The Cross-Cultural Bridge: Business and Cultural Differences Between Portugal and Germany

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Resumo

As diferenças culturais desempenham um papel importante nas interações empresariais, dinâmicas no local de trabalho e estilos de liderança. Ao compreender as diferenças culturais, podemos entender os padrões de comportamento e as razões por trás deles. Este artigo tem como objetivo explorar as diferenças culturais entre Portugal e Alemanha, com um foco especial nos ambientes profissionais e nas relações económicas. Para analisar essas diferenças, são utilizados como referenciais teóricos o Modelo das 6 Dimensões da Cultura Nacional e o Modelo de Erin Meyer, além de uma entrevista com um especialista em Estudos Luso-Alemães.

Palavras-chave: Diferenças culturais, Relações Luso-Alemãs, Comunicação Intercultural, Dimensões Culturais de Hofstede, Mapa Cultural de Erin Meyer

Abstract

Cultural differences play an important role in business interactions, workplace dynamics, and leadership styles. By understanding cultural differences, we can understand patterns of behavior and the reasons behind them. This article aims to explore the cultural differences between Portugal and Germany, with a special focus on professional environments and economic relations. The following theoretical frameworks were used to explore this difference: the 6-D's Model of National Culture and Erin Meyer's Model. Additionally, the use of an interview with a specialist in Luso-German studies.

Keywords: Cultural differences, Portuguese-German Relations, Cross-Cultural Communication, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Erin Meyer's Culture Map

Introduction

Culture serves as the coding of the human mind that allows one group of people to distinguish itself from another group (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 6). Cultural differences play an important role in international business and professional interactions. Understanding cultural differences can assist in fostering collaboration and create bridges between the gaps created by this culture's differences.

According to a study presented by Federação Académica do Porto [Porto Academic Federation] (2025, p. 42), 73% of young university students in Porto admit to emigrating when they finish their studies. This study identifies Germany as the fourth most preferred country, following the UK, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. In 2023, 140275 Portuguese people were living in Germany, representing 1% of the total immigrant population in Germany. On the other hand, according to Diana do Mar (2025), although the subsidiaries of German companies operating in Portugal do not make it into the top five in terms of numerical presence, they are among the most productive foreign companies, second only to those from France.

As the interactions between Portugal and Germany are growing, it is also important to understand the cultures of each country and how these cultures can work together. This article explores the cultural differences between Portugal and Germany and how these cultural norms can impact workplace dynamics, leadership styles, and business interactions.

What is Culture?

Before we discover more about the cultural differences between Portugal and Germany, we need to reflect on an important question. What is culture? One of the first scientific definitions of Culture is from Edward Tylor: "Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (Tylor, 1889, p. 1). One of the most respected definitions comes from Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede. He claims that culture serves as the coding of the human mind that allows one group of people to distinguish itself from another group. (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 6).

Hofstede also agrees with Edward Tylor that culture is not innate to individuals; culture is learned. What is innate to individuals is human nature. In Hofstede's book named "*Culture and Organizations – Software of Mind*", he presents the three levels of uniqueness in Mental Programming. Figure 1.

1. Human Nature is what all human beings have in common. For example, the human ability to feel fear, anger, love, and joy.

2. Culture, as we already explained, is not innate to humans, culture is learned. The human ability to feel fear or joy is human nature, however, how one expresses fear or joy is cultural. We learn how to do it.

3. Personality is the unique personal set of "mental programs" that needn't be shared with any human being. It is what makes each unique.

