

# Power Distance in Cross Cultural Workplaces

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# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

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The main focus of my dissertation is on Power Distance in organisations as a Dimension of National Culture.

Power distance is defined by Hofstede as 'the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations expect and accept that power is distributed'.

I am intrigued by the dimension of Power Distance as I have worked in five different countries and with hundreds of people of different nationalities.

I have observed on many occasions that there people in different national cultures behave differently towards their bosses, in some cases not calling them by their first name.

I was sure that the differences in hierarchical relationships were not just dependent of the corporate structure, size of company or industry.

When I started my research into the subject I was interested to see that this dimension has been classified as a characteristic of cultural orientations in societies are there have been broad surveys carried out in more than fifty countries giving each country, with statistical confidence, a power distance score.

Hofstede is a key figure in my research. He began to measure power distance in the sixties and his findings have stood the test of time.

In my literature review I look at the academic roots to gain an understanding of the concept.

I show studying theory what the sources of power distance are. This is fascinating. By knowing these you can predict the power distance of a society without knowing much about them.

I also look at the how it manifests in the societies in question and how we can improve our awareness in cross cultural encounters.

## **Why is this important?**

An understanding of our own culture and the culture of others helps to build harmonious relationships and avoid clashes.

In Ireland we experience low power distance relationships in the workplace is the cultural norm

It lets know what leadership styles are more effective in a particular national cultural context for example subordinates with a preference for high power distance prefer to be told what to do.

This is not to be mistaken for lack of initiative.

We might also have to change our approach when dealing with senior managers and show more reverence! ?

What I am particularly interested in finding out is whether or not there is an ideal level of power distance.

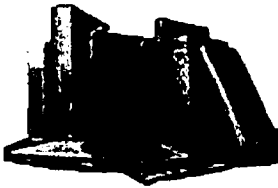
To gain some insights I have done an exploratory study of a workplace in Dublin city centre.

This looks at attitudes of foreign workers in Ireland who can make educated comparisons between power distances in Ireland and in their country of origin.

We can see from the findings of semi structured interviews if their scores are consistent with their national average and whether they feel power distance or levels of inequality are a good or bad thing.

# Literature review

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# Introduction

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In this chapter my aim is to share an understanding of the existing research on power distance as a characteristic of national culture as it is expressed in the workplace.

Most of the literary reviewed is over the last fifty years at the nature of most business activity prior to the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century was non global.

To provide a framework to the existing research and its findings this chapter begins with a brief review of culture as a concept and its significance in the workplace.

I will look in detail at the influential models in a chronological order which have sought to define the characteristics of culture and to differentiate individual cultures and cultural groups or clusters.

The tendency in the literature I have researched is to take a comparative approach in which core dimensions of culture are identified and then in the case of Hofstede and most recently in the Globe Survey to score individual countries along these dimensions.

The particular dimension of national culture I am interested in is Power Distance. The insights listed can be viewed within the context of developing knowledge in this field.

Hofstede is an absolutely key figure in this area and his major surveys on cross cultural differences in IBM offices across fifty countries are a pivotal contribution.

Criticisms of Hofstede will also be explored and further contributions in more recent times will add some flesh to the bones with international insights and colourful case studies.

I hope that this chapter will be of value to you, the reader and will increase your understanding of the dimension of power distance when working with people of different nationalities.



## ***What is Culture?***

Before exploring power distance as a dimension of national culture it is necessary to define the concept of Culture itself.

As Hofstede is a key figure in the research I will give his summary definition here.

'Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values.'

(Hofstede, 1984, p. 21)

His definition refers to culture on a national scale. The following definition is used more specifically to describe organizational cultures.

'Culture is 'how things are done around here'. It is what is typical in the organization, the habits, the prevailing attitudes- the grown up pattern of accepted and expected behaviour'.

(Drennan, 1992, p.3)

These definitions emphasise the key role of learned values shared by members of a group.

Cultures can be difficult to identify as they operate tacitly or unconsciously. Schein sums this up as:

'The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operates unconsciously and in a basic 'taken for granted fashion an organizations view of itself and its environment'.

(Schein, 1992, p.6).

## ***The Significance of Culture for Organisations***

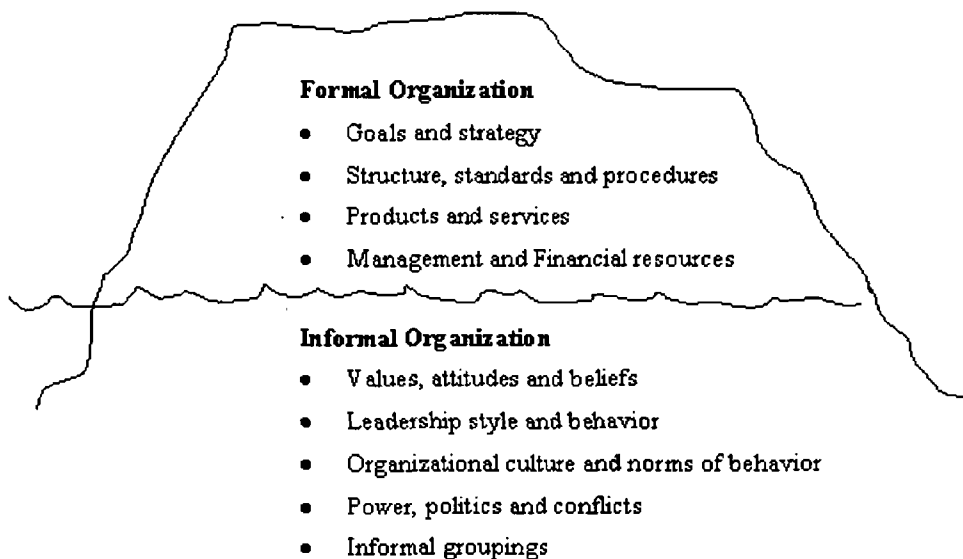
Culture directly impacts on what happens or doesn't happen in organizations and on bringing about change.

I have included some models as a visual aid to demonstrate first of all the hidden nature of culture and secondly to show the different dimensions of culture and how they are woven together.

The iceberg model by French and Bell (1999) is useful here to illustrate the hidden nature of organizations expressed in Schein's definition above.

The metaphor of the iceberg depicts two contrasting aspects of organizational life.

- Above water we have the visible /tangible aspects such as goals, strategy and structure.
- Under water hides hidden/tacit aspects such as culture, politics and power that are more difficult to examine.



Source:

Based on iceberg model by French & Bell [www.iscn.at](http://www.iscn.at)

This illustration shows the degree of influence culture has on beneath the surface of an organization.

Morgan confirms that ‘The culture and politics of many organizations constrain the degree of change and transformation in which they can successfully engage, even though such change may be highly desirable for meeting the organisations success.’

