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**Culture and perception of  
leadership: Ideal leader in  
the country of origin and  
the country of residence  
– case of Germany. Study  
report (part two)**

*“Asking people to describe  
the qualities of a good leader  
is a way of asking them to describe their culture.”*  
G. i G. J. Hofstede (2005, p. 268)

**1. Introduction**

Hofstede is recognized as one of the first investigators who became interested in the interrelationship between leadership and culture. In line with the abovementioned quote, he claims that the people’s views on leadership reflect the culture of their country, and leader himself is a so-called “culture hero” who defines the behavioural patterns for the members of a given culture (Hofstede, Hofstede 2005). A similar assumption was the foundation of the long-term research project GLOBE, which from the early nineties investigated the cultural determinants of leadership in organizations (Dickson et al. 2003 House et al. 2004).

The themes of leadership and the prototype of an ideal leader (within the intercultural frame) were central to research done by the

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authors of the present paper. The first part of the study report (Witkowski, Grotthus 2011) was primarily concerned with the intercultural differences in perception of an ideal leader in German organizations and organizations in the country of origin between five geo-cultural regions: Germans and foreigners working in Germany (the *inter*-level). The present part of the report focuses on the foreigners and only the differences in their perception of an ideal leader in the country of origin and Germany were analyzed (the *intra*-level). Thus, the main goal of the present study was to find out which of the leader attributes are considered more important by the foreigners in their country of origin, and which are in Germany.

## 2. Hypothesis

The following hypothesis will be tested in order to examine the possible differences existing between the leader prototypes shared by the foreigners for the country of origin and Germany: *There will be significant differences in perception of an outstanding leader for Germany and for the country of origin.*

In order to analyze the data gathered with one single measure (CLT Questionnaire) and from the same group of participants, Wilcoxon test for two dependent samples will be used. The foreigners, grouped in four geo-cultural regions, will be therefore looked upon as a double source of data regarding the (perception of) leadership in their country of origin and in the country that they had decided to move to. Furthermore, in order to investigate the interdependence of the prototypes of an outstanding leader for Germany and for the country of origin, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient between the two sets of data for each scale of the CLT questionnaire will be calculated.

## 3. Measure

The CLT (Culturally Endorsed Leadership Theory Questionnaire) was used to examine the perception of the outstanding leadership. It is the chief tool used in the GLOBE project, available in several dozen languages (GLOBE, 2006). It contains a list of 112 items [describing] an outstanding leader's traits and behaviours, i.e. characteristics of a person "with the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (House et al., 2002). The items were assigned to twenty one scales of leadership, which analysed together give an exhaustive picture of the prototype of an outstanding leader for the investigated group.



Age	28,14 (9,40)	24,14 (1,57)	24,40 (1,51)	25,14 (2,12)	<b>26,03 (6,12)</b>
Length of stay in Germany*	43,29 (51,14)	31,86 (23,24)	13,50 (9,90)	25,14 (18,47)	30,00 (35,09)
Extent of professional experience*	28,29 (38,74)	21,57 (20,53)	7,30 (6,70)	5,00 (3,96)	17,24 (26,72)
German language skill level**	<b>5,64 (.63)</b>	<b>5,71 (.49)</b>	<b>4,40 (1,43)</b>	<b>5,57 (.98)</b>	<b>5,32 (1,07)</b>
Countries included in the region	<b>Polska</b>	<b>Serbia Słowacja Węgry Rosja Grecja Turcja</b>	<b>Francja Włochy Hiszpania</b>	<b>Meksyk Brazylia Chile Kolumbia</b>	

\* means and standard deviations in months

\*\* means and standard deviations on a seven-level scale (1 – not at all, 7- perfectly)

Source: own study (Grotthus 2011)

## 5. Results

The data for each of the geo-cultural regions (Poland, Eastern Europe, Latin Europe and Latin America) will be consecutively analyzed in order to test the significance and magnitudes of differences in the perception of an outstanding leader for Germany and the country of origin.

**Poland.** The participants of Polish origin were the largest group among the foreigners that took part in the study and the results obtained by their group indicated the greatest discrepancy between the perceptions of an outstanding leader in Germany and in the country of origin. In the eyes of Poles, the two prototypes were significantly different in the most scales of the questionnaire: out of twenty one scales, as many as eleven yielded significant differences on the  $p \leq 0.05$  level<sup>1</sup> (see table 2.).

