of this paper are presented below.

The effectuation process exhibited by the entrepreneurial leaders goes in hand with multi-active cultural behavior. Leaders that demonstrate this behavior are generally extremely people oriented and tend to perform multiple tasks simultaneously. These characteristics go in hand with what is considered the “typical” entrepreneur of making decisions under conditions of uncertainty where the entrepreneur takes decisions with the given means (effectuation) and improvises based on the situation at hand, rather than planning every step out carefully. Though this does not really fit with the linear-active cultures behaviors. Non-native entrepreneurs give the impression that in Sweden, there is less concern about the unpredictable future, because of the welfare system. Though this uncertainty is deemed minor given the prospect of starting up a venture in Sweden by non-native leaders.

Regarding the assertiveness, it can be witnessed that Sweden is positioned in the more linear-active quadrant of the model, though the way the Swedish business culture and behavior is perceived by entrepreneurial leaders is in contradiction with the theory of Lewis (2015), as Swedish individuals tend to be extremely conflict avoidant, as was perceived by various non-native leaders. This conflict avoiding behavior is more associated with the reactive cultural behavior. Moreover, this lack of assertiveness is a matter that is perceived to be highly

inconvenient, as it does not allow the entrepreneur to grow as a leader or to achieve the best results possible.

It also became apparent that being able to efficiently communicate with team members is considered crucial to be a good leader of a venture team in Sweden. Also, effective collaboration must be ensured and instead of focusing on the apparent differences in personality and attitudes, leaders must design an environment that enables for team members to feel comfortable (Haas & Mortensen, 2016).

Taking the opinions and practices by non-native entrepreneurial leaders regarding gender differentiation into account, it can be concluded that it is only somewhat influenced on the cultural background and social influences. However, it is more considerably shaped by the entrepreneurs' own experiences when working in teams internationally. Interestingly, male leaders seem to prefer to see more women in leadership positions, whereas the women entrepreneurs rather focus on the quality of work delivered for a certain task, amplifying that the hiring process should not necessarily consider gender, but prior experience and a proven track record of team members.

The entrepreneurs that participated in this study revealed a strong interconnectedness between high **performance**, institutional collectivism, and the power distance (House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2020). Compared to previous academic, this study reveals that a lower power distance in entrepreneurial teams, for instance, allows for team members to feel more comfortable to give feedback and thus making more of an effort to make the business thrive, something which is possible when entrepreneurial leaders ensure that team members are given the space to share their opinions. This given can be related to the democratic/participative leadership style (Ordu, 2020; Caillier, 2020; Fiaz et al., 2017), though it appears that a situational approach, as proposed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) is more fitting to the Swedish business culture, as was articulated by multiple non-native entrepreneurial leaders.

Though it is perceived by non-native entrepreneurs that natives in Sweden tend to keep private and professional lives separated, non-native entrepreneurs do not believe in the strong division between private and working life in relationships with others. Instead, they appear to consider their colleagues also as friends whereas they don't find it unacceptable to meet each other outside of working hours and mix the social and professional; also related to multi-active behavior (Lewis, 2006).

Moreover, the international leaders highlight the importance of having a compelling vision for the startup, similarly to the utterance of Renko et al. (2015), which match with the values of the individual team members. Especially in the startup phase, as the venture has to be built from scratch, with very little resources and a lot of uncertainty of what the outcome of devoting time and effort to the startup will be. All resources must be dedicated to augment the leadership and management within the venture to create stability and to instill team spirit. Furthermore, the overall goals for the company and the tasks at hand are mapped out for the sake of transparency within the venture, after which the search and placement of the respectable human resources is carried out.

In general, entrepreneurial leaders enact a different type of leadership, which they had previously acted out in previous companies. In general, non-native leaders in Sweden have a habit of exerting different leadership styles, depending on what the situation requires. However, there is no mention of interchanging or even combining elements of the various leadership styles based on whether a company in the non-profit or for-profit sectors and/or the personality and work ethics of team members within a company, as became apparent within this study. The leaders find that it is rather common to provide feedback to team members, but also to receive feedback. The entrepreneurs that lead the startups, have the common idea is that all feedback needs to be taken into consideration, but at times unpopular decisions need to be made, which is not necessarily advantageous for the individual, but the right decision for the venture.

Finally, non-native entrepreneurial leaders appear to view professional experiences gathered in the time spent abroad as a part of future preparations. Furthermore, international leaders feel that this experience is imperative to be ready for the inevitable change that is necessary to shape the future. In a sense, it can be inferred that multi-active behavior is most fitting within startups in Sweden. This because of the indistinctive border between combining private and work life together, the planning of a grand outline and mixing the social and professional (Lewis, 2006).

Taking the abovementioned into consideration, it can be concluded that non-native entrepreneurial leaders have an unmistakable advantage having dealt with the uncertainty of trying to make a living in a foreign country. In general, there is some level of assimilation to the Swedish business norms, however, to guarantee high performance, non-native entrepreneurial leaders will switch between their previously acquired leadership skills when deemed necessary. Furthermore, the international entrepreneurial leader will exert some

control, which clashes with the Swedish non-competitiveness that is embedded in the national culture of Sweden.

## **5.2. Implications for Practice**

Entrepreneurial leaders in the Swedish business context need to take a few matters into consideration when it comes to successfully lead teams and ascertain high performance. The main points that have been raised are that entrepreneurial leaders should ensure that the vision for the company is clear, that expectations of everyone has been spoken out and that the vision and values of the venture resonate with the personal values of the followers. Especially for startups that are in their nascent state and where monetary rewards are rather low, having a compelling vision for the future, which matches with the individuals' values may boost the morale and level of loyalty within venture.

Furthermore, it is of great importance that, with this clearly communicated vision, all team members should be given the space to act entrepreneurially, give ownership of projects instigated by these members, point out the accomplishments and praise good performance, especially when there is but a small, or no monetary reward involved, which is typically the case within a startup. Another consideration in this regard, is that the purpose of the startup should be impactful.

Another recommendation for practice is that entrepreneurial leaders should focus on creating a safe environment, in which team members feel comfortable enough to share ideas and opinions. In that sense, all ideas should be considered, but in the end the decision should be taken by the leaders of the venture. Doing so, however, requires a leader to effectively communicate the vision for the company, but also where the individual team members fit in the progression of the venture.