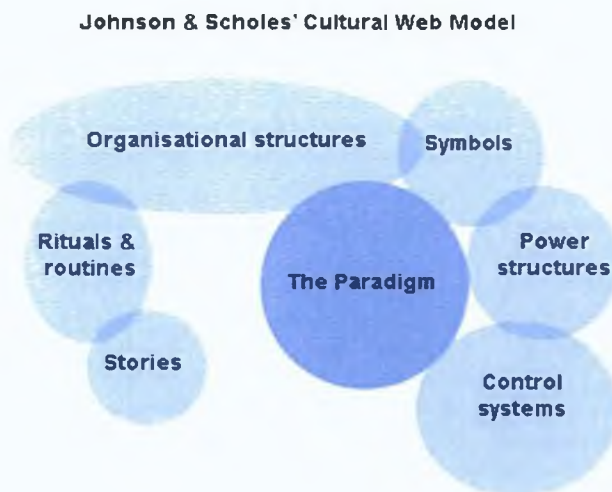
(Senior & Fleming, 1997, p.139)

A more recent model by Johnson & Scholes (2005) emphasises the importance of culture (as defined by Schein as myths or assumptions) in bringing about strategic change.

The model below shows how symbols, routines and rituals and stories are woven together with the formal aspects of organizations such as structure to form the organisational culture or paradigm.

Or in their own words the multidimensional nature of culture is described by Johnson et al...

‘It would be a mistake to conceive of the paradigm as merely a set of beliefs and assumptions removed from organizational action. They lie within a cultural web which bonds them to the day to day action of an organization.’ (Johnson et al, 2005, pp 47 – 48)



Source: [www.solutions4training.com](http://www.solutions4training.com)

## ***How National Cultures Vary***

There is a long standing ~~is a long standing~~ debate in the study of the cultural similarities known as the Convergence/Divergence Debate.

Supporters of the Convergence debate such as Chandler (1962) argue that the forces of industrialisation will push organisations regardless of where they are located towards particular configurations.

Hofstede (1984) argues that differences in countries' attitudes, social organizations, religions, education systems and values will mean that one the culture of one nation will diverge significantly from another.

The remainder of this chapter will look at the evidence in particular from Hofstede's research on cultural differences to support that the divergence debate.

This will provide firm evidence that the influence of national cultural difference, in particular the dimension of power distance, should be taken seriously.

In the next section I will look review the body of research that has identified the body of research on the different cultural orientations of societies.

## Different Cultural Orientations of Societies

In 1961 Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck developed a ground breaking theory that there are three distinctive ways in which national cultures vary.

They started with three basic assumptions:

- "There is a limited number of common human problems for which all peoples must at all times find some solution".
- "While there is variability in solutions of all the problems, it is neither limitless nor random but is definitely variable within a range of possible solutions".
- "All alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times but are differentially preferred".

They suggested six basic types of problem to be solved by every society:

- People's **orientation to time** - on what aspect of time should we primarily focus - past, present or future?
- People's **relationship to the environment** - mastery, submission or harmony?
- People's personal relationships in terms of **individualism/collectivism**.
- People's orientation to either **being or doing** - to express one's self ("Being"), to grow ("Being-in-becoming"), or to achieve?
- People's view of others as basically **good or bad** or a mixture?
- People's use of **space** – the separation of managers and s subordinates, designation of public/private space, offices as status.

(Source: Senior & Fleming, 1997)

Their work can be seen as the building blocks on which contemporary models of cultural preference have been constructed.

## **Hofstede's Dimensions of National Culture**

Hofstede built on the concept of geographically identifiable culturally different regions.

Between 1968 and 1973 he led two major surveys on cross cultural differences in IBM. His responses included 116,000 responses from 72 countries.

His pioneering study helped to form the foundation of comparative management.

The Dimensions are:

**Power Distance:** The degree to which inequality or distance between those in charge and the less powerful (subordinates) is accepted.

**Individualism:** The degree to which action is taken for the benefit of the individual or the group.

**Certainty:** The extent to which people prefer rules, regulations and controls or are more comfortable with unstructured, ambiguous or unpredictable situations.

**Achievement:** The degree to which we focus on task and work or relationship building and quality of life. This dimension also tracks the relative masculine and feminine influences in the workplace.

**Time Orientation:** The degree to which we embrace values oriented toward the future, such as perseverance and thrift, or values oriented toward the past and present, such as respect for tradition and fulfilling social obligations.

(Source: Hofstede, 1991)

Although there have been critics of Hofstede's (as I will show later) the model he developed stood the test of time as his questionnaire is easy to use and comprehensive.

As all the respondents are working within the same corporate structure objective factors such as structure, strategy do not come in to play.

## **The Concept of Power Distance**

*Hofstede defines power distance between a boss and subordinate in a hierarchy as ' the difference between to the extent to which boss can determine the behavior of subordinate and the extent to which subordinate can determine the behavior of boss.'* (Hofstede, 1991, p38).

The term 'power distance' was originally coined by Mauk Mulder (1971).

According to Mulder's Power Distance Theory subordinates will try to reduce the power distance between themselves and their bosses and bosses will try to maintain or enlarge it.

His questions deal with perceptions of the superior's style of decision making and of colleagues' fear to disagree with superiors and the type of decision making which subordinates prefer in their boss.

Hofstede's study suggests that the level of power distance at which both tendencies will find their equilibrium is societally determined. (Hofstede, 1984, p.65).

In low power distance societies, inequalities among boss and subordinate will tend to be minimised with subordinates expecting to be consulted by bosses over decisions that affect them, and to be treated more as equals of those with the power.

In high power distance societies, inequalities in power and wealth endorsed by the followers as much as the leaders, with corresponding large differences in salaries and status.

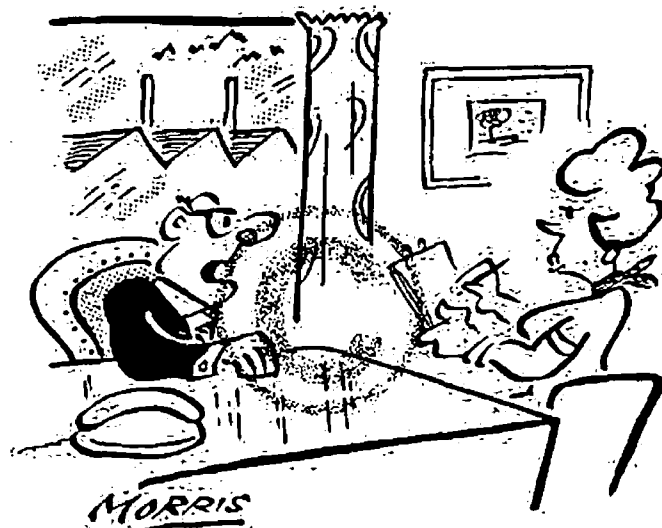
## More Equal than Others - Power Distance and Inequality

Inequality occurs in areas such as prestige, wealth and power. Similar orders of inequality have been expressed amongst chickens. Hence the term 'pecking order'.

Human pecking orders are part of the universal level of mental programming. How the basic fact of dominance is worked out in human social existence varies from one society to another. It belongs to the collective cultural level. Some societies have elaborate formal systems of dominance; others go to great lengths to deemphasize dominance.

Within organizations we inevitably find inequality of members' abilities and inequality of power. An unequal distribution of power over members is the essence of organization. Hofstede refers to this:

'Inequality of power in organizations is essential for temporarily overcoming the law of entropy, which states that disorder will increase.' (Hofstede, 1984, p.69).



"No, equal pay doesn't mean you'll be getting the same as me."

(Source: <http://www.cartoonstock.com/lowres/jmo18781.jpg>)



## **Factors influencing the Hierarchical Relationship**

Objective factors play a role such as the expertise of boss and subordinate, the history of their relationship, the task at hand and the relative criticalness of the relationship.

