

The Hofstede Prediction Game

Six workplace situations. Can the numbers tell you what's happening — and where do they fall short?

WHAT YOU HAVE

- All six cards. Each has a short scenario, a **Hofstede** chart (country-level values), and a **GLOBE** chart (cluster-level leadership preferences).
- China's scores appear on every card — even when neither party is Chinese — as a reference point.

WHAT TO DO (20 MINUTES · GROUPS OF 4)

1. I will tell you which card to start with. **Work through the deck in order from there.**
2. For each card you reach, write down:
 - **Predict** — using only the scores, 2–3 sentences on what is going wrong. Which dimensions seem to be doing the work?
 - **What's missing** — 2–3 sentences on what the scores cannot explain. Think about institutions, history, individuals, recent change.
3. **Don't try to finish all six.** Two or three thoughtful cards is better than six rushed ones.
4. Pick a spokesperson for a 90-second share-back: country + one prediction + one limit you noticed.

HOW WE'LL SHARE BACK

- Different groups start in different places, so we will hear different cards. You will see how others read situations you didn't reach.

HOFSTED E SCORES

theculturefactor.com (current country scores, 0–100)

GLOBE SCORES

House et al. (2004) cluster means (1–7 scale)

MODULE

HRM304 · SWUFE · Session 2 of 11

Sweden → China

Swedish automotive firm · Chengdu R&D centre · engineering team of 28

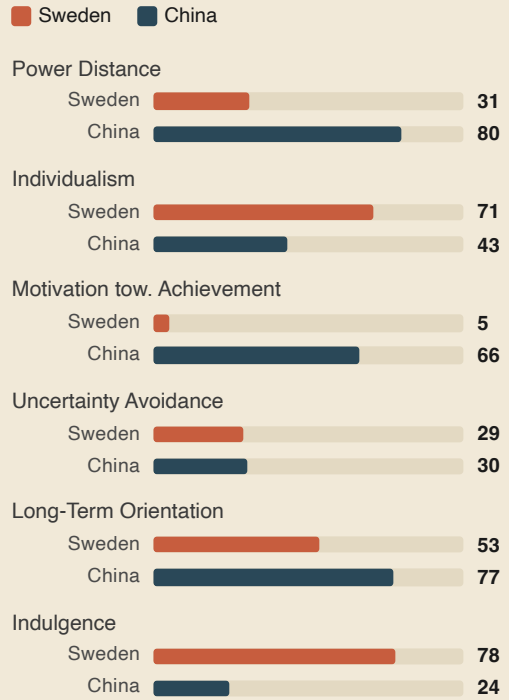
SCENARIO

Erik, newly transferred from headquarters in Gothenburg, runs the weekly engineering team meeting in Chengdu. When he asks junior engineers what they think, he gets silence; senior staff speak only after the project director arrives. Erik decides to make the meeting more informal – he asks a different junior to lead each week. The project director quietly objects to HR.

Three weeks in, juniors are cc'ing senior managers on every email they send. Two deadlines have slipped. Erik tells HR the team "lacks initiative". The director says the team is "showing proper respect" – and that Erik is "creating confusion about who decides".

HOFSTEDE SCORES

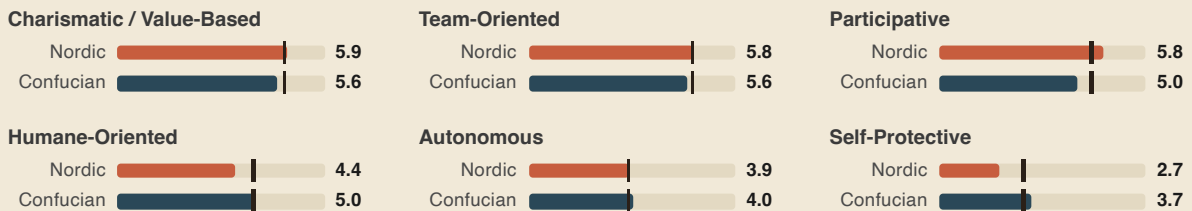
country level · 0–100



GLOBE LEADERSHIP PREFERENCES

cluster level · 1–7 scale

■ Nordic (Sweden) ■ Confucian (China) | 10-cluster avg



Sources: theculturefactor.com (Hofstede, current); House et al. (2004) (GLOBE)