## **5.3. Implications for Future Research**

First, future research could expand the methodological focus of this thesis by increasing the number of interviews with regards to the different cultural behaviors (reactive, linear active, and multi-active). The current analysis covers interviewed entrepreneurial backgrounds related to linear active and multi-active behavior. For this reason, it could be of interest to further

investigate the entrepreneurial opinions by interviewing someone with reactive cultural behaviors. By further investigating reactive behaviors from food entrepreneurs in Sweden, we will be able to distinguish similarities and differences of all the cultural behaviors in relation to leadership in food startups in Sweden.

Second, by increasing the sample size of interviewees, correlations between different behaviors can be categorized, compared, and contrasted resulting to more specific and reliable outcomes for this research.

Third, for this study, the perceptions of leaders with an international professional background regarding leadership in Swedish startups have been researched, whereas no natives of Sweden have been interviewed. Including native Swedes within the sample, could possibly assist in finding the gaps between the practices of internationals and the successfulness of these leadership practices in the Swedish context.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: List of Definitions

<b>Assertiveness</b>	Assertiveness is the degree to which individuals are forceful, confrontational, and aggressive, as opposed to cooperative and compassionate. In high assertiveness countries such as the United States, Germany, and Mexico, communication is direct and unambiguous. Individual initiative is encouraged, and relationships are likely to be competitive. Countries with low assertiveness rankings are Switzerland and New Zealand. Managers in these countries are more likely to look for consensus and cooperative decision making.
<b>Abductive research</b>	Abductive research is related to when researchers come to different unrelated conclusions (also known as empirical phenomena) whereas these 'surprising facts' cannot be explained by the existing theories.
<b>Deductive research</b>	Deductive research is aimed at testing an existing theory where broad generalizations are tested in order to come to specific observations.
<b>Employees</b>	Employees are defined as paid employees, interns and volunteers working for a company.
<b>ENTRELEAD scale</b>	This scale measures the entrepreneurial leadership behaviors.
<b>Food startups</b>	Food startups includes agriculture, manufacturing, food processing, marketing, wholesale, foodservice, grocery, farmer's market, public market and other retailing, education related to food and food technology.
<b>Future Orientation</b>	The degree to which delayed gratification and planning for the future are valued over short-term gains is called future orientation. Countries with high future orientation encourage investments for future payoffs over immediate consumption. It is similar to the ability of individuals to delay gratification. Canada, Switzerland, and Malaysia have high future orientation; Poland, Argentina, and Russia have low future orientation.
<b>Gender Egalitarianism</b>	The degree to which male and female equality is actualized is called gender egalitarianism. Countries with high gender egalitarianism provide more opportunities for women and have more women in positions of power. Sweden, Poland, and Costa Rica have high gender egalitarianism. Japan, Italy, and Egypt have low gender egalitarianism. In these countries, women generally have lower status at work and in the culture.
<b>Humane Orientation</b>	The degree to which fairness, altruism, generosity, and kindness are encouraged and valued is a measure of a country's humane orientation. In nations with high humane orientation, individuals are responsible for promoting the well-being of others as opposed to the state providing social and economic support. The Philippines, Ireland, and Egypt have high humane orientation; France, Germany, and Singapore have low humane orientation.
<b>Institutional Collectivism</b>	Institutional collectivism is the degree to which organizational and societal institutions encourage individuals to be integrated into groups and organizations. In high institutional collectivism countries, collective distribution of resources and collective action are encouraged. Group loyalty is encouraged, even if it undermines the pursuit of individual goals. Sweden, Japan, and Singapore are examples of countries that have high institutional collectivism; Germany, Argentina, and Italy have low institutional collectivism. In the United States, low institutional collectivism has resulted in debates on appropriate work-life balance.
<b>Inductive research</b>	Inductive research is based on developing a theory moving from specific observations to broad generalizations.
<b>Leaders</b>	Leaders are defined as owners, co-founders and the management team
<b>Linear active</b>	Linear active cultures are cultures whose people listen well, never interrupt and show great deference to others' opinions; they do not precipitate improvident action, allowing ideas to mature.
<b>Multi-active</b>	Multi active cultures are cultures whose people tend to do many things at once, often in unplanned orders, usually people oriented and extroverted.
<b>MBL</b>	Also known as the 'Co-determination at Work Act' - A Swedish law about the co determination in the labor market which regulates the relationship between employer and employee.
<b>In- group Collectivism</b>	In-group collectivism is the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. In countries with high institutional collectivism, individuals

	identify with their families or organizations and duties and obligations determine behaviors. A strong distinction is made between individuals who are in a group and those who are not. India, Egypt, and China are examples of countries that have high institutional collectivism; Sweden, New Zealand, and Finland have low institutional collectivism.
<b>Performance Orientation</b>	Performance orientation is the degree to which innovation, high standards, and excellent performance are encouraged and rewarded. Countries with high performance orientation value materialism and competitiveness, and they expect to invest in training to promote performance improvements. The United States and European countries have high performance orientations; Argentina, Russia, and Greece have low performance orientations.
<b>Power distance</b>	Power distance is the degree to which people accept an unequal distribution of power and status privileges. In high power distance countries, there is respect for age and titles, people are expected to follow rules, and there is more tolerance for concentrated power. India, Mexico, and the Philippines have high power distance. The United States, Australia, and Israel have low power distance.
<b>Reactive</b>	Reactive cultures are cultures whose people rarely initiate action or discussion, preferring first to listen to and establish the others position, then react to it and formulate their own.
<b>Secondary research</b>	The practice of analyzing already existing qualitative and/or quantitative data, published by other researchers. The data generally may not have been intended to be used for the purpose that researchers with no involvement in the primary data collection do.
<b>Small Medium Enterprise (SME)</b>	SME are defined as businesses with English as a main language. The enterprises are led between 1-3 founders.
<b>Uncertainty avoidance</b>	The degree to which people are uncomfortable with risk, change, and ambiguity is called uncertainty avoidance. In high uncertainty avoidance countries, there is a greater emphasis on rules, structure, order, and predictability. France, Japan, and Costa Rica, for example, are countries with high uncertainty avoidance. The United States, India, and Sweden have low uncertainty avoidance.