Subjective factors depend on their mental programming and their psychological impact on each other. Their mental programming contains their personalities and their values, affected by societal norms which they respect.

Attitudes towards parents, especially fathers and teachers which are part of our mental programming are transferred later on to our bosses.

‘Both as bosses and subordinates, people can be expected to carry over values and norms from their early life experiences as children and school pupils. As family and school environments differ strongly among cultures, we can expect to find traces of their differences in the exercise of power in hierarchies.’

(Hofstede, 1984, p70).

### ***The Origins of Power Distances***

To help us to understand the roots of power distance and how one nationality differs from another Hofstede provides a wealth of insights into this in his book *Cultures Consequences* (1984).

The following section explains that other subjective factors such as language area, climate and population size affect our portable mental programmes.

### ***Language***

The results of Hofstede’s research above shows a correlation between language area and present day mental software regarding power distance.

Countries in which a Germanic language is spoken (Austria, U.K, Sweden, Germany) score low. The Germanic part of Europe was divided into small tribal groups under local lords, not prepared to accept directives from anybody else.

Countries in which a Romance Language is spoken (Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian score medium to high) and countries with a Chinese cultural inheritance score high.

Both the Roman and Chinese empires were ruled by a single power centre, which presupposes a population prepared to take orders from anyone else

There is a correlation in these power systems and the historical and prehistoric hierarchies in these language areas.

It is reasonable given this correlation to assume that early statehood experiences helped to develop a common mental programme.

### ***Geographical Latitude***

There is a rough correlation between geographical latitude and power distance.

Hofstede's research shows that higher latitude contributes to smaller power distance. Although it is difficult to prove the effect of climate the map below gives us a visual aid and examples can be clearly seen. Ecuador and Brazil for example have the same PDI (78) and are on the equator.

'Philosophers and popular wisdom have for centuries ventured climate differences as an explanation for the difference in inhabitants. Warm climates, for example would make people lazy, cold ones would make the industrious.' Hofstede, 1991, p.44).

The logic of this relationship according to Hofstede is that at lower latitudes agricultural societies are more abundant. There is less demand for intervention between man and nature for things to grow. The major threat for survival is competition from other human groups for the same land and resources. Better chances for survival exist for those societies that have organized themselves hierarchically in dependence of one central authority.

At Lower latitudes nature is less abundant and there is more need for the creation of industry. Nature rather than other human groups is the first enemy to be resisted. Societies in which people are less dependent on central authority and learn to fend for themselves have a better chance of survival.



(Source: [www.k12science.org](http://www.k12science.org))

### ***Size of population***

People in a largely populated country have to accept authority from a more distant and less accessible political power than those in a small country. This fosters dependence.

The statistical analysis by Hofstede (1984) shows that over 40 countries, 43% of the variance from the power distance index (PDI) can be predicted from the geographical latitude, 51% can be predicted from a combination of latitude and population size.

Given these findings you can predict the power distance of a society - without knowing much about them!

## Measuring Power Distance - Hofstede's findings

Hofstede's research on IBM employees in similar positions allowed him to assign each country with a score indicating its level of power distance.

The three questions used for composing the power index were:

1. Answers by non managerial employees on the question: 'How frequently, in your experience, does the following problem occur: Employees being afraid to express disagreement with their managers.
2. Subordinates perception of their bosses' actual decision making style.
3. Subordinates preference for their bosses' decision making style.

The results tell us about the mental software of having one nationality compared to another.

The power index scores also inform us about *dependency* and *emotional distance*.

Hofstede explains this:

In small power distance countries 'there is a limited dependence of subordinates on bosses, and a preference for consultation, that is, interdependence between boss and subordinate. The emotional distance between them is relatively small. Subordinates will quite readily approach and contradict their bosses'.

In large power distance countries 'there is a considerable dependence of subordinates on bosses. Subordinates respond by either preferring such dependence in the form of an autocratic or paternalistic boss) or rejecting it entirely, which in psychology is known as counter dependence...in these cases emotional distances between subordinates and their bosses is large: subordinates are likely to approach and contradict their bosses directly'.

(Hofstede, 1991, p.28).

The conclusion of this is that for authority to survive it must be matched by obedience

The following is an index of power distance scores. The higher the score the higher the power distance. Malaysia for example experience a high power distance and Austria a low one.

Malaysia	104	Thailand	64
Guatemala	95	Zambia	64
Panama	95	Chile	63
Philippines	94	Portugal	63
Mexico	81	Uruguay	61
Venezuela	81	Greece	60
China	80	South Korea	60
Egypt	80	Iran	58
Iraq	80	Taiwan	58
Kuwait	80	Czech Republic	57
Lebanon	80	Spain	57
Libya	80	Pakistan	55
Saudi Arabia	80	Japan	54
United Arab Emirates	80	Italy	50
Ecuador	78	Argentina	49
Indonesia	78	South Africa	49
Ghana	77	Hungary	46
India	77	Jamaica	45
Nigeria	77	United States	40
Sierra Leone	77	Netherlands	38
Singapore	74	Australia	36
Brazil	69	Costa Rica	35
France	68	Germany	35
Hong Kong	68	United Kingdom	35
Poland	68	Switzerland	34
Colombia	67	Finland	33
El Salvador	66	Norway	31
Turkey	66	Sweden	31
Belgium	65	Ireland	28
Ethiopia	64	New Zealand	22
Kenya	64	Denmark	18
Peru	64	Israel	13
Tanzania	64	Austria	11

## ***How low and high power distance societies differ:***

We can now see as a result of Hofstede's research how difference power distance manifest different as different norms and attitudes. ??

### **Low Power Distance:**

- Inequality should be minimised
- All people should be interdependent
- Superiors/Subordinates are people just like me.
- All use of power should be legitimised, and is subject to moral judgment,
- All have equal rights.
- Powerful people should try not to look too powerful.
- Reward, legitimate and expert power are accepted
- If something goes wrong - System is to blame.
- To change the social system, redistribute the power. (evolution)
- People are more prepared to trust one another.
- There is a latent "harmony" in the society
- Co-operation in "lower class" is based on solidarity.

### **High Power Distance**

- Inequality is a fact of life - Everyone has their rightful place.
- Some are independent, others are dependant.
- Hierarchy is something that exists and is accepted.
- Superiors/Subordinates are different to me
- Power is a basic fact of society which is independent of morality. It is there to be used - legitimacy is irrelevant
- Power gives privileges.
- Powerful people try to look as powerful as possible. (pomp + ceremony)
- Coercion and referant power are accepted
- If something goes wrong - it's the underdog's fault.

- To change the social system, dethrone those in power (revolution)
- Latent conflict between powerful-powerless.
- Co-operation is hard due to lack of trust.

These findings help us understand and respect that cultural predispositions in power distance relationships are legitimately different and therefore it is easy to reconcile with this

### ***Criticism of Hofstede's Work***

In his paper 'A triumph of faith – a failure of analysis', McSweeney (2002) identifies main areas of criticism:

- It is questionable whether Hofstede's IBM employee represents the national average.
- Has Hofstede demonstrated that societal level cultural factors have resulted in mental programming of his respondents to <sup>the</sup> exclusion of objective factors.
- Has Hofstede's questionnaire method captured the dominant nature of culture?