Germany → Brazil

German engineering firm · São Paulo subsidiary · standardised appraisal rollout

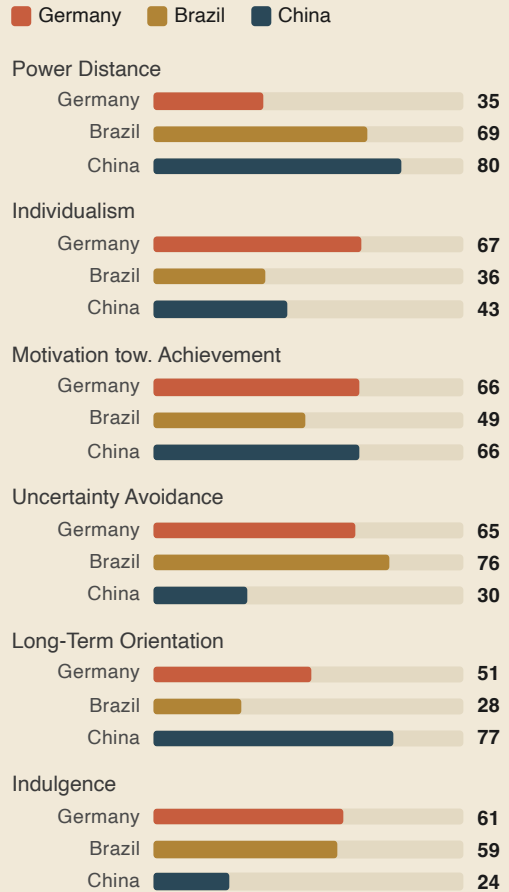
SCENARIO

A German parent rolls out a standardised appraisal form across its 12 subsidiaries. Each manager must score their reports on nine competencies, attach two specific incidents to justify each score, and rank team members from best to worst, which determines who gets a bonus.

São Paulo completes the cycle on time. Within four months, three top performers resign — including one named in the succession plan. Exit interviews say the new process "felt cold" and that ranking colleagues "destroyed the team". The Brazilian HR director proposes adapting the form. Munich replies that using the same form everywhere is the whole point of the rollout.

HOFSTEDE SCORES

country level · 0–100



GLOBE LEADERSHIP PREFERENCES

cluster level · 1–7 scale

Germanic (Germany) | L. America (Brazil) | Confucian (China) | 10-cluster avg

Charismatic / Value-Based



Team-Oriented



Participative



Humane-Oriented



Autonomous



Self-Protective



USA → Japan

San Francisco SaaS firm · Tokyo subsidiary (80 engineers) · "Peer Connect" rollout