## Appendix 2: Interview Matrix

MRQ: How do non-native entrepreneurs enact leadership in food startups founded in Sweden?				
General Questions				
What is your native nationality? What countries did you live in? What countries have you gathered experienced leadership roles? In what company did you experience this working role? What kind of startup do you currently have? For how long is your startup existing? How many employees do you have in your startup?				
Sub RQ's	Information needed	General interview questions	Probing Questions	Labels
<b>How does the non-native culture of Entrepreneurs affect the leadership style within startups they have founded in Sweden?</b>	<b>1. Uncertainty avoidance</b> <i>The extent to which a society, organization, or group relies (and should rely) on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events. The greater the desire to avoid uncertainty, the more people seek orderliness, consistency, structure, formal procedures, and laws to cover situations in their daily lives.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on your previous experiences in an international environment, what can you tell us about the way that people within companies deal with risks?</li> <li>- How do you currently deal with uncertain events and risks, not that you have founded your startup here in Sweden?</li> <li>- How is this different from the international experience that you have gathered?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on your experiences that you have acquired internationally and in Sweden, how are you dealing with risks?</li> <li>- Can you give an example from your own experience?</li> <li>- From what you have experienced in this situation, how is this different from your cultural background and any other international experiences acquired?</li> <li>- How do people from your culture deal with risk when conducting business?</li> </ul> Backup questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From what you are experiencing now in your startup, how would describe the level of experimentation and innovation and to what extent is it encouraged? How is this different from your cultural background?</li> <li>- How is it different in comparison to your startup right now and how do you deal with these changes?</li> </ul>	(a) Orderliness (b) Consistency (c) Structure (d) Formal procedures (e) Laws
	<b>2. Assertiveness</b> <i>The degree to which individuals are (and should be) assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationship with others.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In your culture X how do you deal with disagreements?</li> <li>- Thinking back about a previous situation where you did not agree with the actions of a team member. How did you deal with this?</li> <li>- Now that you have founded your company here in Sweden, how do you currently deal with disagreements?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relating to your professional experiences abroad and in the startup right now, how did you deal with disagreements regarding actions and opinions?</li> <li>- How do you deal with disagreements right now in your startup? Why?</li> </ul>	(a) Assertive in their relationship with others. (b) Confrontational in their relationship with others. (c) Aggressive in their relationship with others.

	<p><b>3. Gender differentiation</b>  <i>The degree to which a collective minimizes (and should minimize) gender inequality.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Within your culture, how does the management within companies minimize gender inequalities.</li> <li>- How have you experienced this in any international working environment where you have worked in</li> <li>- In your startup at the moment, how do you, as a leader, minimize inequalities in gender?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How many people do you have on the team?</li> <li>- What is the division of men and women within the startup?</li> <li>- What are the positions of men within this startup?</li> <li>- What are the positions of women within this startup?</li> <li>- Thinking back about your professional experiences in your home country and other geographic locations, prior to founding your business, to what extent did previous companies try to minimize the gender gap in companies? How is this the case right now that you found your startup in Sweden? Why the change/why no change?</li> </ul>	<p>(a) Minimizing gender inequality</p>
	<p><b>4. Performance orientation</b>  <i>The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards (and should encourage and reward) group members for performance improvement and excellence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In your previous experiences, prior to coming to Sweden, how do you normally ensure high performance from team members?</li> <li>- Relating this to your company right now in Sweden, what do you currently do to ensure that your team members perform well?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thinking back about your past professional experiences, how have individuals been rewarded when achieving great results for the company? (If even)</li> <li>- How was failure dealt with failure in a business environment?</li> <li>- Now considering your own conducts and rewarding practices, how do you reward your employees when they achieve good results?</li> <li>- How do you hold people accountable when the delivered work is not according to standards?</li> <li>- How do you as a founder deal with failures?</li> <li>- How is the current situation that you are experiencing in your startup at the moment differentiate from your previous experience?</li> </ul>	<p>(a) Rewarding performance improvement and excellence</p> <p>(b) Encouragement performance improvement and excellence</p>
Link with Power Distance	<p><b>5. Human Orientation</b>  <i>The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards (and should encourage and reward) individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How likely would it be in company X to meet employees outside working hours?</li> <li>- Currently in your startup, do you spend much time with your team members outside of the working hours?</li> <li>- Do you do fun social activities together? What kind of activities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How likely is for you to meet with employees outside of working hours?</li> <li>- From what you have experienced in this situation, how is this different from your previous experiences and in the culture in which you grew up?</li> <li>- How was this in other geographic locations where you acquired work experience?</li> </ul>	<p>(a) encourages and rewards individuals for being fair to others</p> <p>(b) encourages and rewards individuals for being altruistic to others</p> <p>(c) encourages and rewards individuals for being generous to others</p> <p>(d) encourages and rewards individuals for being caring to others.</p>

				(e) encourages and rewards individuals for being kind to others.
Link with Human Orientation	<b>6. Power distance</b> <i>The extent to which the community accepts and endorses authority, power differences, and status privileges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What can you tell us about the way that team members within companies outside of Sweden that you have previously worked for deal accept leadership?</li> <li>- What can you tell us about the acceptance of independent behavior from employees in the business in (country x)?</li> <li>- What can you tell us about the way that you involve team members that have a title lower than yours and the ideas and feedback that they provide? What do you generally do with this feedback?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering the places where you primarily gained your professional experiences, how would you generally describe the hierarchical structure within the business culture? Considering the places where you gained your professional experiences prior to founding your company in Sweden, how would you generally describe the hierarchical structure within the business culture?</li> <li>- Where were these businesses situated?</li> <li>- How is the hierarchical structure within your startup here in Sweden? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Authority</li> <li>(b) Power distance</li> <li>(f) Status privilege</li> </ul>
Combine with in-group collectivism	<b>7. Institutional Collectivism</b> <i>The degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward (and should encourage and reward) collective distribution of resources and collective action.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering your past experience(s), would you say that people act more as one, or rather individualistic?</li> <li>- To what extent is this different within your startup?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering your past experience(s), would you say that people act more as one, or rather individualistic? To what extent is this different within your startup?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Practices collective distribution of resources and collective action.</li> <li>(b) Encourage collective distribution of resources and collective action.</li> <li>(g) Reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.</li> </ul>
Combine with institutional collectivism	<b>8. In-group collectivism</b> <i>The degree to which individuals express (and should express) pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What can you tell us about your previous experience regarding the sense of happiness of team members within companies that you have worked for internationally?</li> <li>- What do you currently do to keep your team members happy and make them feel proud of the positions they have within your company right now?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering your past international professional experiences and relating it to the current situation in your startup,</li> <li>- How do you describe it now that you founded your startup in Sweden? Why is it this way?</li> <li>- From what you have experienced in this situation, how is this different from your cultural background and any other international experiences acquired?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Express pride in their organizations.</li> <li>(b) Express loyalty in their organizations.</li> <li>(c) Express cohesiveness in their organizations.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>9. Future orientation</b>  <i>The extent to which individuals engage (and should engage) in future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In your previous working experience at company X how did you as a leader prepare yourself for the future strategies for the company.</li> <li>- Currently in your startup, how are you thinking ahead and preparing yourself for future change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent is your startup preparing itself for the future (What is your long-term vision on where do you see your company in the next X years?</li> <li>- Having this future perspective in mind, what measures are you taking?</li> <li>- What has been done regarding the planning for the future in your previous international working experiences?</li> <li>- What country did you obtain these experiences?</li> <li>- How far ahead do people in your culture often plan for the future?</li> <li>- How are you taking your cultural background in the decisions you are taking for this startup?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Engage in future-oriented behaviors such as planning</li> <li>(b) Engage in future-oriented behaviors such as investing in the future,</li> <li>(c) Engage in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How does the Swedish Business Culture influence the manner in which the non-native entrepreneurs lead startups in Sweden?</b></p>				
	<p><b>10. Charismatic/Value-Based Leadership:</b>  The ability to inspire, motivate, and expect high performance outcomes from others based on firmly held core values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How has the Swedish environment influenced the way that you lead your team currently, in comparison to your previous experience?</li> <li>- How is it different now?</li> <li>- What conducts of your leadership right now did you learn through your past experiences and which things did you have to learn to work ensure the right team dynamics?</li> <li>- What was the hardest thing for you to adjust to in the Swedish Business Culture?</li> <li>- What would be your advice for international entrepreneurs who would like to start a new venture in Sweden?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In what way do you lead the startup and the team members?</li> <li>- What is your vision, mission, and strategy for the company? How do you visualize this to your employees?</li> <li>- How does the way you lead the startup differ from your previous professional experiences? Why? Could you give us some examples?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) visionary</li> <li>(b) inspirational</li> <li>(c) self-sacrifice</li> <li>(d) integrity</li> <li>(e) decisive</li> <li>(f) performance oriented.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>11. Team-Oriented Leadership:</b> Emphasizes effective team building and implementation of a</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you measure team effectiveness?</li> <li>- What measurements do you currently take with the team to make sure that everyone is on the same page?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) collaborative team orientation,</li> <li>(b) team integrator</li> <li>(c) diplomatic</li> </ul>

