

## Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

### Power Distance

This is the way people in a society relate to each other on a hierarchical scale. A culture that gives great deference to a person of authority is a High Power Distance culture, and a culture that values the equal treatment of everyone is a Low Power Distance culture. In High Power Distance cultures, "inequality is seen as the basis of societal order" (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 97). Low Power Distance cultures, on the other hand, see inequality as sometimes necessary (think professor to student), but the more that relationships can be equalized, the better for everyone.

### Important Differences

<u>Low Power Difference</u>	<u>High Power Distance</u>
(United States)	(Arab Countries/China)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pluralistic governments based on outcome of majority vote</b></li> <li>• <b>Much discussion but little violence in domestic politics</b></li> <li>• <b>Power, status, and wealth do not need to go together</b></li> <li>• <b>Prevailing religions and philosophical systems stress equality</b></li> <li>• <b>Use of force reveals the failure of power</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Military, autocratic, or oligarchic government based on co-optation</b></li> <li>• <b>Little discussion but frequent violence in domestic politics</b></li> <li>• <b>Status consistency: power brings status and wealth</b></li> <li>• <b>Prevailing religions and philosophies stress stratification and hierarchy</b></li> <li>• <b>Use of force is the essence of power</b></li> </ul>

(Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 116)

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. USA: McGraw-Hill.