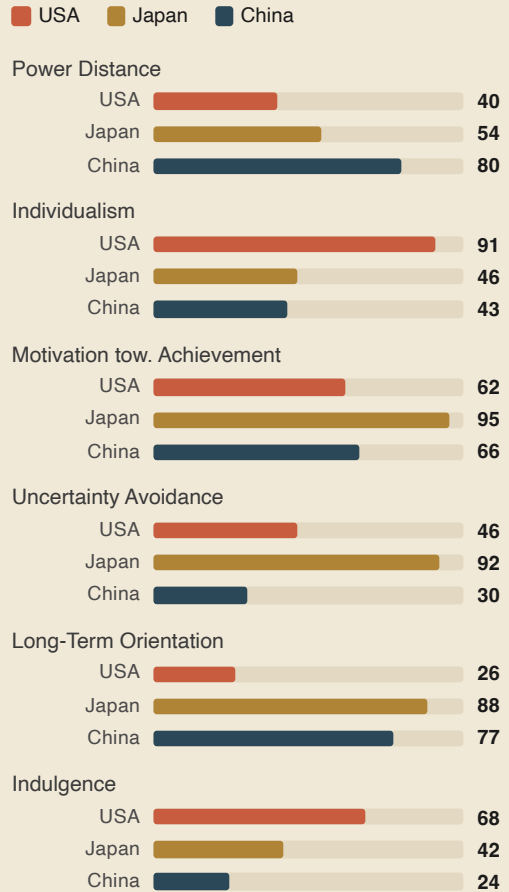
SCENARIO

"Peer Connect" is a quarterly peer-feedback system. Each engineer rates four randomly assigned colleagues on a 1–5 scale and writes one short answer to "what could they do differently?". Feedback is anonymous.

After two quarters in the Tokyo office, almost every score is a 4 or 5. The comment boxes are mostly empty; the rest contain only praise. The US Chief People Officer asks why Tokyo is "not using the system as designed". The Tokyo lead replies that the system is being used exactly as designed: people are giving honest feedback, and the team is performing well.

HOFSTEDE SCORES

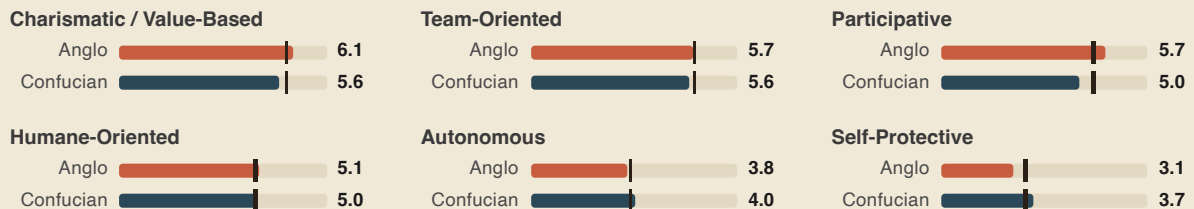
country level · 0–100



GLOBE LEADERSHIP PREFERENCES

cluster level · 1–7 scale

Anglo (USA) Confucian (Japan & China) | 10-cluster avg



Sources: theculturefactor.com (Hofstede, current); House et al. (2004) (GLOBE)

UK → Saudi Arabia

UK retail group · Riyadh expansion · graduate recruitment scheme

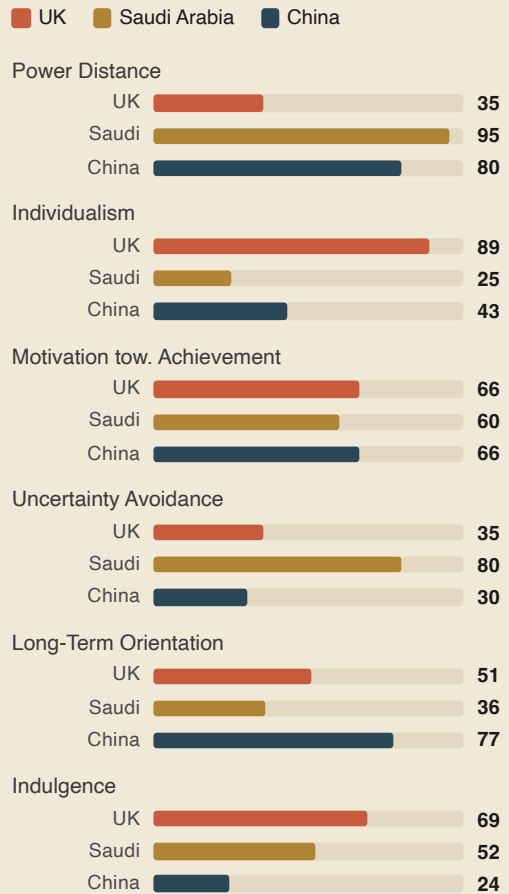
SCENARIO

A UK retailer opens five stores in Riyadh. Its London head of talent designs the graduate scheme she has used for years: numerical aptitude tests, structured interviews, and an assessment centre – a day of group exercises and role-plays in mixed-gender teams.