	common purpose or goal among team members.			(d) malevolent (reverse scored) (e) administratively competent.
	12. <b>Participative Leadership:</b> Reflects the degree to which managers involve others in making and implementing decisions. It includes two primary leadership dimensions labeled		- When you think back about your prior international professional experiences, how likely is it for owners and managers to ask the employees to act on their own accord? - Relating to your startup, how important is it for you that your employees act according to your instructions? Why?	(a) nonparticipative (b) autocratic (both reverse scored).
	13. <b>Humane-Oriented Leadership:</b> Reflects supportive and considerate leadership and includes compassion and generosity.		- Considering your professional experience, prior to founding your company in Sweden, what is the likeliness that owners/managers show compassion for difficult, personal circumstances of employees? - How would you describe it within your startup? Could you please share situations with us regarding your startup about tough moments your employees have experiences? How did you deal with these situations? Why?	(a) modesty (b) humane orientation.
	14. <b>Autonomous Leadership:</b> Refers to independent and individualistic leadership attributes. It is measured by a single primary leadership dimension		- When considering your previous professional experience, prior to coming to Sweden to found your company, how involved were owners/managers in the division of tasks? - When relating this to your startup right now, how do you approach it right now? How is it differently from your previous experience? Why do you approach it in this manner?	(f) Individualistic (g) Independence (h) Autonomous (i) unique attributes
	15. <b>Self-Protective Leadership:</b> Focuses on ensuring the safety and security of the individual and group through status enhancement and face saving.		- Considering your past professional experiences, how important was it for your managers/owners that their own needs, status and wellbeing was put before that of the other team members? - Relating this to your own venture now, what do you do similarly to this company and what do you do differently?	(a) self-centered (b) status conscious (c) conflict inducer (d) face saver (e) procedural

### Appendix 3: Coding Matrix

	1 <sup>st</sup> order concepts	2 <sup>nd</sup> order concepts	Aggregate dimensions
INT#1	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Taking risk is dependent on motivation and to what extent an entrepreneur stands behind his/her own ideas. It also involves ensure you have the right team members otherwise it is not worth to take the risk. There are a lot more startups in Sweden, because they are less risk averse. Does not overthink everything too much and decides based on what feels right (gut feeling).</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Germany, individuals generally tend to be very risk avoidant. Individuals from this culture, both in personal life and professional life tend to look for financial security, insurances, and stability. Germans are not willing to take big risks, without knowing exactly what the outcome will be.</p>	<p><b>Orderliness</b></p> <p><b>Consistency</b></p> <p><b>Structure</b></p> <p><b>Formal procedures</b></p> <p><b>Laws</b></p>	<p><b>Uncertainty avoidance</b></p>
INT#2	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Swedish students have more room for experimenting due to the welfare system, I am more risk adverse. In Italy you don't have that much freedom.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Italy it is very much discouraged (at least in the South) to start your own business as a young individual, they rather encourage you to leave the country for a better future.</p>		
INT#3	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Moving from another country to Sweden and try to start up your own business is a huge risk. Compared to a native entrepreneur in Sweden, who have all securities, such as CSN in place. They have more room for experimenting than I do, I have to ensure that I can stay in Sweden, as do Non-EU citizens.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Indonesia and Thailand the NGOs are not backed by the government and so when we operate there it is always a huge risk. Especially in Indonesia, when I was working for the AIESEC in Bandung, we were aware that some of the things might be considered a crime, but as we were not supported anyway and we knew that change never comes without any risk, we just thought 'fuck it'. Comparing Sweden to Indonesia or Thailand, Sweden is strongly focused on building a business ecosystem for startups and networking. In Indonesia and Thailand you don't really have support from the government.</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I learned in Sweden to take more time and to consider other people's opinions for better long-term results.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> Processes here in Sweden are much more time consuming, they want to include everyone's opinion in decision making to avoid risks, it's more of a flat hierarchy. India is rather the opposite. Sweden decision making and coming to results is more time consuming, but in a way also more efficient.</p>		
INT#5	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Perception of the financial and business risks within the startup are considered to be minimal, though he does mention that it might as well be that the startup might be bankrupt in two years, though this does not seem to bother him.</p>		