Figure 1 - Three Levels of Uniqueness in Mental Programming (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 6)
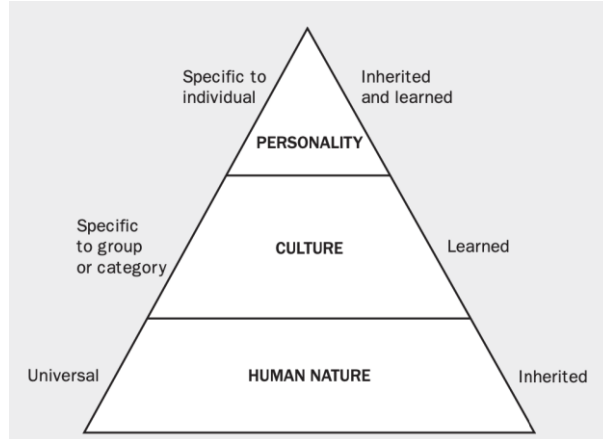
Cultural differences can be manifested in several ways. Hofstede created an Onion that shows how culture can be shown and indicates the most superficial and the deepest way of manifesting culture. Figure 2. Symbols are words, gestures, and objects that are recognized by those who share the same culture. It's the most superficial way of demonstrating culture. The Heroes are individuals, real or imagined, present or from the past, that are contemplated by society and play a role as a behavioral model. Rituals are collective activities that are characteristics of society and are considered essential, such as ways of greeting and praying. These three ways to show culture through practices. These practices are visible to outsiders, but their true meaning is not obvious. The meaning depends on how the people within the culture interpret the practices. The deepest way of demonstrating culture is through values. Values are the way to rationalize our decisions, our beliefs, and the "mental programming" of each one of us.

Figure 2 - The Onion: Manifestation of Culture (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 8)
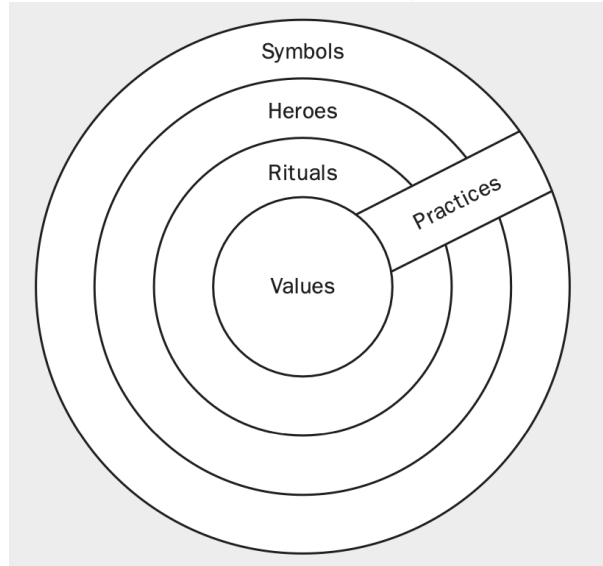
Theoretical models

Understanding national and organizational cultures has become essential for effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration in increasingly globalized contexts. Among the leading frameworks developed to facilitate this understanding are Geert Hofstede's 6-D Model of National Culture and Erin Meyer's Culture Map, both of which provide structured

approaches for decoding cultural behaviors and values. While they have a common objective, to elucidate cultural variation and improve intercultural interactions, they differ in conceptual foundations, structure, and practical application.

6-D's Model of National Culture

The 6-Dimensional Model of National Culture is a model created by Geert Hofstede. This model helps us to understand the culture of a country based on its cultural values. This model has helped organizations in the past years to improve communication and cooperation between cultures. This model consists of six dimensions.

The first one is the Power distance, this dimension expresses the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect unequal distribution of power. The next dimension is Individualism, which is defined as a preference for a more self-reliant society in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families. Masculinity vs Femininity is a dimension that the masculine aspect of this dimension reflects a societal preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards, emphasizing success. In contrast, feminine societies prioritize cooperation, care for the vulnerable, and the overall quality of life. To illustrate these differences, Figure 3 presents a comparison between masculine and feminine societies as discussed by Hofstede.[1] The Uncertainty Avoidance represents the degree to which individuals in a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. This is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known. Long-Term Orientation reflects how society conceptualizes future rewards, perseverance, and pragmatism. Short-term orientation versus long-term orientation is significantly differentiated by how they view success, learning, and economic progress. Short-term orientation prefers tradition, national pride, and quick results, but long-term orientation values saving, learning, and hard work for lasting success. And the last one is Indulgence, which represents a society that allows for the relatively free gratification of basic human desires, focusing on enjoying life and having fun. In contrast, the other type, known as a restraining society, suppresses the fulfillment of these needs and regulates them through strict social norms.