1 However the Wilcoxon significance test analyses the mean ranks for individual pairs of variables, in order to show data in a transparent manner only the means and standard deviations are presented in the tables.

**Table 2. Comparison of means on 21 leadership scales of the CLT Questionnaire: outstanding leader for Germany and the country of origin. Polish participants**

Poland (n=14)				
Scale	Outstanding leader:		Significance level*	Correlation coefficient**
	in Germany	in the country of origin		
Administratively competent	5,95 (.72)	5,39 (.73)	,002*	,663**
Diplomatic	6,21 (.56)	5,69 (.60)	,018*	,400
Malevolent	1,74 (.56)	1,87 (.71)	,482	,777**
Team 1/ Collaborative Team Orientation	5,68 (.63)	5,23 (.66)	,037*	,237
Team 2/ Integrating	6,22 (.47)	6,05 (.67)	,282	,556**
Charismatic 1/ Visionary	6,17 (.73)	5,79 (.79)	,012*	,697**
Charismatic 2/ Inspirational	6,11 (.48)	5,82 (.49)	,041*	,304
Charismatic 3/ Self-Sacrifice	5,76 (.87)	5,50 (.86)	,201	,710**
Decisive	6,05 (.77)	5,93 (.88)	,587	,691**
Integrity	5,21 (.83)	4,38 (.96)	,010*	,198
Performance-oriented	6,07 (.85)	5,48 (.81)	,005*	,818**
Self-centred	1,82 (.79)	2,50 (1,11)	,021*	,495
Status conscious	4,11 (1,08)	4,32 (1,05)	,323	,626**
Conflict inducer	2,95 (.85)	3,17 (.76)	,305	,497
Face-saver	3,17 (1,06)	3,38 (1,08)	,265	,837**
Procedural	4,60 (.70)	4,04 (.74)	,003*	,533**
Modesty	4,91 (.61)	4,59 (.59)	,004*	,870**
Humane orientation	4,64 (1,01)	4,57 (1,07)	,717	,597**
Autocratic	2,98 (1,05)	3,60 (1,11)	,071	,657**
Non-participative	2,93 (.98)	3,41 (1,06)	,006*	,584**
Autonomous	4,32 (.93)	4,38 (.86)	,686	,462

\* two-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test,  $p < .05$

\*\*two-tailed Spearman's rang correlation,  $p < .05$

Source: own study (Grotthus 2011)

There were significant differences in most of the scales pertaining to the group-oriented leadership [dimension] (*Administratively competent, Diplomatic, Collaborative Team Orientation*); as well as in the scales related to the leadership charisma (*Visionary, Inspirational, Performance-oriented and Integrity*). Nonetheless, all these attributes were relatively highly rated by the Poles (all means above

5.0 with exception of *Integrity*, with the mean of only 4.38 for Polish leaders); they were also perceived as more beneficial for effective leadership in Germany. The Polish participants believed that an ideal German leader pays more attention to the teamwork and creation of an effective team of workers. Moreover, he or she will gain more than the Polish counterpart from having a vision and from inspiring coworkers, as well as having a goal-achievement orientation and being honest in effective leading. Modesty is also believed to be more characteristic for an ideal leader in Germany.

On the other hand, the attributes viewed upon as negative and [represented in] the *Self-centered* and *Non-participative* scales yielded higher results the Polish leadership pattern. According to the Polish participants, being oriented only towards one's personal interests, working apart from one's subordinates, and not delegating one's own managerial faculties, impedes becoming an outstanding leader in Poland to a significantly lower extent than in Germany.

**Eastern Europe.** Similar differences between the prototypes of an ideal leader for Germany and for the country of origin were observed in case of the Eastern European participants. The differences were significant despite the small number of subjects and relatively big differences between the cultures allocated in this region. In table 3., eight leadership scales are presented and the significant results are highlighted.