	<p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> Has been a 'leader' of hospitality companies with teams comprising of over 100 employees. And the biggest risk in during these previous professional experiences internationally, is that not everyone will agree with the decisions you make, or with the company's vision, which will affect your return on investment.</p>		
INT#1	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Within the first venture team in Sweden, <i>INT#1</i> mentioned that problems were not addressed immediately and that team members bottled up frustrations. In the new venture team, <i>INT#1</i> tries to address any issues with team members as soon as conflict arises, but experiences difficulties as the confrontation is seen as a personal attack.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> People in Germany will confront you with your mistakes and are not particularly forgiving. <i>INT#1</i> stated that a decision during the academic career was strongly condemned by acquaintances of family members.</p> <p>In Mexico, where the entrepreneur gathered professional experience, you may be made aware of the mistakes of inadequate performance, however, instead of focusing on this negative aspect, people generally try to do whatever to make the best out of it. People are generally warmer.</p> <p>It is difficult to separate a work conflict from private life, because work and life are interwoven and that can create difficult situations in which you cannot see eye to eye with a person as your coworker, but also as your friend. It's quite difficult.</p>	<p><b>Assertive in their relationship with others</b></p> <p><b>Confrontational in their relationship with others</b></p> <p><b>Aggressive in their relationship with others</b></p>	<p><b>Assertiveness</b></p>
INT#2	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I have always been a critical thinker and like to challenge the status quo. I just learned how to handle it in a nicer way, but when I disagree, I disagree. I do not conform.</p> <p>Over time I have learned more how to motivate team members, even if we disagree on something</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> I am always that person in a disagreement that gets very much in your face. If I disagree, I make it known. I do not conform.</p>		
INT#3	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Within my venture right now, everyone from the team is pretty straightforward, so if we disagree on something, we just say it directly. I think that's a really cool thing. Every single one of us is able to accept criticism in a calm manner and that helped us a lot to avoid unnecessary conflicts. Sure, we have had disagreements, but then we discussed it and then we moved forward from there.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> Indonesia is a pretty interesting country, as professionals from Central Java are extremely conflict avoidant, whereas people from Sumatra are extremely assertive. Personally, I also experienced this when working with people from Sumatra, they will not think twice about what they want to say, they will be plain and honest with you. On Central Java you are expected to always be polite, never raise your voice.</p> <p>In Thailand individuals in personal and professional life are basically similar to people from Indonesia, they tend to avoid conflict, as they believe in peace and harmony. Must have something to do with the Buddhist culture in a sense. Within this culture individuals tend to avoid any arguments and so everything needs to be discussed and everything needs to be agreed on and solved properly, without offense.</p>		

	<p>My level of assertiveness is dependent on what sector I work in. When I work in the for-profit sector and people are rewarded for their work, I will be blunt and honest and I will confront them with the fact that there is an agreement and that they need to step up their game. I will act more as a manager.</p> <p>In an NGO, people generally do not get financial rewards and I will not be so assertive. I'm aware that people do this for the experience and not for a financial gain. I will still confront them with the fact that the work is not what I expected, but I will word it differently. I will act more as a leader.</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I have been in a conflict with someone over an assignment. I was pushing this person to perform better, whereas this person was taking it really easy. I was under the impression that there was only one way to achieve great results and that is working hard. Back then, I took that home with me and it bothered me for two months after which we got in contact again and noticed that we could have solved things if only we would have found a middle ground. I got into another conflict like this, but by now I did not let it get to me personally. It was a great learning that helped me dealing with conflicts better.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In India, where I am from, you surround yourself with people that talk like you, you make friends with people that think like you and therefore you are always surrounded by people that are pretty much the same as you. You generally have very little conflicts, as people are generally very much moving into the same direction as you are.</p>		
INT#5	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I have mainly worked with a lot of leaders in the past few years, which made it a lot easier for me to passionately speak about the vision and making my team members understand this vision and create this community around the idea that we are going to leave a positive impact on the environment.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> I have been leading teams of over 100 employees in the past and that demands a certain kind of leadership skills and not everybody will agree with you or with the vision of the company, so sometimes you will have to make unpopular decisions. It's an experience you get by making a lot of mistakes.</p>		
INT#1	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I believe it is good to have a mixed team with both men and women as both genders bring different perspectives</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Germany you see more men in higher leadership positions, here in Sweden I feel that it is more equalized. In Germany if women get a child and get some years off for their child it is almost impossible to get back in the professional working environment.</p>	<p><b>Minimizing gender inequality</b></p>	<p><b>Gender differentiation</b></p>
INT#2	<p><b>Previous professional experience(s)</b> For this interviewee the difference in characteristics are deemed significant, rather than the gender differences.</p> <p><b>International:</b> In my previous working experiences, I have often experienced sexism; men making comments on my appearance or uncomfortably touching my shoulder (especially in Italy),</p>		
INT#3	<p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Indonesia, nothing is done to minimize gender inequality and that it is a very patriarchal society, where masculine traits need to be expressed openly</p> <p>The 'think-like-a-man, act-like-a-lady' mentality gives the impression that the women in Indonesia need to work at least twice as hard and in order to be recognized as a leader, need to step up harder and really show that they are in control of their subordinates</p> <p>In Indonesia the act of favoritism when it comes to granting leadership roles, where being acquainted with a person with a high position matters more than competencies, skills or other factors related to the job.</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> As an entrepreneur I will only hire people that are good for my company and will not hire people based on their gender to equalize the gender gap</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b></p>		

	There are not many women in leadership positions, but I feel that you shouldn't be a leader just because you're a woman. People need to be hired based on how good they are and not based on gender.		
INT#5	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I really believe there should be a balance in a team, and it should be equalized. For my own venture at the moment, we are with two guys but we want to hire a woman.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> My previous working experiences I mostly worked only with guys, I really felt that we were missing something. Only men together is one big competition, when you introduce a women in the team things become more relaxed. Having only men or only women in a team can really be a disaster.</p>		
INT#1	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> The startup experience taught me that it is important to set deadlines and that we tell one another when someone executed a task well, that we acknowledge this. It keeps people in your team motivated.</p> <p>I think it really depends on the feedback that you get from and give to your team members and that you should be transparent about the tasks that you complete. This will make people want to perform even better.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In the German academic and professional environment, high performance is expected. Additionally, it is more common to see things through completely and when you don't. An example mentioned is the first study program abroad that <i>INT#1</i> started in the Netherlands but did not complete after the first year. You are expected to explain yourself constantly towards people within your personal network and in your professional career.</p> <p>In Germany, I have experienced moments where I worked hard to achieve the best result possible, but this was not recognized by any of my superiors. This made me wonder; if they don't care about the effort I put into a task, I could also care less.</p> <p><i>INT#1</i> perceives Mexico to be more 'relaxed' and more accepting of mistakes being made. There is more a mentality where they acknowledge the mistake, but that life goes on and that the best should be made of it.</p> <p>In Mexico, people are not really performance oriented, everything they would do in a month, <i>INT#1</i> could do a lot faster. An explanation given is that the wages in Mexico are around €300 a month, which made her understand why people do not focus on performing well.</p>	<p><b>Rewarding performance improvement and excellence</b></p> <p><b>Encouragement performance improvement and excellence</b></p>	<p><b>Performance orientation</b></p>
INT#2	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> We are a very high-performance team, and we know what we want to achieve, and this high performance comes with putting in 100% of our efforts.</p> <p>In Sweden, there is this conception that you have your own time and at 5pm on a Friday, you do your own thing. We managed to change that within our team, in which we have two Swedes and for some assignments we got them to put in a bit more time. Not because I they were forced, but we believe that our work ethics were contagious in a way and we influenced them, showing that hard work pays off.</p> <p>People should not feel forced to do something, we try to ensure balance between teamwork and individual work, try to be as flexible as possible and that there is some freedom to express an own way of working. There should be this feeling amongst team members that they contribute and that their opinions are valued, and we that should be integrated in the work of the team.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In I think that all of us have different work ethics. People in the workplace have high expectations and we are expected to work our asses off, basically until we're dead.</p>		