Figure 3 - Key Differences Between Feminine and Masculine Societies (Hofstede et al., 2010)

FEMININE	MASCULINE
Relationships and quality of life are important.	Challenge, earnings, recognition, and advancement are important.
Both men and women should be modest.	Men should be assertive, ambitious, and tough.
Both men and women can be tender and focus on relationships.	Women are supposed to be tender and to take care of relationships.
In the family, both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings.	In the family, fathers deal with facts, and mothers deal with feelings.
Girls' beauty ideals are most influenced by the father and mother.	Girls' beauty ideals are most influenced by the media and by celebrities.
Parents share earning and caring roles.	The standard pattern is that the father earns, and the mother cares.
Both boys and girls are allowed to cry, but neither should fight.	Girls cry, but boys don't; boys should fight back, and girls shouldn't fight at all.
Boys and girls play for the same reasons.	Boys play to compete; girls play to be together.
The same standards apply for bridegrooms and brides.	Brides need to be chaste and industrious; grooms don't.
Husbands should be like boyfriends.	Husbands should be healthy, wealthy, and understanding; boyfriends should be fun.

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[1] The Cultural Factor Group, a cultural analytics and strategy advisor, refers to this aspect as *Motivation Towards Success.* From now on, this will be the terminology adopted.

Erin Meyer's Model

Erin Meyer's model of eight cultural scales gives a fresh perspective on intercultural communication, particularly in organizational and business contexts. Krebs (2022, p. 12) states that while this model is not traditionally categorized as a cultural dimensions model, it provides valuable insights into differences in communication styles across cultures. Meyer also refers to the importance of the concept of cultural relativism, as she states "The point is that where a culture falls on a scale doesn't in itself mean anything. What matters is the position of one country relative to another" (Meyer, 2014). For a better picture, Meyer (2014) gives an example of when she was working with British and French teams. When she asked the British team about their experiences with the French, they described them as chaotic, disorganized, and often late. Later, when Indian team members joined, Meyer asked them about their experiences working with the French. The Indians characterized the French as rigid, overly structured, and uncomfortable with last-minute changes.

This eight-cultural scale starts is the Communicating scale, which varies between high-context and low-context cultures, concepts developed by Edward Hall. In low-context cultures, effective communication is direct, straightforward, and clear. In contrast, high-context cultures employ more sophisticated and nuanced forms of communication, where messages are often implied rather than explicitly stated (Hall, 1976). The Evaluating scale measures a preference for frank feedback versus diplomatic feedback. Persuading scale explains the differences between countries that adopt an applications-first approach versus those that take a principles-first approach. According to Meyer, cultures that lean towards a principles-first approach prioritize developing a theoretical framework before making any decisions. In contrast, applications-first cultures focus on quickly establishing facts and opinions, and only if necessary, they will present a concept that supports their approach. Leading scale is partly based on the concept of power distance presented by Geert Hofstede. It measures the degree of respect and deference shown to authority figures. Meyer places the countries on a spectrum from egalitarian to hierarchical. The Deciding scale differs between consensual and top-down decision-making. Consensual cultures try to make decisions more democratically, involving the team. The top-down cultures typically have decisions made by individuals, usually the managers. Trusting scale measures how we can have trust in the team. Cognitive trust can be different from affective trust. In task-based cultures, trust is built consistently throughout work. However, in a relationship-based society, trust is a result of a strong affective connection. Disagreeing scale measures the tolerance for open disagreement and inclination to see it as either helpful or harmful to colleagues. Scheduling scale measures how much value is placed on operating in a structured, linear fashion versus being flexible and reactive.

Despite their shared goal of enhancing intercultural competence, Hofstede's and Meyer's models differ significantly in application and theoretical foundation. Hofstede adopts an empirically grounded, value-based approach that presents cultures as measurable and somewhat fixed entities, ideal for macro-level comparative analysis. His model is particularly valuable in academic and theoretical explorations of societal structures. Meyer, on the other hand, prioritizes behavioral nuances and practical interaction patterns, making her model more adaptable to the dynamic realities of contemporary global teams. Her approach is less about categorizing cultures and more about fostering mutual understanding in intercultural settings.