**Table 3. Comparison of means on 21 leadership scales of the CLT Questionnaire: outstanding leader for Germany and the country of origin, Eastern European participants**

Eastern Europe (n=7)				
Scale	Outstanding leader:		Significance level*	Correlation coefficient**
	in Germany	in the country of origin		
Administratively competent	6,00 (.69)	5,75 (.65)	,285	,676
Diplomatic	5,89 (.49)	5,54 (.40)	,026*	,825**
Malevolent	3,76 (.91)	3,95 (.93)	,038*	,989**
Team 1/ Collaborative Team Orientation	5,55 (.66)	4,98 (.55)	,027*	,813**
Team 2/ Integrating	5,88 (.58)	5,65 (.51)	,206	,689
Charismatic 1/ Visionary	5,97 (.57)	5,71 (.46)	,016*	,985**
Charismatic 2/ Inspirational	6,04 (.58)	5,43 (.58)	,018*	,549
Charismatic 3/ Self-Sacrifice	4,67 (1,09)	4,67 (1,22)	,317	,797**

Decisive	6,11 (.72)	5,82 (.83)	,066	,932**
Integrity	5,93 (.75)	5,29 (.57)	,075	,327
Performance-oriented	5,86 (.69)	5,14 (.57)	,039*	,435
Self-centred	3,21 (1,23)	3,54 (1,12)	,084	,923**
Status conscious	4,14 (1,11)	4,79 (1,32)	,024*	,966**
Conflict inducer	3,52 (.79)	3,52 (.33)	1,000	,556
Face-saver	4,00 (.51)	4,00 (.82)	1,000	,935**
Procedural	4,89 (.78)	4,46 (.65)	,223	,421
Modesty	5,21 (.44)	4,68 (.75)	,042*	,653
Humane orientation	5,00 (.71)	5,07 (.73)	,655	,805**
Autocratic	3,71 (1,19)	4,05 (1,07)	,351	,815**
Nonp-articipative	3,46 (.99)	3,86 (.97)	,109	,807**
Autonomous	4,71 (.73)	4,79 (.89)	,893	,114

\* two-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test,  $p < .05$

\*\*two-tailed Spearman's rang correlation,  $p < .05$

Source: own study (Grotthus 2011)

Among the attributes related to group-orientation, the *Diplomatic* and *Collaborative Team Oriented* skills were perceived by the participants from the Eastern Europe as the most useful for a German leader. On the other hand, traits such as egotism, hostility or cynicism (measured in the *Malevolent* scale) were perceived as less harmful for an effective leadership in their countries of origin than in Germany.

Indicators of charisma, such as: having a vision, inspiring employees and stressing the importance of achieving high goals, were considered to be more important for leaders in Germany than in the country of origin. Also in case of *Modesty*, encompassing attributes such as avoiding publicity and patience, German ideal leaders were perceived higher than their Eastern European counterparts.

The last significant difference was observed with regard to the consciousness of status and class differences. The participants from Eastern Europe considered that being conscious about such differences contributes more to an effective leadership in case of their countrymen ( $M=4.79$ ) than Germans ( $M=4.14$ ).

**Latin Europe.** In the Latin Europe region, consisting of participants from France, Italy and Spain, close to half of the leadership scales yielded significant differences in comparison of an ideal leader in Germany and in their country of origin (see table 4).

It is important to note that the respondents from this part of Europe manifested significant results primarily on the negatively marked scales, i.e. *Malevolent*, *Conflict inducer*, *Face-saver*, *Autocratic* and *Non-participative*. All of these negative traits and behaviours impede effective leadership in this region less than they do in Germany. Some of these scales, such as *Autocratic* and *Conflict-inducer*, yielded results close to the mean (M=4.0), which indicates that they are practically neutral when it comes to effective leadership in this part of Europe.

**Table 4. Comparison of means on 21 leadership scales of the CLT Questionnaire: outstanding leader for Germany and the country of origin, Latin Europe participants**

Latin Europe(n=10)				
Scale	Outstanding leader:		Significance level*	Correlation coefficient**
	in Germany	in the country of origin		
Administratively competent	5,88 (1,09)	5,43 (1,13)	,033*	,554
Diplomatic	5,18 (1,00)	5,60 (,60)	,078	,914**
Malevolent	3,30 (,67)	3,61 (,65)	,020*	,785**
Team 1/ Collaborative Team Orientation	4,93 (1,07)	5,23 (,41)	,440	,758**
Team 2/ Integrating	5,46 (,79)	5,54 (,48)	,858	,892**
Charismatic 1/ Visionary	5,47 (,95)	5,44 (,57)	,944	,178
Charismatic 2/ Inspirational	5,16 (1,09)	5,44 (,73)	,173	,580
Charismatic 3/ Self-Sacrifice	4,67 (,85)	5,30 (,66)	,065	,913**
Decisive	5,15 (,99)	5,40 (,75)	,041*	,465
Integrity	5,20 (,92)	4,63 (,64)	,038*	-,467
Performance-oriented	5,70 (1,16)	5,43 (,82)	,222	,236
Self-centred	2,95 (1,07)	2,95 (1,12)	,916	,598
Status conscious	4,25 (,89)	4,55 (1,17)	,157	,880**
Conflict inducer	3,07 (,54)	3,90 (,50)	,007*	-,307
Face-saver	2,93 (,58)	3,93 (,81)	,028*	,715**
Procedural	4,94 (,93)	4,32 (,63)	,020*	,772**
Modesty	5,08 (,77)	4,30 (,75)	,090	,665**
Humane orientation	4,35 (1,03)	4,30 (,95)	,621	,273
Autocratic	3,18 (,80)	3,88 (1,22)	,008*	,622
Non-participative	3,23 (,86)	3,63 (,90)	,033*	,835**
Autonomous	4,05 (,97)	4,30 (,81)	,172	,884**