	<p>My previous experience has taught me to set common expectations, ensure some ground rules and implement feedback loops.</p> <p>In Italy, I feel that there is this case in the professional world, which I like to refer to as the ‘blame culture’. It could be because there are a lot of family-owned businesses. It’s easier to blame an outsider.</p>		
INT#3	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Within the venture team, what we did from the start was expectation setting. I can tell you; I am not the one who drives performance, it is every individual in the team that initiate themselves and drive their own performance. By asking every individual for their expectations, we could judge whether these expectations could be realized.</p> <p>Trust is an important factor; you will have to learn how to place your trust in someone. Breaking someone’s trust will make you feel bad, but by trusting in them you keep your resources. Micromanaging demotivates people</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> My bachelor’s studies and my previous experience has taught me to give people autonomy, a sense of control of what they do instead of micromanaging. I have learnt that you have to create a sense of community to make people feel that they are not alone, you need clarity, so that you know what is expected from you and what the measurement of successes are. Role clarity leads to higher performance, the moment you don’t know what to do, or what is expected, is also the moment that people perform less. Another way that you can ensure that people perform well, are rewards. This does not have to be monetary rewards, but experience on one’s cv, in case of the NGO</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> You know this whole mindset of ‘Lagom’? don’t stand out but be with everyone. That was a shocker to me, because where I come from you have to stand out and excel in everything. Here in Sweden people get 60/100 points and that is fine. Now I do not agree with either situation, but I do know that it’s okay to break people down who might not be good at certain things and are good at other things, right? But my experiences in Sweden have taught me to break away from micromanaging. This learning came through the various experiences I have had.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> I come from India, which is a highly competitive society. There is no question of failure, it’s not only something that occurs at work, but also at school. If you fail, your life is done, you’re a failure.</p>		
INT#5	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I am quite proud of what I have done in the past, but also now in my venture. But I consider myself as a people and operations strategist. I simply create a blueprint and then I put the right people in the right places. I have been applying the principle of storytelling within my venture right now as well. In order to perform well, I am now never compromising on my value proposition, do not let the quality of your ideas be compromised, ever.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> I learned the art of storytelling over the past 10 years in my career and it is still a learning that I will carry with me forever. I learned to be humble as a leader and appreciate people from your team on a daily basis.</p>		
INT#1	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I think it’s important to get along well with each other in both situations, Sweden has taught me that you can also be friends with your boss.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Germany private life and work life is really divided. You are not just going to a bar with each other on friendship level, it’s very work orientated. When working in Mexico, private and work life is more mixed</p>	<p><b>encourages and rewards individuals for being fair to others</b></p> <p><b>encourages and rewards individuals for</b></p>	<p><b>Human orientation</b></p>
INT#2	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> If I want to get to know a person better, I just invite them over for dinner.</p>		

	<p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Italy it is very common to meet with people outside of company hours. I mean you go out with them for dinner, drinks, it's always food-related if you want to bond with someone</p>	<p><b>being altruistic to others</b></p> <p><b>encourages and rewards individuals for being generous to others</b></p> <p><b>encourages and rewards individuals for being caring to others</b></p>	
INT#3	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I have no time to meet my colleagues outside of working hours. We already spend so much time together! We also hang out with each other during the working hours.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Indonesia you will not meet your colleagues outside of working hours, especially not your boss. You are not going to talk to each other outside the contracts.</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I think it's good to go abroad and experience things outside your comfort zone. When you go outside the comfort zone you start learning. It is important to respect people in every way and handle situations in a professional and clean way, things should not become personal.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Sweden people also meet each other outside of work. No way that people will do that in India!</p>		
INT#5	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Now as an entrepreneur I speak more with my colleagues than I speak to my wife</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> After working in hospitality you learn to divide working environment and friendship. In hospitality you can scream at one another during your shift and be best friends again when the shift is over.</p>		
INT#1	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> To make everyone feel proud of the venture, I think that each team member should try to be transparent about their accomplishments and I feel that this should also be 'rewarded'. So, when someone performs well on a certain task or completed something before the set deadline, we have to tell each other, because I feel this will keep everyone motivated.</p>	<p><b>Express pride in their organizations</b></p> <p><b>Express loyalty in their organizations.</b></p>	<p><b>Institutional collectivism</b></p>
INT#2	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> In Sweden the competition between professionals is a bit more invisible, I have the feeling that people have the tendency to bring the company more forward.</p> <p>I think that many foreign entrepreneurs emerge in Sweden, because they are different and dare to be different and they are here to speak up and tend to be a bit flamboyant. We have to be special and show we are different.</p>		
INT#3	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> We are all different individuals, with different backgrounds, but I think that the thing that makes us proud and what unites us is the fact that we all have the same goal.</p> <p>I believe you need to give a sense of ownership and to all your partners, subordinates, and employees. Make them see and understand the bigger picture, because this will make them feel prouder to work for the company.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Indonesia, Thailand and Sweden I would say that people are rather collective. Which could be why I had very little troubles adjusting to the Swedish culture. In Indonesia, Thailand, and Sweden, you want to blend in, no matter what you do, do not stand out, or you will be excluded from the collective. You don't want that in Indonesia or Thailand.</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I am currently still trying to figure out how Tetra Pak does it, but all of my friends who work there are super proud of being part of Tetra Pak. The people I speak with are always speaking about 'we' are going to do this, and 'we' are planning this or that in the next year.</p>		