Methodology

This study aims to explore the cultural differences between Portugal and Germany. To have more insights into these differences, data was collected through an expert interview. This interview provided valuable information for the study, which also utilized the frameworks

and theories that were explained earlier. Also used for this study were the frameworks explained earlier.

As part of this research, an interview was conducted with a Portuguese academic who teaches German business culture at the Porto Accounting and Business School. His professional and cultural background, combined with his teaching experience, offers valuable insights into the cultural and professional differences between Portugal and Germany. While this single interview cannot represent the full complexity of bilateral relations or cultural dynamics, it provides a useful case study to contextualize broader trends that will be explored in the following discussion. The interview for this study was a semi-structured expert interview. This type of interview uses a set of prepared open-ended questions, which keeps the discussion consistent across different topics, including professional cultural distinctions, potential mutual learning between Portuguese and German workers, leadership strategies for managing multicultural teams, and the impact of cultural differences on business relations.

A qualitative approach was chosen to allow for a better understanding of the differences and how we can address them. This combination of an expert interview and theoretical frameworks ensures a comprehensive analysis of the cultural contrasts between Portugal and Germany, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of cross-cultural interactions in various dimensions. The frameworks of Hofstede and Meyer were specifically selected because Hofstede's model provides a well-established quantitative basis for comparing fundamental cultural dimensions, while Meyer's approach offers practical insights into communication and collaboration styles, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of how these cultural differences manifest in professional settings.

Results

6-D's Model of National Culture

Figure 4 visually presents the differences between Portugal and Germany using Hofstede´s 6-D Model of National Culture.

On the Power Distance dimension, Germany is considered one of the lower power-distance countries, with a score of 35. Direct and participative communication and meeting styles are common, control is disliked, and traditionally, leadership is challenging to show expertise. On the other side, Portugal scores on these dimensions 63, which reflects that hierarchical distance is accepted and the most powerful positions are admitted to having privileges for their position. In Portuguese culture, negative feedback is very distressing, so for the employee is more than difficult to provide his boos with negative feedback.

Regarding the Individualism dimensions, the German society is an individualist one, they score 79 on these dimensions. There is a strong belief in the ideal of self-actualization. Loyalty is based on personal preferences for people, a sense of duty, and responsibility. The Portuguese culture scores 59 on this dimension, which translates into a loosely knit society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families.

Concerning the Motivation Towards Achievement and Success dimension, German society is considered a decisive society, with a score of 66. Performance is highly valued and is required early, as the school system separates children into different types of schools at the age of ten. People would rather "live to work" and draw a lot of self-esteem from their tasks. Portugal is a consensus society, with a score of 31. The focus is on "working to live." Managers strive for consensus, and people value equality, solidarity, and quality in their work lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation.

Portugal is one of the most uncertainty-avoidant societies in the world, with a score of 99 out of 100. Portugal, by exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance, maintains rigid codes of belief and behavior and is intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. In these cultures, there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work), and time is money. On the other side, Germany scores 65 on this dimension. The score is on the high end, so there is a slight preference for Uncertainty Avoidance, but not as extreme as Portugal.

About the Long-Term Orientation dimension, Germany, with a 57 score, indicates that it is a pragmatic orientation country; people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context, and time. The Portuguese society prefers normative over pragmatic. People in Portuguese society have a strong consensus on establishing the absolute truth.

And in the Indulgence dimensions, German society is trained in nature. A low score of 40 demonstrated that German society tends toward cynicism and pessimism. The Portuguese score on this dimension is not that different from the German one; it is 33. This indicates that Portugal has a culture of restraint.