\* two-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test, p<.05

\*\*two-tailed Spearman's rang correlation, p<.05

Source: own study (Grotthus 2011)

On the other hand, the more positive leadership attributes – being *Administratively competent* and *Modesty* – have been related in a significantly larger extent to the ideal of German leader.

The *Decisive* scale was an exception. First of all, the scale yielded significant differences between the leader prototypes only in this group of participants. Furthermore, according to respondents from this part of Europe, this attribute is more characteristic for leadership in their countries of origin – a leader from the southwest of Europe will benefit more from being decisive, logical and stubborn.

Aside from that, the *Procedural* scale yielded significant differences for the prototype of German leader – according to the French, Italians and Spaniards, being ritualistic and formal is useful for German leaders to a large extent (M=4,94).

**Latin America.** Results obtained by the immigrants from the Latin America, the only region from beyond the Old Continent, yielded the lowest number of significant differences between the prototypes of an ideal leader in Germany and the country of origin. Only five scales demonstrated statistically significant differences.

**Table 5. Comparison of means on 21 leadership scales of the CLT Questionnaire: outstanding leader for Germany and the country of origin, Romance-speaking Europe participants**

Latin America (n=7)				
Scale	Outstanding leader:		Significance level*	Correlation coefficient**
	in Germany	in the country of origin		
Administratively competent	5,86 (1,28)	5,57 (1,15)	,063	,934**
Diplomatic	5,03 (1,05)	5,29 (1,33)	,105	,991**
Malevolent	3,19 (.25)	3,41 (.49)	,104	,682
Team 1/ Collaborative Team Orientation	4,88 (.96)	4,79 (1,34)	,588	,741
Team 2/ Integrating	5,22 (.97)	5,22 (1,07)	,915	,844**
Charismatic 1/ Visionary	5,51 (1,14)	5,49 (1,18)	,739	,991**
Charismatic 2/ Inspirational	5,07 (1,05)	5,27 (1,42)	,235	,734
Charismatic 3/ Self-Sacrifice	4,81 (.69)	4,71 (.93)	,581	,826**
Decisive	4,68 (1,41)	5,00 (1,01)	,197	,883**
Integrity	5,71 (.99)	4,89 (1,51)	,027*	,991**
Performance-oriented	5,52 (1,17)	5,43 (1,15)	,157	1,000**

Self-centred	3,54 (.89)	2,89 (.88)	,045*	,811**
Status conscious	4,57 (.84)	4,93 (.93)	,059	,913**
Conflict inducer	3,38 (.93)	3,38 (.30)	,785	,884**
Face-saver	2,67 (.51)	3,19 (.88)	,040*	,353
Procedural	4,26 (.94)	3,89 (.90)	,041*	,929**
Modesty	4,21 (.80)	3,96 (1,05)	,143	,964**
Humane orientation	4,14 (.69)	4,29 (1,44)	1,000	,808**
Autocratic	3,29 (.43)	3,64 (.73)	,292	,091
Non-participative	2,93 (.28)	3,57 (.62)	,027*	,724
Autonomous	4,29 (1,30)	4,61 (.80)	,293	,865**

\* two-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test,  $p < .05$

\*\*two-tailed Spearman's rang correlation,  $p < .05$

Source: own study (Grotthus 2011)

That does not mean however that German and Latin American leaders were recognized as very similar to each other, which is demonstrated in the juxtaposition of means for all twenty one scales in Table 5. The respondents from this region were not unanimous in answering to questionnaire's items, which is indicated by the fact that the standard deviations exceeded 1.0 for most cases. Latin America is geographically the vastest of all regions taking part in the study and at same time it was represented by a very small sample ( $n=7$ ), which could have considerably influenced the results.