Hofstede (2002) has responded to this by stating that there was a reason that objective factors such as corporate culture were the same so the focus was on the subjective. Although there could be some validity to the criticism that Hofstede oversimplifies complex phenomena, his research is the most extensive and important in the field to date.

### ***What happens in Multinational Companies?***

There are interesting findings in the research by Laurent (1983) on employees of different nationalities

He found that when working for a multinational corporation, Germans became more German, Americans more American, French more French etc. The research was conducted in three multinational corporations each with subsidiaries in Western European Countries and the U.S.

In each case corporate culture did not or reduce national differences. Laurent's findings are that organization culture maintains and enhances them.

The conclusion of this research is that companies are not beyond nationality in their design and operations.

### ***Case Studies:***

At this point looking at real life case studies to illustrate some difficulties that can arise during cross cultural encounters with nationalities of differences in power distance.

Adler (1997) brings to life some case studies of how power distance affects organizations so to add some flesh me the bones of this study I have included some here to illustrate the point.

#### ***The Chinese Dinner Party***

One of Canada's leading banks invited Chinese delegation for dinner.

The Canadian host decided to share his hosting responsibilities with a colleague.

The dinner was not a real success. Both the Chinese and the Canadians remained relatively uneasy throughout the meal. During the dinner no welcoming speech or toasts to mutual good health were made. At the end of the meal the Chinese stood up, thanked the bank officials, declined a ride back to their hotel and left feeling slighted.

The Canadians also felt upset. They found the departure of the Chinese to be very rude, yet they did not know what they had done wrong to cause the Chinese to leave so abruptly. Despite Planning the menu carefully (avoiding such foods as beef and dairy products, providing excellent translation services , and extending normal Canadian courtesies, the Canadians knew that something had gone wrong; they wee worried and somewhat hurt by the lack of rapport.

When they analysed the situation, it became clear that the Chinese expectations had not been fulfilled. First, having two people sharing the hosting responsibilities was confusing to the



hierarchically minded Chinese. Second, because the Chinese view age as an indication of seniority, they considered the youth of their Chinese hosts as a slight to their own status. Third, in China, the host traditionally offers a welcoming toast at the beginning of the meal, which the guests then reciprocate, by not offering a toast the Canadians are thought rude.

The specific incident that upset the Canadians - The abrupt departure of the Chinese following the banquet - was in fact neither unusual nor a problem; the Chinese retire early and it was getting late.

The Canadians' lack of understanding of the hierarchical nature of Chinese society and the Chinese ways of communicating respect clearly cost them in their business dealings with the visiting delegation.

### ***An American in London***

An American executive went to London to manage the office. Although the initial few weeks were fairly uneventful it bothered the executive that visitors were never sent directly to his office. The visitor had to speak first with the receptionist, then the secretary, then the office manager. Finally the office manager escorted the visitor to the American.

The American became annoyed with this practice which he considered a total waste of time. When he finally spoke to his employees and urged them to be less formal and to send the visitors to him the employees were chagrined.

After a number of delicate conversations the American began to understand the greater stress on formality and hierarchy in England.

He slowly learned to ignore his feelings of impatience the British used in their proper channels for greeting guests.

As a result he continued to see the receptionist, secretary and office manager before being sent in to meet the American.

## ***A Twenty -First Century View***

Project Globe (2004) is the most recent large scale contemporary research to look at the relationship between national culture and organisational culture across 62 countries

In project GLOBE the following nine characteristics were identified:

Performance Orientation	Uncertainty Avoidance	Humane Orientation
Institutional Collectivism	In-Group Collectivism	Assertiveness
Gender Egalitarianism	Future Orientation	Power Distance

The dimension of power distance was located by presenting respondents with statements to which they were required to along a seven point scale.

The following are the scores for Power Distance on the seven point scale:

### **Country Rankings on Power Distance**

#### ***Lowest Power Distance***

Denmark 3.89  
 Netherlands 4.11  
 South Africa (Black sample) 4.11  
 Israel 4.73  
 Costa Rica 4.74

#### ***Medium Power Distance***

England 5.15  
 France 5.28  
 Brazil 5.33  
 Italy 5.43  
 Portugal 5.44

#### ***Highest Power Distance***

Russia 5.52  
 Spain 5.52  
 Thailand 5.63  
 Argentina 5.64  
 Morocco 5.80

The scores are consistent with Hofstede's findings however they indicate a shift towards a lower PDI global average due to increases in technology, education and middle classes over the last 30 years. The countries with low, medium and high power distances have remained in the same categories almost thirty years on. This correlation shows that Hofstede's findings have stood the test of time and that countries with similar climate and language areas generally have a similar ranking.

## Some Tips for Cross Cultural Relations

I came across a helpful tool on the ITAP international website. Based on Hofstede's findings that will help the reader in cross cultural power distance relationships.

The aim of this is to improve gain understanding of cultural differences d relationships and avoid cultural clashes.

### **Colleagues with a preference for high power distance (Hierarchical Orientation)...**

- Look for signs that your approach to seniority and hierarchy is not too challenging.
- In dealing with senior management, you will need to take steps to adjust your style to cultures where inequalities among people are both expected and desired (Hofstede, 1991) and where senior managers are expected to tell juniors what to do.
- Recognize their "authority," be deferential.
- Use legitimate power if you have any.
- Expect managers to decide and often to tell subordinates (or you) what and how to do something.
- Expect your clients to apply management authority and decisiveness and feel the need to control their subordinates (or you).
- Remember that subordinates who have a preference for high power distance expect their managers and team leaders to tell them what to do. Do not mistake this for lack of initiative.

### **Colleagues with a preference for low power distance (Participative Orientation)...**

- Use more gentle persuasion and influencing skills.
- Include colleagues in the discussion. Provide them with choices to discuss and explain your position/suggestions.
- Recognize that they want a more equal discussion regardless of the levels of those involved.
- They may expect subordinates (or you) to design "how" something is accomplished while they define the "what."
- They may prefer to work with those who can question and challenge

Source: <http://www.itapintl.com/culturalpreferences.htm>

# Conclusion

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My review of the literature over the last on national cultural preferences in particular power distance has given me and I hope you the reader some interesting and useful insights into this area.

The literature reviewed has shown why an understanding of culture is important for the success of organizations and in recognizing differences in national cultural orientations.

Hofstede's classifications of national culture has in particular shown to be of enduring relevance.

He has also provided interesting insights into the sources of power distance and a historical framework for international comparisons.

This has been the building block for more recent studies including the GLOBE project and case studies by Adler which give a personal dimension to the findings.

As a result of this study it is easier to identify different social norms and attitudes and at the end of the chapter there are lessons on how to improve cross cultural relationships based on these findings.

The insights in this chapter allow us to create more effective and productive cross-cultural working relationships.

Based in this literary review I will explore the concept with in order to find out if there are advantage or disadvantages to having low power distance relationships in the workplace in Ireland.

# Hypothesis

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There is evidence in the literature on power distance to date that levels of power distance differ vary from one country to another and more markedly among countries from a different language areas. This is largely based on quantitative based research and simplifies what is a complex phenomenon.