Figure 4 - Portugal and Germany in Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model, data taken from The Cultural Factor (2025)
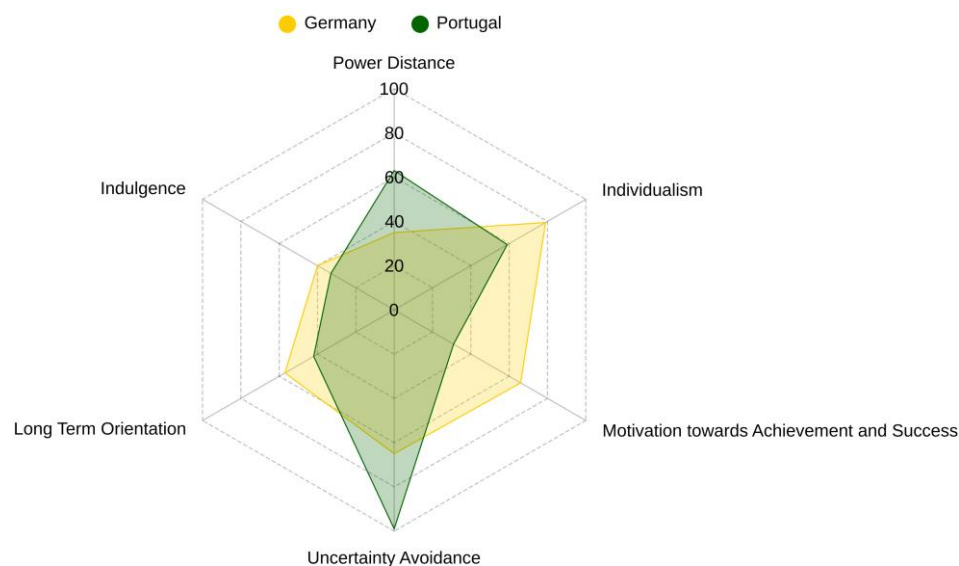
Erin Meyer Model Comparison

Figure 5 visually illustrates the differences between Portugal and Germany using the Erin Meyer Model Comparison.

Communicating: low context vs. High context – Portugal is a high-context culture, which means that communication is often indirect, and messages rely on shared understanding and context. Sometimes the receiver of the message needs to read between the lines of the message. On the other hand, German society prefers low-context communication, where information is explicitly stated, and the conversation is straightforward.

Evaluating: Direct vs. Indirect Negative Feedback – Germans usually provide direct feedback, which is unambiguous. In Portugal, feedback is more reserved or softened to avoid confrontations and maintain harmony.

Leading: Egalitarian vs. Hierarchical: Both countries place similar in Meyer's scale, however, the Portuguese have a more hierarchical structure. Portuguese employees expect their superiors to have all the answers and are less likely to challenge authority figures, however, the German workplace tends to be more egalitarian, with employees feeling comfortable questioning and debating with their leaders.

Deciding: Consensual vs. Top-down –usually follows a top-down approach, where managers make final decisions with little input from employees, on the other side, decision-making is more consensual in Germany, with discussions involving a smaller, specialized group.

Trusting: task-based vs. relationship-based – Portuguese culture is significantly more relationship-based than German culture. There are two different types of trust: affective and cognitive trust. The positioning of these two cultures on the trusting scale, in the Portuguese work environment, both trust forms are important, however, in the German work environment, the professionals tend to separate affective and cognitive trust and rely more on cognitive trust.

Disagreeing: confrontational vs. Avoids Confrontation: Portuguese workers prefer to avoid confrontations, seeking harmony in discussions. On the other side, Germans are more confrontational and value open debate to reach solutions.

Scheduling: Linear-time vs. Flexible-time – Germany follows a strict, linear-time approach, valuing punctuality, structure, and long-term planning. However, Portugal has a flexible time culture, where schedules are more adaptable, and improvisation is common.

Persuading: Principles-Frist vs. Applications-First – both cultures emphasize a principal-first approach, meaning they prefer to understand the underlying logic before implementing solutions.