	I just believe that people are happiest when they work for a company or a purpose that is bigger than themselves. I believe the ‘WHY’ behind my startup is much bigger than me. I always make sure to be transparent upfront, as I am still in this bootstrapping phase and I tell everyone that I basically have nothing else to offer that could keep them there, but the vision that I have for the company. Is state what I can and what I cannot do, and I make sure to have conversations with the people within the venture on a regular basis.		
INT#5	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I make sure to share the achievements with the team. I do not have direct employees, but I have two freelancers and when I receive compliments on something that other people admire, I make sure to tell who is responsible for the work.		
INT#1	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> It is important to reward your team members and tell them that they are doing a good job, that makes them feel proud about their job and motivated to work.	<b>Practices collective distribution of resources and collective action;</b>  <b>Encourage collective distribution of resources and collective action</b>	<b>In-group collectivism</b>
INT#2	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Different ideas are important and should be encouraged. <b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Sweden the community is stronger than the individual. It might be hard for a person that is progressive to introduce new ideas into the workplace and do things differently as you will be seen as an outcast. That is not lagom		
INT#3	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I learned not to micromanage people, that only gives conflicts. I want to know what is going on but I will of course give people a sense of ownership. In our venture I am the person who works with the main idea and I need to be able to see the bigger picture. <b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> My working experience taught me the importance of giving someone responsibility for something. To give them a sense of ownership to give them pride about something.		
INT#4	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I am using transparent and honest communication with my team. It is important to know their concerns, what they like, etc. In the end you want to have loyal employees. <b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> I learned that it is so important to have a company brand with a purpose. For example, Oatly, also its important to treat your employees well and stay loyal then employees will talk in ‘we’ instead of ‘I’.		
INT#5	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> It’s important to share achievement with the team and help others grow. It is also important to help your network. <b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In my previous working experiences, especially in the hospitality industry, you learn to say ‘we’ instead of ‘I’. You learn that from the beginning, there simply is no ‘I’. I build my whole career based on ‘we’.		
INT#1	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I generally have the feeling that the hierarchy in Sweden is a flatter than in Germany, for example. I am more likely to give feedback earlier to my team members or coworkers, than I would in Germany, because I have the feeling, they accept feedback more here in Sweden. <b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Germany there is such a strong hierarchical structure. I had this conversation with my uncle, who recently started working and the company that he works for has a strong hierarchy, and he sees that a lot of things go wrong in the business, but he is too afraid to address this, because he is afraid of the reaction.  In Mexico there is a rather flat hierarchy, we did a lot together, but a conflict in Mexico that is work-related is difficult to separate from your private life.	<b>Authority</b>  <b>Power distance</b>  <b>Status privilege</b>	<b>Power distance</b>
INT#2	<b>As an entrepreneur:</b> My experience in Sweden and within my startup right now has taught me that there is not one way of leading. Having witnessed different perspectives and having analyzed the differences in business cultures allowed me to spot the things that need		

	<p>changing. And Change is hard. The community is stronger than the individual and if you try to do things completely different than others, you might be considered an outcast.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> In Italy, there's a strong hierarchical structure and the boss is simply the boss. He/she will give you orders and that is my experience in Italy. My father works in the public sector and he is rather rebellious, just like me. But it's quite uncommon to defy authority. In Italy there is little room for exploring and being creative, in many businesses you are simply there for the execution of the organizational vision they have, but the employees by no means are contributors to this vision.</p>		
INT#3	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> First of all, it should be mentioned that any feedback should be taken into consideration. Within the venture I take all feedback into consideration, but sometimes, as a leader, you need to make unpopular decisions, which may not be the favorite choice of your team members, but they are good for the company. I mean, considering feedback depends on the context.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> When I fulfilled a leadership role in a for-profit company, I think that, whether an employee wants it or not, they will have to follow my order, as they signed a contract and if they do not follow it, they know they might risk being laid off.</p> <p>Now within the non-profit sector, the servant leadership style was sort of my bible. You share leadership in a way, and you empower your team members so that they can become better than you, eventually.</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> The way that I see it right now, is that it requires an open mind and that smaller startups are more open to implement this open-mindedness, more than larger corporations, but when someone in my team has a problem, I am not going to belittle their problems.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> I have found extremely arrogant leaders in Europe, India and the US, who really cannot see beyond their own viewpoints.</p>		
INT#5	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Nowadays, I carry this idea with me that I have to function as a role model for my team members, which can be a burden, as that means that there is no margin for errors, because you always have eyes on you.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> I have had the luck to be working for companies in the last 6 to 7 years which had a lot of great values from the leader of the company.</p>		
INT#1	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> I am pretty German in terms of planning ahead, however, I do feel that became a bit more relaxed. Mexico and Sweden have changed my behaviour slightly</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> Germans really plan ahead. They are always prepared for the future and want to have a sense of security</p>	<p>Engage in future-oriented behaviors such as planning</p> <p>Engage in future-oriented behaviors such as investing in the future,</p>	<p>Future orientation</p>
INT#2			
INT#3	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Basically my entire life is full of uncertainty and even now, I take things day by day.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> My life in Thailand was pretty uncertain and through it all, I have learnt that everything is uncertain. I had no securities and even coming to Sweden was a huge risk. It made me realize that I have to take things day by day.</p>		
INT#4	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b></p>		

