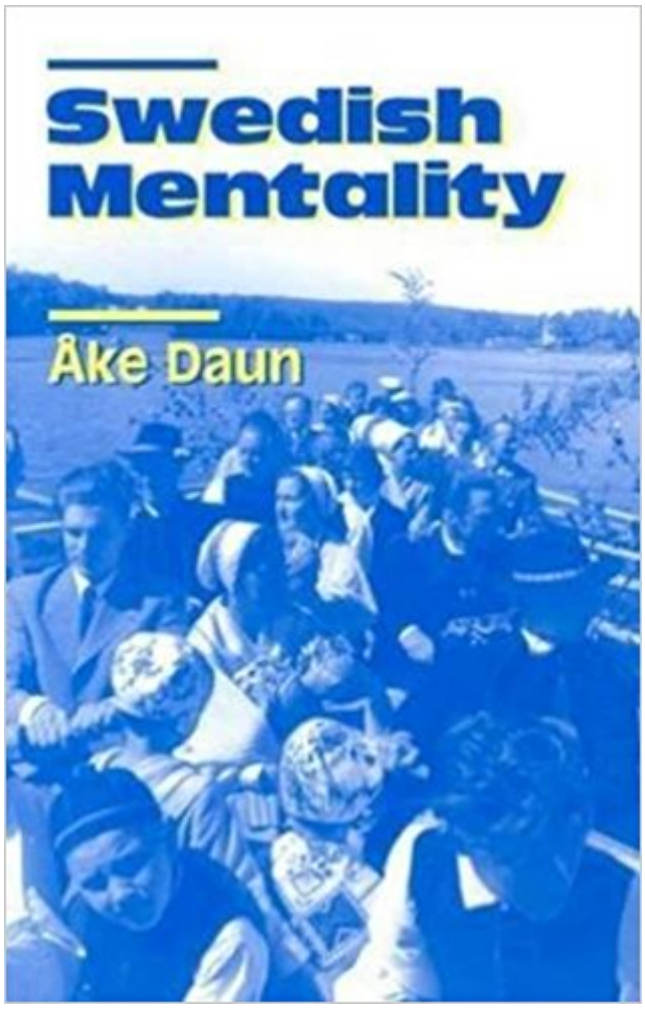
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Swedish Mentality



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Synopsis

Is there a distinctly Swedish national character? Are Swedes truly shy, unemotional, conflict-avoiding, melancholy, and dour? Swedish Mentality, the English translation of the hugely successful book published in Sweden in 1989, considers the reality behind the myth. The author, Ãƒâ |ke Daun, is a respected ethnologist who is sometimes referred to as the "guru" of Swedish character. In recent years, it has become popular to discuss Swedishness and Swedish identity. The advent of the European Union and the increasing presence of immigrant refugees in Sweden have fueled public debate on the distinctiveness of Swedish culture. Daun, however, goes beyond stereotype, drawing upon statistics gathered over more than a decade of research. The result is an entertaining and engagingly written book. Throughout, Daun quotes from interviews with native Swedes and immigrants as well as from travel accounts, folklore, and proverbs. We learn why some Swedes might prefer to walk up a flight of stairs rather than share an elevator with a neighbor and why some gain satisfaction from walking alone in the woods or going fishing. Daun describes a range of factors influencing Swedish character, including population composition, rural background, and even climate. He recognizes behavioral variations related to gender, age, class, and region, and he considers subtleties of individual character as well.Swedish Mentality should interest a wide array of readers, whether of Swedish descent or not.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Swedish --This text refers to an out of print or

unavailable edition of this title.

Ake Daun, a respected ethnologist who is sometimes referred to as the ’guru’ of Swedish character, goes beyond stereotype, drawing upon statistics gathered during more than a decade of research. He quotes from interviews with native Swedes and immigrants as well as from travel accounts, folklore, and proverbs. We learn why some Swedes might prefer to walk up a flight of stairs rather than share an elevator with a neighbor and why some gain satisfaction from walking alone in the woods or going fishing. ’Swedish Mentality’ is an entertaining and engagingly written book that should interest a wide range of readers, whether or not of Swedish descent.