Figure 5 - Germany and Portugal on Meyer´s eight culture scales, Erin Meyer (2022)
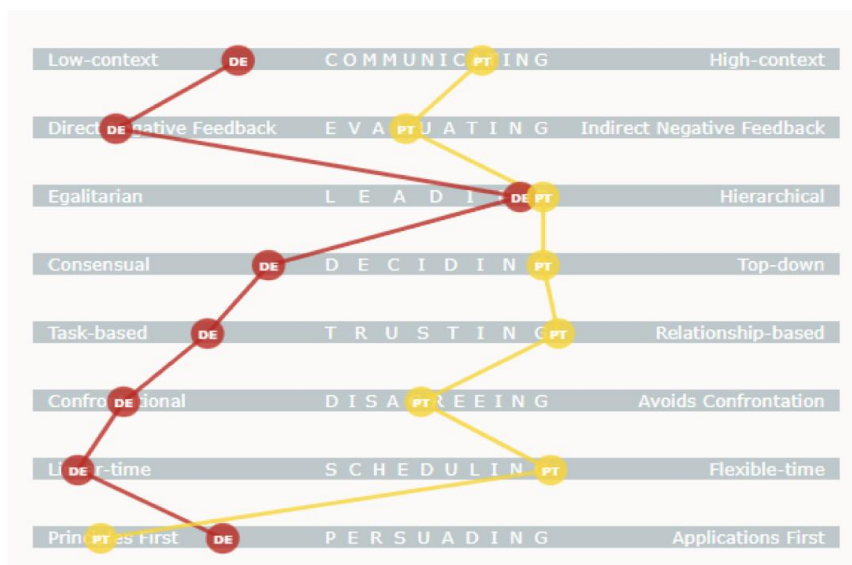
Interview

This interview explored the cultural and professional differences between Portugal and Germany, focusing on workplace dynamics, leadership styles, and business interactions. According to this specialist, one of the main cultural differences in the workplace is how the Portuguese is the way Portuguese employees display formal attitudes toward their hierarchical superiors. In Portugal, workers often address their superiors by their academic titles. In contrast, in Germany, professional interactions tend to be more straightforward, with less emphasis on academic titles; colleagues are usually addressed as Herr or Frau[2], followed by their last name.

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[2] Herr – Mister | Frau - Mizz

When discussing work styles, the specialist pointed out that Portuguese workers are more adaptable and capable of multitasking, often doing several tasks at the same time. This flexibility is sometimes referred to as the *desenrascar*[3] mentality, which allows Portuguese workers to find new solutions to unexpected problems. This approach to work can lead to a lack of structure and prioritization. On the other hand, German professionals tend to follow a more methodical approach, focusing on one task at a time and ensuring it is completed before moving on to the next. While this approach improves efficiency, it may sometimes limit the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. According to the specialist, we should find a way in between these two work styles.

This conversation also addressed economics and business relations between the two countries. Historically, Portugal and Germany have maintained strong bilateral trade relations, supported by institutions such as the Luso-German Chamber of Commerce. In this interview, the specialist pointed out that the German market offers many opportunities for entrepreneurship and business expansion, particularly given its long-standing tradition as a destination for immigrants.

The specialist also identified political challenges that could threaten these positive relations, particularly the rise of far-right political movements in both countries. These movements often advocate for protectionist policies, which can negatively impact international business and cooperation. To respond to these challenges, he emphasized the importance of fostering cultural exchange through institutional initiatives, which could be developed by some institutions that already have relations between these two countries, such as the Luso-German Chamber of Commerce, the Goethe Institute, or partnerships between universities, such as the partnership between Hochschule Koblenz and Porto Accounting and Business School.

Discussion

Throughout this article, we explored the cultural differences between Portugal and Germany. According to Hofstede, culture is learned, and each individual possesses a unique cultural background. It is important to recognize that people belong to multiple cultural spheres—not just their national or geographic background—and that personality also plays a significant role in shaping individual behavior. While studying cultural differences is essential for understanding general patterns, it is equally important to acknowledge individual perspectives. We should avoid generalizing an entire group based on the behavior of one person and instead aim to understand the specific individuals we are interacting with, avoiding assumptions about their beliefs or behaviors.