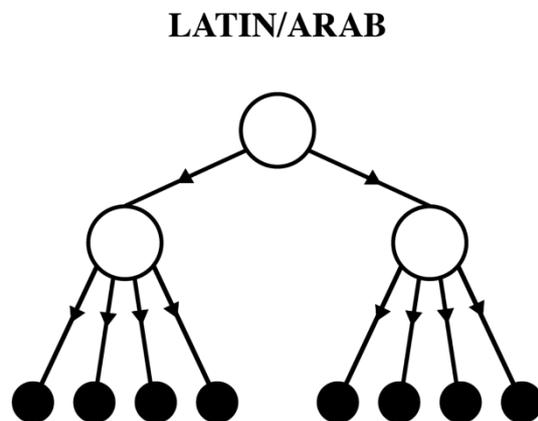
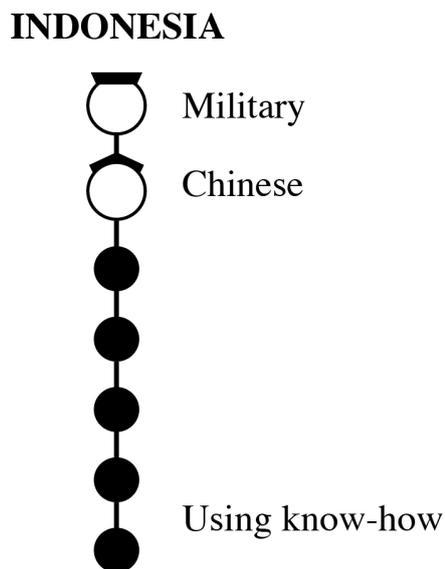
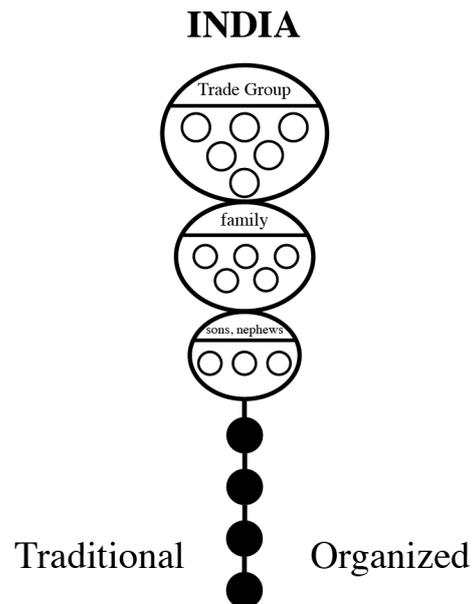
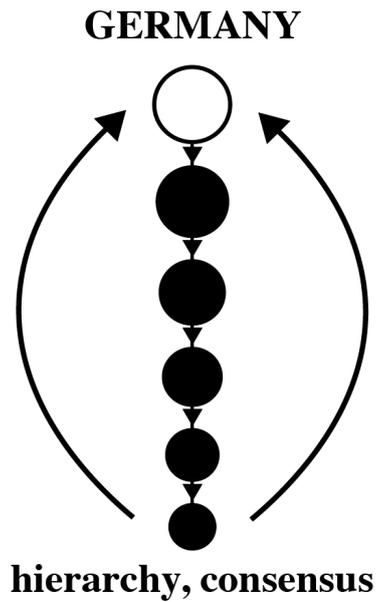
	<p>I feel different in comparison to most people from my origin as I am one of these people who travelled around the world and came back to set something up. I like to learn from different places.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> leadership positioning and how they look at the future how they look at the team is very individualistic.</p>			
INT#5	<p><b>As an entrepreneur:</b> Now as an entrepreneur we planned a future strategy for the next 10 years.</p> <p><b>Previous professional experience(s) International:</b> Iran is very different from Sweden. In Sweden your future is already secured and predicted in a way and you don't need to be worried. The salary is given to the government to get something back in return. Social system has been established pretty much on what you have and what you can provide. In Iran you don't have that and that's why it is very family oriented because the only security you have is your family helping out others. In Iran you are stressed about what is going to happen in the future so you can keep what you have today.</p>			
INT#1	<p>I have the feeling that, in Sweden, it is important to address the needs and wellbeing of team members and employees properly. It is important that the team feels good and that team members are happy and healthy.</p> <p>Sweden has two faces, I think. In the service/hospitality industry in Germany, the customer is king, you do everything for the guests and here in Sweden, they don't really care about you, I guess. People can come across a bit rude at times, but I find that in Sweden, people are generally super friendly.</p> <p>As a leader, it is important that you build a good relationship with your team members and that you discuss things openly. Reward people for good performance and acknowledge good performance. If you don't give feedback, then you never know what was good, or bad and in the long term, I feel that people will get demotivated. It's important to reflect on the work of your employees and talk about it with them.</p>			
INT#2	<p>The biggest hurdle I am still facing here in Sweden as an entrepreneur, but also with my employment within the NGO, is literally that I do not know what my boss, or subordinates want. It is really hard to interpret what a Swede is thinking, they might say that everything is alright and suddenly you don't hear anything from them again.</p> <p>The advice I have for internationals that want to start their ventures in Sweden is; know who you are working with. If you are from a culture where they are rather competitive, you are going to have a hard time in Sweden. Don't get too caught up in the previous country that you worked in</p>		<p><b>Advice for internationals / learnings on effective leadership in Sweden</b></p>	
INT#3	<p>Try to reach out to anyone, but mainly try to find the right people. People should make use of the networks that are provided, whether that be through the university or other organizations and leverage those opportunities. Remember, in the beginning, when you just start out with your company, there is no brand, meaning you yourself are the brand, the face of the company. Don't be afraid of asking for help. And learn the language, it will open doors for you that would otherwise remain locked. Language is powerful.</p>			
INT#4	<p>My greatest lessons I have taken from India and Sweden mainly. I believe in the work hard to get good results mentality. Not like in Sweden where everyone who participates gets a medal.</p> <p>The biggest learning from Sweden is that in entrepreneurship there is no true success or absolute failure. Either you succeed or you do something, and it does not work and you try to do it better and you continue doing this until you get it right.</p> <p>It's also important that you make sure that everyone's opinion is heard.</p>			

	<p>My advice is to make use of all the resources that exist in the Swedish system before putting your own money in your projects. You have great incubators, in terms of grants you have Almy, Krinova that provides free business advice for companies, free innovation labs. Making use of these resources can also lead to more global exposure. And if you are developing a product, test your product early and use the feedback that you get.</p>		
<p><b>INT#5</b></p>	<p>I have learned the art of storytelling and I think that the experiences from the past have made me see myself as a people and operations strategist. I have learned through my career how to listen to that.</p> <p>The hardest thing to adjust to in Swedish business culture, personally, is getting honest feedback. In comparison to Denmark, where they will block you out when you are not good enough at something, in Sweden they will not share this with you immediately.</p> <p>My advice for international entrepreneurs that want to start a business in Sweden is not to be afraid to reach out to Swedish businesspeople. Listen to a lot of pitches and pitch a lot yourself to learn.</p> <p>Don't be apologetic for the things you are not good at, instead mention what you are good at. Your experiences may shine light on great ideas that would otherwise remain unknown, because you don't reach out and don't share. And find the right people, investors as well. When an investor tells you that your idea is not good enough, respect that and just move on. It was simply not the right investor for you and such a person you also do not want to have on board.</p>		

## Appendix 4: The different leadership styles based on culture

The different leadership styles from Lewis per culture are related to the following interviewees:

- Germany INT1
- Latin/Arab INT2
- India INT4
- Indonesia INT3
- Latin/Arab INT5



*Leadership Styles based on Culture adapted from Lewis (2006)*