The question I want to explore is: **What is the ideal level power distance?**

*for what: professional structures etc*

My hypothesis is that a certain level of power distance is necessary to maintain a professional working environment.

*define*

The desire for a low PDI and more equality seems obvious. Hofstede (1991) contends that a low PDI is more suitable to the leaner and flatter modern organization structures (depending on context), the increase in education, technology and development of middle classes

*at*  
I am in favour of a strict hierarchy either? Without even looking at statistical evidence of an international shift to a lower power distance over the last thirty years I know from anecdotal evidence from my parents and grandparents that this is the trend.

Thirty years ago in Ireland my mother could not address her boss by their first name. She was once reprimanded for serving the boss milk with his tea from a bottle and not a jug. Seniority gave you power and nepotism was rife. That was the order of the day.

However over the last 15 years I have worked in five different countries and with hundreds of people from different nationalities.

The PDI scores ranged from high to low: India (77), France (68), Greece (60), England 35, and Ireland (28).

Because of this experience I am intrigued by the concept of power distance and the effects of nationality on our expectations and preferences in this area.

It is possible that due to immersion in these cultures I have internalised some of their societal norms and values and I have certain biases. However I feel that a moderate level of power distance in the workplace is best.

In the comparatively lower power distance societies in England and Ireland and particularly Ireland I have enjoyed being able to participate in decision making process and being rewarded on the merit of being conscientious in work but I have found that working relationships are not as clearly defined as in France for example and this has led to confusion, unprofessionalism and in some cases lack of respect.

I will a few brief examples of my boss/subordinate experiences in Ireland to illustrate this.

In Ireland the trend is to be social in work to a high degree. - *social?*

**Manager A-** Could not resist the temptation to give me and others the inside scoop on work information like salaries and hiring and firing decisions. I saw this as a breach of trust and confidentiality on his part and he lost a lot of his credibility with me.

**Manager B** - Favoured a particular female employer but also some of the alpha males in the workplace. This preference was not due to the contribution each of these made to the business but to how he felt about them on a personal level. I came to distrust him and felt that hard work was not rewarded but whether he liked you on a personal level or not.

**Manager C** – Was not very careful with alcohol and was usually the last to leave a party. In most workplaces in Ireland there is a lot of social mingling, whether it is at functions or casual drinks after work and it is natural for managers to be part of it. This guy was well liked but not respected. Given his lack of professional boundaries I found it hard to take directions from him.

*How do others with experience of working in different countries feel about their experience of varying power distance relationships?*

# Research Aims and Objectives

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The literature reviewed in the last chapter has provides solid evidence that there are national cultural preferences of high or low power in the workplace.

Hofstede's findings were absolutely pivotal to the research conducted. <sup>??</sup> Between 1968 and 1973 he led two major surveys on cross cultural differences in IBM. His responses included 116,000 responses from 72 countries.

Currently he is the world's most cited author in the entire area of social sciences. This proves that his model for cultural comparison has stood the test of time. It is easy to use and comprehensive.

The more recent survey by the GLOBE Project by 160 social scientists over 62 cultures representing all major regions through out the world has provided.

The GLOBE researchers gathered evidence which correlates with the original study by Hofstede and provides a wealth of evidence that national culture affects our preferences in high or low power distances.

These major studies were carried out using questionnaires based quantitative techniques.

As there has already been an abundance of quantitative research carried out, some of which is quite recent, it is not necessary for me to conduct a similar survey. Far be it for me to reinvent the wheel.

These findings however do not explore the concept of power distance from the point of view of participants immersed in a situation.

In the last chapter I included some case studies by Adler of cross cultural encounters and how power distance affected their intercultural encounters.

I find that case studies of this sort enjoyable to read. They captivate interest in a way that bald statistics can't and they are appealing to the imagination.

Qualitative techniques such as case studies can offer new and fresh interpretations.

I aim to explore the dimension of power distance as a cultural preference with foreign colleagues in my company. Their views will help to interpret the effects of working in a high/low distance culture.

All my foreign colleagues have work experiences in their countries of origin so can give valid feedback on what level of power works best for them and if there are disadvantages or advantages to working in a lower/higher power distance society.

As we quite similar in age and role profiles the objective factors such as organisational context, generation gaps and rank are removed from consideration . The focus is on the subjective factor of mental programming, (their personalities and their values, affected by societal norms which they respect) is the main focus.

Input from those who have experienced working in different countries will provide answers based on real life experiences and not just ideals to my question – What is the ideal level of power distance?



# Research Methodology

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## ***Which method is appropriate?***

Based on the literature I have reviewed on power distance in the workplace I feel a qualitative technique for my exploration of the questions in the previous section is appropriate.

In my literature review I have given details of three major international questionnaire based surveys that were carried out by Hofstede and the GLOBE project.

These broad surveys determined with statistical confidence what the average PDI score in sixty six countries.

The results show that there is a gradual shift towards lower power distances over the last thirty years. Although the surveys are broad, they do not attempt to study the complexity of the area of power distance or tell us if low power distance is a good or bad thing.

French (2007) confirms that there are limitations in this quantitative research. He gives the following reasons

'It is possible to criticize Hofstede's tendency to oversimplify complex social phenomena in two ways. Firstly, doubts persist over whether responses to values questions provided in surveys do in fact correspond to the operative values of managers, and even if they do, whether the values held are actually converted into behavioural outcomes. Secondly, the bipolarized approach in itself does not cope well with the diversity, complexity and dynamism of different cultures'.

(French, 2007,p.42)

My research in the area of cultural preferences in power distance will take place in the form of a case study in my place of work. I will call the company I work for x.com.

### ***Why use a case study?***

The use of a case study will allow me to give a holistic account of national preferences in power distance relationships in a real life context.

The fact that Power distance varies according to nationality has been demonstrated already as a cultural preference has been established. The use of a case study will hopefully provide useful insights and resonance to this dimension.

This case study design allows me to use both quantitative and qualitative data.

### ***My role as participant observer***

I am the longest serving staff member of x.com. I have been working there for four years and I have been a lot of boss/subordinate interactions amongst different nationalities.

Therefore I am ideally situated as a participant observer to report on different attitudes towards power distance relationships within the organisation.

I have access to interview people from nine different countries who have worked in our head office. I can relate closely to the context in which they work.

I hope this will add depth to my findings.

## ***X.com***

X.com was set up in 1999 by two entrepreneurs who found a niche in the internet market.

Our office is located in Dublin City Centre.

I joined the company in 2003 when there were only four other staff members working there.

There was also an office with in Belarus where the software was developed as we were operating on a low budget and it was cheaper to employ a software developer over there. The design function did not need to be located in the same country.

At that time there was an ah-hoc structure and we were given a lot of autonomy. There was a high focus on innovation and ownership. This was partly due to the artistic nature of the owner founders one of whom was a visionary. We were very successful in the e-commerce market and grew rapidly over the next four years.

A consequence of this growth was that the ad-hoc structure could not survive. The owner founders did not enjoy conforming to a more process driven style of work and, tempted by a takeover bid from a large competitor, sold the company.

A change manager came in to formalize work processes and the structure became more mechanistic within a professional context.

I would name the culture as processes covered in smarties, somewhat similar to Google but we as high performance.

Today there twenty staff working in our head office. The age profile is quite young.