According to Hofstede's model, Portugal has a higher Power Distance than Germany, meaning that hierarchical structures are more pronounced and accepted. The interviewed specialist also observed this difference, noting that Portuguese professionals tend to address their superiors with academic titles more frequently compared to Germans. However, one of the interesting facts is that even though Portugal has a bigger power distance than Germany, they have more relation-based practice than Germany. In Portuguese culture, having relationships and relying on trust are important. One of the reasons could be that Portugal is one of the countries that has the most uncertainty avoidance in the world, according to The Cultural Factor, and it is more difficult for an individual to break affective trust than cognitive trust. This is also reflected by the disagreement. The Portuguese culture tends to avoid conflict to maintain trust and emotional bonds. This tendency to avoid uncertainty is also evident in their approach to persuasion, as measured by the Meyer scale. In other words, the Portuguese culture prefers to first understand the reasoning behind

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[3] resolve quickly and with few resources or in an improvised manner;

solutions before implementing them; they prioritize proving the logic before executing any actions.

The specialist refers to the German culture as methodical; this methodical culture is also reflected in the long-term orientation indicated by Hofstede. This dimension indicates that Germans are a pragmatic society. This is also reflected in the scheduling strategy given by Meyer, which shows that German society prefers structure and long-term planning. German society also has a low power distance; there is a hierarchy in the organizations, but the workers feel comfortable disagreeing with their superiors. As German society is more task-based, they tend to separate their affective trust from cognitive trust. As they separate, they trust it is easier to handle negative feedback because they are criticizing the work, not the person. This separation of cognitive trust and affective trust could also affect the individualism dimension identified by Hofstede, as the German society is a more individualistic society than the Portuguese society, where affective trust plays an important role.

Despite all the differences between Portugal and Germany, effective collaboration is possible when intercultural competence and adaptive strategies are in place. The Portuguese flexibility and the "desenrascar" mentality can complement Germany's structured, long-term, and planning culture. Conversely, the German emphasis on clarity and predictability may address challenges related to uncertainty avoidance in the Portuguese context, enabling both parties to engage in more informed and cooperative work processes. Cross-cultural studies show that practices like giving direct feedback, which are common in German workplaces, can help boost productivity in Portuguese jobs. On the other hand, the focus on personal relationships in Portuguese work culture can lead to better teamwork and well-being, which might not get as much attention in some German settings. To work well together, both cultures need to recognize, respect, and balance their different approaches.

Nowadays, in the political situation that we are living in, as the specialist refers to, the increase of far-right parties can affect the relations between these two countries, as these parties usually tend to have a protectionist economy and not increase the bilateral relations. Despite these challenges, to strengthen relations between Portugal and Germany, as the specialist identified, institutions and initiatives must promote even more collaboration.

Conclusion

Understanding cultural differences is essential for fostering strong Portuguese-German relations. Only by understanding others can we create meaningful connections. This article has highlighted several key distinctions between Portugal and Germany.

Recognizing and respecting cultural differences enables the development of collaborative strategies that harness the strengths of diverse workforces. For instance, the adaptability characteristic of Portuguese teams can complement the efficiency and precision typical of German work practices, while Germany's structured feedback mechanisms may enhance the productivity and clarity of communication within Portuguese teams.

While it is essential to recognize that cultural frameworks do not define individuals, and that each person is shaped by multiple cultural influences and a unique personality, understanding cultural patterns remains critical in business interactions. This article has shown that key differences, such as Portugal's higher power distance and relationship-based trust versus Germany's lower power distance and task-oriented trust, can significantly shape workplace dynamics. In business contexts, Portuguese professionals may prioritize trust and flexibility, while Germans often value structure, planning, and direct feedback.

These contrasts influence communication styles, decision-making processes, and leadership expectations. For example, Portuguese employees may seek clarity before acting to avoid

uncertainty, while Germans may expect rapid, independent execution based on pre-established plans. Recognizing these tendencies enables professionals from both cultures to adjust their approaches: Portuguese teams can benefit from adopting more structured feedback and planning methods, while German counterparts might foster stronger collaboration by investing in interpersonal trust.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of intercultural workplace dynamics, offering practical insights for multinational organizations looking to optimize collaboration. Future research could further explore how these cultural differences manifest in specific industries or regions, investigate the impact of hybrid cultural identities on teamwork, and develop tailored intercultural training programs. Ultimately, expanding this field can help organizations harness cultural diversity as a source of innovation and competitive advantage.