The *Integrity* scale yielded significant differences – according to the participants of Latin origin being a credible, righteous and sincere leader is much more important in Germany than in Latin America. Moreover, an ideal German leader was rated significantly higher on the *Procedural* scale again.

On the other hand, the attributes related to reluctance to participation and face-saving behaviours impede less being an outstanding and effective leader in the Latin America.

It is worthwhile to focus on the *Self-centered* scale, which yielded significantly higher results for German leaders. Working aside from one's subordinates, avoiding the contact and pursuing only personal interests to a significantly lower degree hinders being an outstanding leader in Germany than it does in the Latin America countries. This result can be explained by a higher collectivism level in the countries of this part of the globe in comparison to Germany. Moreover, it is coherent with the results obtained by Hofstede on the individualism cultural dimension (Hofstede 2001).

## 6. Discussion

The analysis of the data gathered in all groups of foreign participants points at a general tendency of assessing the positive leadership attributes (such as honesty, goal-orientation, and modesty) as more important for an effective leadership in Germany, than in the country of origin. Similarly, the negative attributes (e.g. malevolence and being autocratic) were perceived as less harmful for an outstanding leadership in the country of origin.

In the perspective of the foreigners that took part in the study, Germany emerges as a country with values such as honesty, kindness, modesty, and –above all– the willingness to empower subordinates, as prevailing and beneficial for the effective leadership. However, the question stands whether it is only an idealized picture shared by the immigrants, or whether it reflects the reality of German organizations. The issue of the national identity and identification may contribute to one of the possible explanations of the observed, more negative leader prototype for the country of origin among the foreign participants. Some researchers (Smith et al. 2001) suggest that weak identification with one's own country is correlated with a negative auto-stereotyping of this country. It may well be assumed that a person who has decided to immigrate (in this case to Germany) could manifest a weak identification with the country which, after all, he or she had decided to leave.

It is also necessary to discuss the correlations that have been observed between the prototypes of leaders for Germany and for the country of origin, shared by the participants. In all groups of participants, there were significant correlations between the results on several leadership scales regarding the leader in Germany and in the country of origin. The interdependence of the prototypes of an ideal leader for Germany and the country of origin is obviously not surprising in the instances where no significant differences were observed. However, how should the significant correlations be interpreted when accompanied by significant differences between the two prototypes? Perhaps there was a third mediating variable that had an impact on the participants' assessments of the leadership attributes? With reference to the implicit leadership theories (De Hartog et al. 1999; Javidan et al. 2006), a more general leader prototype could have acted as such mediator and has been accommodated by the participants, and further differentiated for Germany and the country of origin.

The observed differences between the two leader prototypes could have also been a result of the stereotypes about Germans and Germany that the foreign participants might have shared (which could have been indicated by

the significantly elevated score on the *Procedural* scale, in line with the motto *Ordnung muss sein*).

In conclusion, it should be noted that the obtained results have to be interpreted with caution due to the limited size of the sample. Increasing the number of participants would naturally imply a higher external validity of the results. However, the statistically significant differences obtained in the study support the implemented model and its further use.

## Summary

### **Culture and perception of leadership: Ideal leader in the country of origin and the country of residence – case of Germany. Study report (part two)**

The present paper is a supplement to the earlier report (Witkowski, Grotthus, 2011) from the intercultural research concerned with an ideal leader prototype from an immigrant's perspective. In the present part, the authors focus consecutively on four groups of foreigners (Poland, Eastern Europe, Latin Europe, Latin America) working in Germany. Comparison of outstanding leader prototypes in the country of origin and Germany yielded significant differences in all groups.

## Streszczenie

### **Kultura a percepcja przywództwa: Przywódca idealny w kraju pochodzenia i w kraju wyjazdu na przykładzie Niemiec. Raport z badań (część druga)**

Artykuł stanowi uzupełnienie poprzedniego raportu (Witkowski, Grotthus 2011) z międzykulturowych badań nad prototypem idealnego przywódcy, ujętych z perspektywy emigranta. W tej części autorzy koncentrują się kolejno na czterech grupach obcokrajowców (Polska, Europa Wschodnia, Europa Łacińska, Ameryka Łacińska) pracujących w Niemczech. Porównanie prototypów wybitnego przywódcy w odniesieniu do kraju wyjazdu (Niemiec) i swojego kraju pochodzenia wykazało istotne różnice w każdej z tych grup.

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