We are quite a melting pot of different nationalities. We have two French, one English, one Swedish, one Spanish, one Italian, one Dutch and one German working in our office.

We also have a colleague in Belarus who has taken part in this survey as he reports to our Managing Director and has also spent time working with us.

Two other members of staff, one Australian and one Danish have taken part in this study.

### ***Why choose X.com?***

I chose my place of work for the following reasons:

- We are a typical example of twenty first century workplace in Ireland. <sup>7</sup>
- We have a good mix of nationalities working in the Dublin head office.
- We have offices in nine countries.
- As we are a new company we are not influenced by historical working practices as described in the previous section by my parents and grand parents
- We all perform similar roles so there is no difference in rank and we are all in a similar age profile. (I did not want too many other variables).

### ***Use of Semi Structured Interviews***

As the nature of my research on the dimension of power distance is exploratory I used semi-structured interviews to combine the questions used in Hofstede's original survey with open questions to uncover the attitudes and to explore the unique experiences of each participant.

The interviews were mostly face to face and varied in length from twenty minutes to one hour depending on the specific cases and how open the participants were. The interviews were conducted in the meeting room of our workplace which was idea we were not disrupted and they felt comfortable in that surrounding.

The interview with the Australian participant who has now left in a convenient location in the city centre.

The participants in Belarus and Denmark, who has also left the company, replied by email.

## ***The Questions***

I used the same three questions from the 'HERMES' questionnaire that Hofstede (1997) used in his survey of IBM employees in across 50 countries between 1968 and 1973.

The reason for this is that I wanted to see if the preferences of the different national participants were consistent with their scores on the PDI index and to see their actual experience was different.

A sample questionnaire can be viewed in the appendices.

**Questions 1 and 2** provide unique information about power distance in boss – subordinate relationships.

A description of four decision making behavior by managers and ask subordinates to indicate (1) their preferred style and (2) their perception on their boss' actual type.

The four decision making styles are:

- (1) - Autocratic (tells)
- (2) – Persuasive/Paternal (Sells)
- (3) – Consultative (consults)
- (4) – Participative (consensus)

**Question 3** is central exploring power distances between nationalities.

It asks 'How frequently in your experience, are subordinates afraid to express disagreement with their superiors'. It is a projective question. Respondents are not asked how frequently they themselves are afraid to disagree, but their answers can be expected to reflect a projection of their own feelings. If employees are afraid to disagree with their boss is seen as autocratic or paternalistic.

**Question 4** – is an open question:

'How would you compare your experience of power distance with your boss in Ireland to that of previous experiences of workplaces in your county of origin?'

I designed open this question for use in the open interview.

I intentionally used language that would not lead the participant to answer in a way that concurs with my hypothesis but to explore individual points of view.

To steer this discussion I probed the idea just before the last utterance.

### ***Tools for calculating data:***

The power distance index shows the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

The index normally has a value between 0 (small Power Distance) and 100 (large Power Distance), but values below 0 and above 100 are technically possible.

The actual calculation of the country power distance index (PDI) uses mean percent values for questions 1 and 2.

For questions 3 a mean score on a 5 point scale is used (1 = very frequently, 5 = very seldom).

The mean scores for Q.3 are multiplied by 25 to make their range and therefore their contribution to PDI, roughly equal to the range in percentage values of questions 1 and 2.

The actual formula used is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PDI} = & 135 - 25 (\text{mean score of Q.3}) \\ & + (\% \text{ Perceived manager Q.2}) \\ & - (\% \text{ preferred manager Q. 1}). \end{aligned}$$

## **Analysing the data**

The PDI score from questions 1-3 will show how the results of the participants correspond with their national average.

The data from Q. 4, the open ended question will result in observations which will help to answer my question: **What is the ideal level power distance?**

These resulting observations will be coded to identify themes which I will divide into different sections.

Some of these may concur with my hypothesis that a certain level of power distance is necessary to maintain a professional working environment.

I will explore each thematic analysis and suggest explanations in the context of working in an Irish workplace.

The following section reviews the findings of these semi structured interviews and relate them to my research question and hypothesis.

## ***Findings and Conclusions***

The Findings of the PDI index as outlined in the last section suggest a preference for a moderate level of power distance.

There is a general consensus there are low power distance relationships in Ireland.

Denmark is the only country among those interviewed with a lower PDI (18).

The Danish participant feels that the objective factors such as company size and is an important consideration

'It is very popular with a "flat" company structure in small/medium business in Denmark at the mo, where everyone gets on with their immediate bosses, but the larger the company, the further to the top. We're around 70 employees, my boss is the "boogey man"

Overall the attitudes are consistent with the PDI scores for each country.

I am surprised that there is a preference towards a higher power distance in most cases.

The participants and mostly women. There was only one male participant. I am not sure if there is a gender based predisposition in females towards a paternalistic/authoritative behavior style in bosses. This could be a topic for future research.

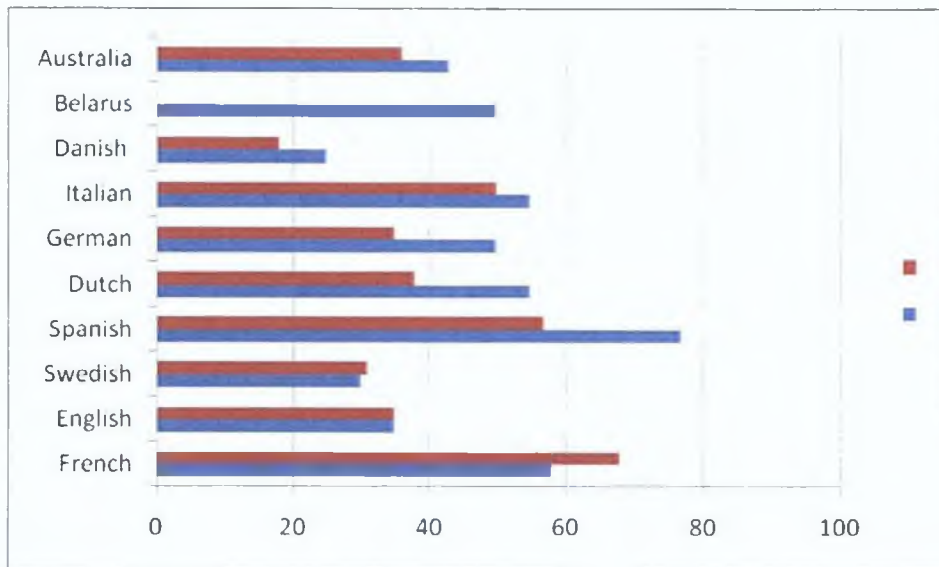
The observations found in the open interview question show that there are advantages and disadvantages to working in Ireland which has a low PDI score (28).



# Research Findings

In this section I will list the findings from the eleven semi structured interviews I conducted with the ten different nationalities who are currently working at or have now left X.com.he participants:

**PDI findings for questions 1 – 3:** The following graph shows the individual score versus the mean score for their country.



**Actual Scores**

Country	PDI Score for participant(s)	National PDI index
French	58	68
English	35	35
Swedish	30	31
Spanish	77	57
Dutch	55	38
German	50	35
Italian	55	50
Danish	25	18
Belarus	50	Not on index
Australia	43	36

**The breakdown of the participants by nationality is as follows:**



French: Two Female Participants. Both Age: 20-24.