Of 600 applicants, 380 are shortlisted but only 47 attend the assessment day, and 12 accept offers. A local recruiter reports back: the format felt "informal" and "not serious"; several candidates said their families would not approve of mixed-gender role-plays; top applicants from elite Saudi universities withdrew before the assessment day. The Saudi partner says: "you are hiring whoever is willing to come, not whoever is best."

HOFSTEDE SCORES

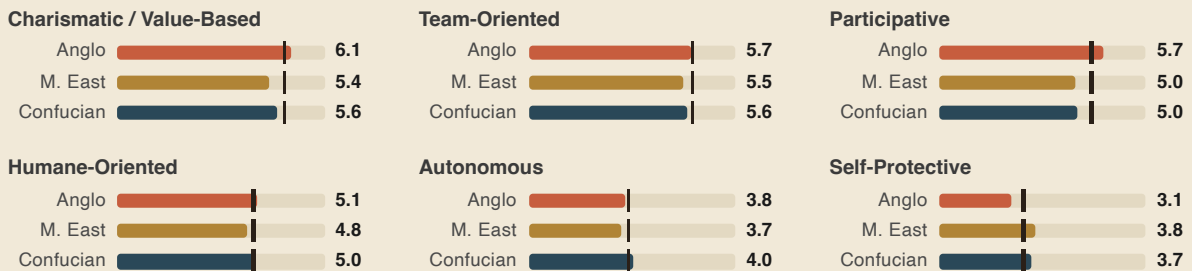
country level · 0–100



GLOBE LEADERSHIP PREFERENCES

cluster level · 1–7 scale

Anglo (UK) Middle East (Saudi) Confucian (China) | 10-cluster avg



China → Indonesia

Chinese e-commerce firm · Jakarta engineering hub (200 hires) · "996" working hours

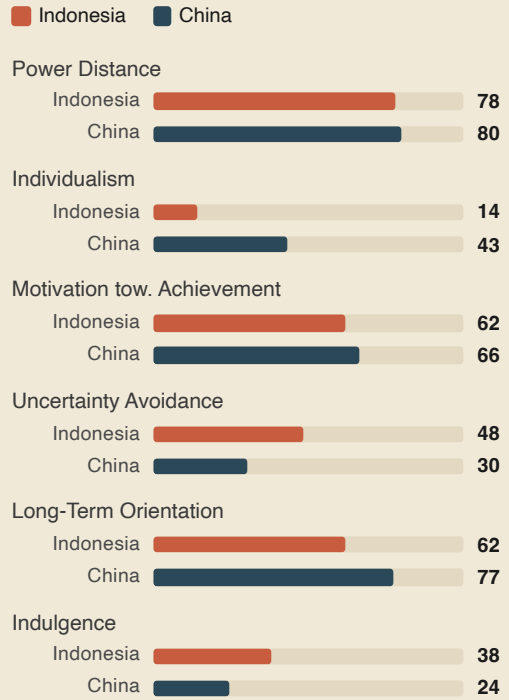
SCENARIO

A Hangzhou-headquartered e-commerce firm opens an engineering hub of 200 staff in Jakarta. Chinese product directors bring the "996" rhythm — 9 am to 9 pm, six days a week — and expect overtime as routine. Bonuses are based on hours worked.

During Ramadan, Indonesian engineers leave at 5 pm to break their fast (iftar) with family. A product director schedules a sprint review for 7 pm on the second day of Ramadan; the room is half empty. He tells Shanghai "this team is not committed." Local HR pushes back: "the team is committed; they are also Muslim." Three senior engineers resign within a month.