Declaration: Use of IA

During the preparation of this article, the author used the ChatGPT and Grammarly tools for support the structural organization of the article, suggest keywords to facilitate the indexing of the article, assist with grammatical and spelling correction, and rephrase sentences for greater clarity and textual coherence. All generated content was subjected to critical analysis, reviewed, validated, and supplemented by the author, ensuring its conceptual accuracy and compliance with ethical and scientific principles.

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Appendix

Interview

Speaker 1:

First of all, thank you very much for accepting this interview. My first question is, in the professional and work context, what are the main differences between Portuguese and German culture?

Speaker 2:

When we talk about the professional context, what exactly do you mean? Because there are, let's say, many differences, right? For example, in a business environment, I believe that we Portuguese are more formal, which might not be the general perception. For instance, when it comes to academic titles, here in Portugal we usually address people using their academic title: Mr. Doctor, Mr. Architect, Mr. Engineer. This is not as relevant in Germany—in a business context, it's just Mr. or Ms. and then the surname. In Portugal, it's Mr. Doctor followed by the surname. So, I think that is one of the differences in a business setting. Do you have anything else in mind?

Speaker 1:

I'd also like to ask: imagine you're leading a team with both German and Portuguese workers. What type of tasks would better suit a Portuguese worker, and which would better suit a German worker?

Speaker 2:

I don't think there's a big difference in that regard. But if we're talking about tasks outside regular working hours, perhaps I would find more willingness from the Portuguese than from the Germans. In my perspective, German professionals are very strict with their work hours—they might be more punctual arriving at work, but they also leave exactly on time. Portuguese workers might be more flexible in staying longer to finish tasks.

Speaker 1:

In your opinion, what could Portuguese workers learn from the German work culture?

Speaker 2:

Perhaps to be more methodical. I think the Portuguese professional is more multitasking, trying to handle several tasks at once and perhaps leaving some aside if they're not so urgent. That's where our typical Portuguese trait of "desenrascar" (resourcefulness) comes in—improvising to get things done. Germans are more methodical—they follow a sequence, complete one task, and then move on to the next.

Speaker 1:

On the other hand, what could Germans learn from Portuguese work culture?

Speaker 2:

Perhaps not to be so rigid in their methods. I believe neither work methodology is entirely positive or negative. A middle ground would be more beneficial for the overall work environment.

Speaker 1:

Now imagine you are leading a team with both German and Portuguese workers. What strategies would you adopt to manage these two different cultures and get the best from both worlds?

Speaker 2:

That also involves changing mindsets. From my experience, Germans don't easily accept being led by someone outside their own culture. They don't like to be led, especially not by someone who isn't German. That can be a handicap, so it's necessary to change that mindset, maybe tone down the sense of superiority that some Germans might display. Portuguese people are more flexible and respond more positively to leadership.

Speaker 1:

What are the main opportunities and challenges the world is facing today that could impact Luso-German commercial relations?

Speaker 2:

Challenges... I think there's a long tradition of Luso-German professional relations—through bilateral partnerships, NGOs, and entities based in both countries. For example, the Luso-German Chamber of Commerce in Porto fosters these business relationships. The German market possibly offers more opportunities for entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses. Germany has always been a country that receives immigrants, which provides good opportunities for setting up businesses. Portugal, traditionally a country of emigration, has recently started receiving more immigrants, especially after the EU expansion. So we've also changed in terms of technological innovation and entrepreneurship. Portugal is now offering more opportunities.

Speaker 1:

And what current challenges could jeopardize these relations?

Speaker 2:

Current political trends, especially the rise of radical parties, could undermine these good relations. These parties are not favorable to immigrants or people from different backgrounds. Unfortunately, this is happening in both Portugal and Germany. In Germany, far-right parties are gaining significant strength, which could endanger these good relations.

Speaker 1:

Returning to cultural differences—do you think studying these differences could foster better cooperation?

Speaker 2:

Absolutely. Local institutions could also play a role by promoting awareness through embassies, consulates, commerce chambers, or even educational institutions like the Goethe Institute and universities. They should promote both German and Portuguese cultures in a bilateral way, not unilaterally, reaching not just an educated audience but the general public. This can also help deconstruct stereotypes and make people more comfortable interacting and forming personal, commercial, and cultural relationships.