Working in Ireland for 4 years/ 6 months.



English: Female. Age: 30 – 39. Working in Ireland for 3 years.



Sweden: Female. Age: 25-29. Working in Ireland for 2 years.



Spanish: Female. Age 30-39. Working in Ireland for 8 years.



Dutch. Female. Age: 25 – 29. Working in Ireland for 4 years.



German. Female. Age: 25- 29. Working in Ireland for 10 years.



Italian. Female. Age 25 – 29. Working in Ireland for 3.5 years.



Danish Female. Age 30-39. Has worked in Ireland for 8 years.



Australian. Female. Age 30 – 39. Has worked in Ireland for 6 years.



Belarus Male Age 30 – 39. Is remote managed by Irish M.D.

Although PDI is a statistical results coming from many thousands of people can only show the National preference, the individual scores in the first column express ideals for low/moderate/high power distance in all societies

I am quite surprised at the findings.

The Spanish participant prefers a high power distance. Higher than the national average in Spain.

In 60% of cases candidates prefer a moderate power distance that is higher than the national average.

Our Swedish participant prefers a lower one of the candidate prefers a lower power distance.

Our English participant shows the same preference as the national average in the U.K.

I will be hopefully see reasons in the individual preferences for these individual preferences.

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## **Comments and Themes by Nationality**

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### **FRENCH**

**Comments:** My experience of power distance is very different here in Ireland than in France where I was previously working. The door of my manager is always open and any news ideas that I can bring to the business are always welcomed and even requested. Everything is shared which is great.

**Themes Identified:** Boss Approachability, Formality

**Comments:** My experience of power distance is very different here in Ireland that in France where I was previously working. The door of my manager is always open and any news ideas that I can bring to the business are always welcomed and even requested. Everything is shared which is great.

**Themes Identified:** Boss Approachability, Consultation.

---

### ENGLISH

**Comments:** In England before here and I would consider the relationship between my current managers and those in my previous job in London to be fairly similar overall. I would perhaps be more relaxed in my current role when working with management I would be more involved in a lot of the decision-making. In my previous roles I would have considered there to be more of a power distance.

**Themes Identified:** Involvement in decision making.

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### SWEDEN

**Comments:** Less hierarchy, but more professional relationship, clearer boundaries

**Themes Identified:** Hierarchy, Professionalism, Boundaries

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### SPAIN

**Comments:** In Spain there is a stricter hierarchy. With your supervisor there is an authority figure and there is more formality. In Ireland I like that you can go and talk to your boss about any thing. There is more socialising around alcohol in Ireland. I'm not very comfortable with that. You would never see that in Spain.

**Themes Identified:** Hierarchy, Formality, and Consultation.

---

## DUTCH

**Comments:** In the Netherlands managers make decisions and explain. The only difference is that in Ireland people tend to carry them out without discussion or without raising difficulties before starting it. I do have the feeling that I have encountered more managers in Ireland that do agree that in the end it is their decision to make and that is final. Meetings about the subject or area that might be affected by the decision are less common in Ireland

**Themes Identified:** Involvement in decision making.

---

## GERMAN

**Comments:** In Germany there is a similar hierarchy but a different ethic. I found that in Germany there was more focus on getting your job done and you were judged on this. In Ireland there is less focus and people are judged more on personalities so the wrong people have influence in my experience.

**Themes Identified:** Professional focus, socialisation

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## ITALIAN

**Comments:** There's much more respect for employees here in Ireland.  
For respect I mean the actual ideas and suggestions that an employee may have in order to sort out or implement something.  
In Ireland and in Denmark I get to work on my own initiative

**Themes Identified:** Respect, Participation.

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## DANISH

**Comments:** Less hierarchy, but more professional relationship, clearer boundaries. In Ireland and in Denmark I get to work on my own initiative and my closest superior respects my judgement and skills My relationship with my bosses in either company or country does not differ hugely from each other.

**Themes Identified:** Respect

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## AUSTRALIA

**Comments:** Much the same here as in Australia. however most places I worked in Australia had set procedures in place for dealing with grievances, not in place in Ireland. In Australia a boss is less likely to socialise with staff, than here in Ireland. If that kind of interaction does occur it is normally within the structure of a social club activity. Thus avoiding conflicts and grievances in the first place.

**Themes Identified:** Over familiarity, Boundaries, Clarity & Socialisation,

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## BELARUS

**Comments:** The major difference for me is that boss is far. (Remote). But in Belarus a boss has his own major view, and subordinates can only correct it in some small ways. In Ireland you can disagree with your boss.

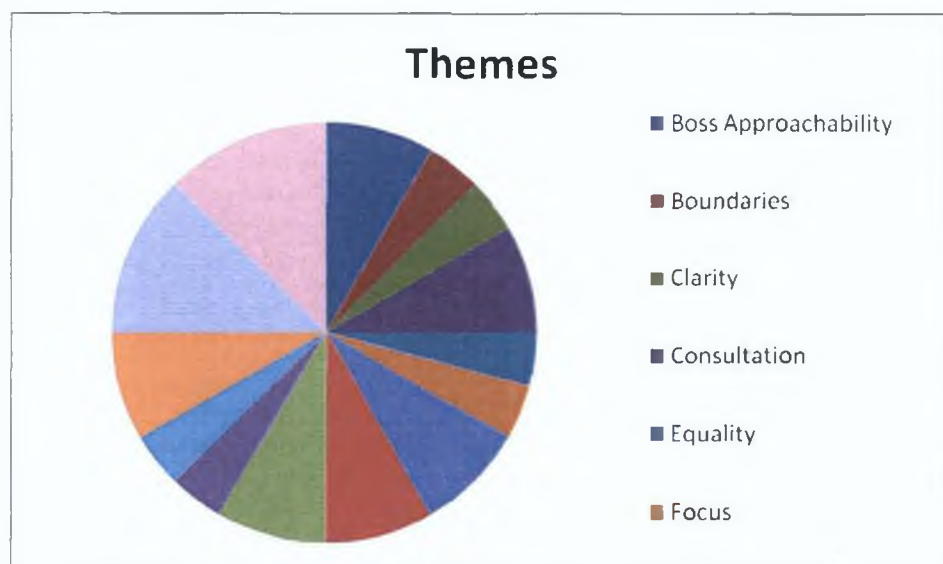
**Themes Identified:** Equality/Respect

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## Thematic Analysis

The following themes were identified from answers to the open question part of the interview:

Themes	Occurrence
Boss Approachability	Occurs twice
Boundaries	Occurs twice
Clarity	
Consultation	Occurs twice
Equality	
Focus	
Formality	Occurs twice
Hierarchy	Occurs twice
Involvement in Decision making	Occurs twice
Over familiarity	
Participation	
Professionalism	Occurs twice
Respect	Occurs three times
Socialisation	Occurs twice



**Respect** is the biggest decision in deciding preference. The main advantage of working in Ireland among the participants is that they feel respected by their bosses.

**Equality, consultation, participation and involvement in decision making** are also main reasons why the participants enjoy the boss/subordinate relationship in Ireland.

Anthony Robbins in his book 'Unlimited Power' lists mutual communication and respect as important value hierarchies. (Robbins, 1986, p. 350).

These findings confirm that value of feeling significant in the workplace.