Wonderful book! Explains so much.I am around a large number swedes and Danish persons. I can honestly say, he nailed it. While a couple of personalities are always unquie to the individual , the general overview is so accurate it is scary. I disagree with a previous reviewer in that this is outdated. I am not Swedish (Danish / German ancestors) but am American surrounded by swedes and hav been to the country over 6 times. I have many friends there.. His book is still on par... From an American culture perspective . Helped me a lot!The only thing I can say is that can be misinterpreted as bragging is that swedes will never ask about anyone else and only talk avoid themselves .. Not bragging in the classic sense but to ask you about yourself seems to be some kind of violation.. Probing. That is unwanted therefore it is never done. So it can seem to an American that they are self absorbed and feel only they are "right". That is eluded to in this book . The attitude of never offering help because it would assume you would be unable I help yourself ... An insult . I have personally experienced this. Where an American would jump to help, a swede will not . ÃƒÆ’Ã â ke, talks about this and thus the definition of bragging is deferent than an American position. It is all about taking care of yourself despite the socialistic values if the country.ÃƒÆ’Ã â ke is also generous with his time, as I wrote him and asked these very same questions.. He replied in kind and was very interests I. The interchange between Americans as rhe book was written with the British in mind.A good purchase !

A effort to measure and describe the collective personality of the Swedish people, based on a number of cross-national opinion surveys. It makes some interesting points -- for example, the "typical Swedish characteric" cited most often by Swedes is shyness. In general, however, the conclusions are way overdrawn. If (say) 30% of Swedes exhibit a given characteristic, compared to (say) 20% of the European average, this gets described as a "Swedish characteristic". Also, the

surveys on which the book is based were taken in the 1970’s and 1980’s, when attitudes of young people showed marked differences from those of older people in some respects -- differences that usually pushed them in a less "Swedish" direction. Interesting, but I wouldn’t base any assumptions about individual Swedes on it

Much of contemporary social science still looks down upon the study of national characteristics as hopelessly unscientific. What a pity. Author Ake Daun shows that such studies, intelligently handled, can provide a wealth of reliable insights into other cultures. Covering everything from child-rearing to academia, he sheds considerable insight into Swedish culture and answers, in the process, some worthwhile questions. Why, for example, is Swedish society, on the whole, so dull? Students interested in the cultural components of creativity will do well to take note of the Swedish distaste for novelty, the predilection for order, peace, literalmindedness, and the surprising salience of envy.

I am not an expert in this field but rather read the book to better understand my heritage. It was heavy, slow reading at first but I warmed to the book and enjoyed it.

As a "Swedish-American" (3rd generation), I have been looking for more information about my heritage. This is one of many books I have been gathering. It is more scholarly than I anticipated, but still very readable. The topic seems hard to pin-down in scientific terms, but he does a pretty good job. Although not a social-scienctist, I imagine this comes as close to facts as you can get with such a subject. It deals with many stereo-types of Swedes, treating most of them in a positive light. I found most to have some ring of truth either within my own temperment or things I have heard from my older relatives. He does point out several times that there are always exceptions to the generalizations.One thing that is interesting is that it was written in Swedish and translated. At first I thought I noticed that some of the sentence structures were a bit off, but then it might have been that I was just looking at it too hard. Also interesting is his perspective from the "inside", and mine from America, albeit "Swedish-America".This book has a pretty narrow focus, and is not that exhaustive, so is not the end-all on the Swedish personality or mentality, but is an interesting look at why a Swede and the rest of the world thinks of Swedes as somehow slightly different in the specific ways discussed. A good book.

Or not, either way this is a truly honest look at us. Ancestral Memories abound. On a par with Kirstan Lavensdotter!

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