HOFSTEDE SCORES

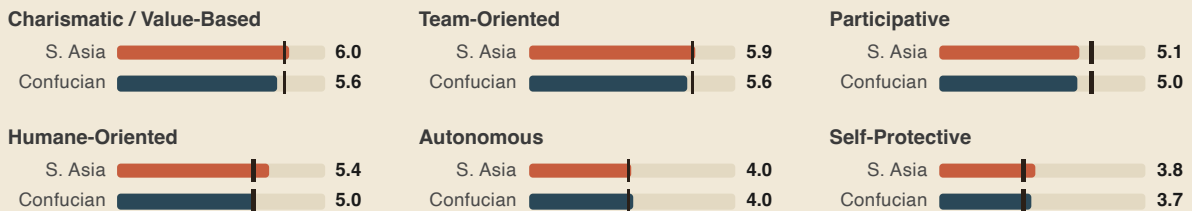
country level · 0–100



GLOBE LEADERSHIP PREFERENCES

cluster level · 1–7 scale

■ S. Asia (Indonesia) ■ Confucian (China) | 10-cluster avg



Sources: theculturefactor.com (Hofstede, current); House et al. (2004) (GLOBE)

China → Germany

Chinese state-owned enterprise · Stuttgart joint venture (automotive supplier, 320 staff) · sales restructure

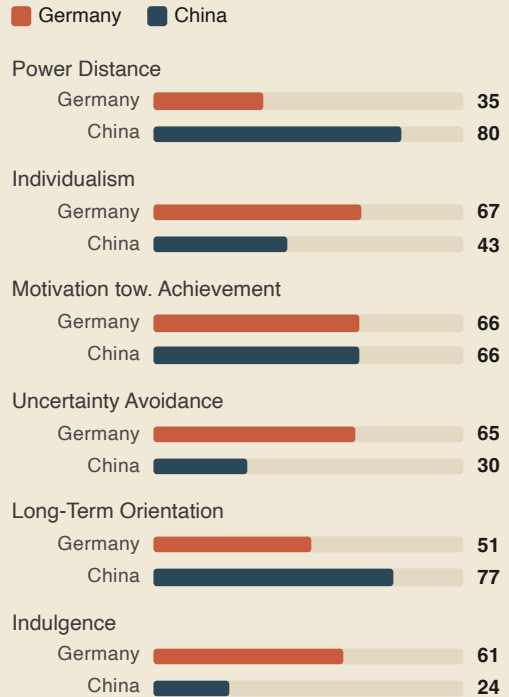
SCENARIO

A Chinese state-owned enterprise (SOE) has acquired a 60% stake in a Stuttgart engineering firm. The new MD, Mr. Liu, wants to merge two regional sales roles into one and reassign three engineers. He briefs the German HR director, Frau Bauer, on Monday and asks her to "implement this week".

Frau Bauer says this is a matter for the works council (Betriebsrat) – the employee representative body required by German law. The works council must be given seven days with full documentation before it agrees, and consultation can take weeks. Mr. Liu finds the delay disrespectful – in Beijing, the parent company decides and HR implements. Three weeks pass; the works council objects. Mr. Liu asks Frau Bauer why she "took the works council's side".

HOFSTEDE SCORES

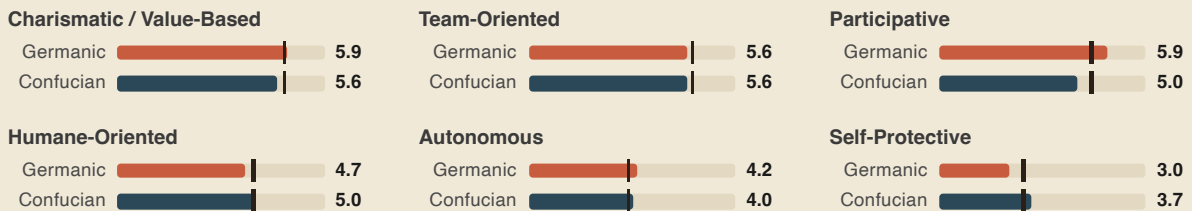
country level · 0–100



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