**Boss approachability** is mentioned twice by the French participants who come from a medium – high power distance country (PDI: 68).

This is consistent with Robbins view that mutual communication is high on the list of value hierarchies.

**Hierarchy and formality** are seen to be less noticeable in Ireland. This is also consistent with Hofstede's findings for low power distance societies. There is no strong judgement in the observations on these themes. These are factors or that are not necessarily good or bad but could be linked to the positive view of involvement in decision making, participation and respect which are all part of what Hofstede (1986) describes as a need to feel significant.

**Socialisation:** The degree of socialisation in the workplace is referred to twice as being higher in Ireland.

This can affect working relationships in a positive or negative way.

This can be a bonding activity and help create a harmonious working environment.

As I mentioned in my hypothesis too much familiarity can breed contempt.



Prentice refers to this theme and the psychological difficulties of too much familiarity in his article 'Understanding leadership'.

'It is harder to take orders from one whom I do not consider my superior. It is true that one of the saddest failures in practical leadership may be the executive who tries so hard to be one of the boys that he destroys any vestige of awe that his workers might have had for him, with the consequences that they begin to see him as a man like themselves and wonder why they should take orders from him'. (Prentice, 1961, p. 106).

The lesser degree of **clarity, focus, professionalism** and **boundaries** observed in Ireland may have something to do with the personal and professional lines being blurred. This can have a negative effect on productivity.

**Over familiarity:** The downside to the higher degree of socialization was described by the Australian participant.

She refers to 'conflicts and grievances' she experienced while working in X.com.

As she was close friends with the boss she came into difficulty when she had grievances in work as the relationship was not clearly defined.

I feel that it important to maintain professional boundaries in work.

As Prentice concludes: 'An understanding leader ...may be wise to maintain a kind of psychological distance that permits his subordinates to accept his authority without resentment.' (Prentice, 2004, p. 106).

## ***Findings and Conclusion***

Overall the findings of my semi structured interviews show positive and negative interpretations of the low power distance in Ireland.

The PDI scores indicate that there is a preference for a moderate level of power distance.

Some participants scored higher than the national average in their country which suggests that we should not assume that the trend for everyone is to desire a lower one.

The thematic analysis of the open interview question shows that there are perceived advantages and disadvantage of the low power distance relationships between bosses and subordinates in Ireland.

There are psychological benefits of feeling significant and respected, it is good for self esteem.

Many of the participants desire an authoritarian or paternalistic boss as well in order to have a sense of order.

The main disadvantage to having low power distance is the lack of clarity in professional boundaries. This is linked with the high level of socialisation and alcohol consumption in Ireland.

Given these observations the answer to my research question: Is there an ideal level power distance? Is that Power Distance is not good or bad. It is about how each unique individual interprets it.

# Conclusion

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The focus of my research has been to explore the dimension of power distance as a dimension of national culture.

To provide a framework I have started by defining the broader concept of culture and it's role in what happens or doesn't happen in organisations.

I looked at the academic roots of the concept and the evidence that levels of power distance vary from one country to another looking at quantitative evidence from Hofstede major surveys in the sixties and seventies to the recent GLOBE project's in 2004.

I now understand what the origins are and how the different preferences in boss-subordinate relationships manifest in societies. I have gathered some insights from looking at case studies into how power distance relationships work in real life day to day situations.

The aim of my research was to find out if power distance is a good or bad thing and whether there is an ideal level we should aspire to.

My exploration, using a case study of a modern Dublin offices shows that there are different interpretations of power distance in Irish organizations.

There is statistical evidence that there are comparatively low levels of power distance in Ireland.

Trends over time show that there is a global shift towards lower power distance relationships.

My case study suggests that there are advantages and disadvantages to this.

The advantages of a low power distance society are that there are more opportunities to participate in decision making, more consultation, respect and equality.

There are some disadvantages in that professional boundaries are blurred and affects eventually effect levels of trust and sense of security within the organization.

Further studies could be carried out into the importance of clearly defined working relationships.

There appears to be a link between socialisation and over familiarity. This is particularly interesting in the Irish context and we have one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption per capita in the world.

Now that I have explored the concept of power distance in more detail I feel that a moderate level of power distance is ideal as it is beneficial to keep a psychological distance between boss and subordinate. It is very rewarding to be able to participate as equals in the decision making process of an organisation and to have an open communication.

I feel that there is a need for professional boundaries and conduct as the law of entropy suggests without a leader chaos would ensue and the boss is still the boss even on social occasions.

I will leave you with the metaphor Prentice (2004) uses of an orchestra conductor which I feel deficts the ideal workplace. . Our skills and imput are all equally important. We must all share satisfaction in the production of the music. Most important of all the conductor must put in place ground rules that are easily followed.

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# Appendices

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## ***Culture in the workplace questionnaire***

This questionnaire will provide a better understanding of how your cultural preferences, as well as the cultural preferences of others, impact working relationships.

The Dimension I'm looking at is **Power Distance**: The degree to which inequality or distance between those in charge and the less powerful (subordinates) is accepted.

Knowing your own profile will help you learn about others and build those bridges together.

There are no right or wrong answers!

---

The descriptions below apply to four different types of managers. Please read through these descriptions first

Manager 1: Usually makes his/her decisions promptly and communicates them to his/her subordinates clearly and firmly. He/she expects them to carry out the decisions loyally and without raising difficulties.

Manager 2: Usually makes his/her decisions promptly, but, before going ahead, tries to explain them fully to his/her subordinates. He/she gives them the reasons for the decisions and answers whatever questions they may have.

Manager 3: Usually consults with his/her subordinates before he/she reaches his/her decisions. He/she listens to their advice, considers it, and then announces his/her decision. He/she then expects all to work loyally to implement it whether or not it is in accordance with the advice they gave.

Manager 4: Usually calls a meeting of his/her subordinates when there is an important decision to be made. He/she puts the problem before the group and invites discussion. He/she accepts the majority viewpoint as the decision.

Q. 1. Now, of the above types of managers, please mark the one which you would prefer to work under (highlight one answer only):

- |    |    |           |
|----|----|-----------|
| 1. | 1. | Manager 1 |
| 2. | 2. | Manager 2 |
| 3. | 3. | Manager 3 |
| 4. | 4. | Manager 4 |

Q. 2. And, to which one of the above four types of managers would you say your own superior most closely corresponds?

- |    |    |           |
|----|----|-----------|
| 1. | 1. | Manager 1 |
|----|----|-----------|

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 2. | 2. | Manager 2   |
| 3. | 3. | Manager 3   |
| 4. | 4. | Manager 4   |
| 5. | 5. | He/she does not correspond closely to any of them |

Q.3. How frequently, in your experience, are subordinates afraid to express disagreement with their superiors? (highlight one answer only):

1. Very seldom
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes
4. Frequently
5. Very frequently

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Q. 4. How would you compare your experience of power distance with your boss in Ireland to that of previous experiences of workplaces in your country of origin.

**Some information about yourself (for statistical purposes):**

Are you:

1. Male
2. Female

How old are you?

1. Under 20
2. 20-24
3. 25-29
4. 30-39
5. 40-49
6. 50-59
7. 60 or over

How long have you worked in Ireland?

What is your Nationality?

Thank you very much for your cooperation!