ISCTE ◆ Business School
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

GERMAN CULTURAL STANDARDS FROM THE PORTUGUESE
PERSPECTIVE

Nuno Manuel N. Neves Agostinho

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Supervisor:
Prof. Dr. António Robalo, Prof. Catedrático, ISCTE Business School,
Departamento de Gestão

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Abstract

O objectivo deste estudo consiste em identificar os standards culturais dos alemães na perspectiva dos portugueses. A metodologia utilizada é o Método dos Standards Culturais, uma metodologia inovadora que permite identificar com muito mais detalhe e rigor as diferenças culturais entre duas culturas. O instrumento utilizado é a entrevista narrativa, um tipo de entrevista aberta em que os entrevistados, todos portugueses que tiveram larga experiência de trabalho na Alemanha, apresentam, pela ordem que os marcou mais em termos de choque cultural, as histórias de incidentes que aconteceram durante a sua estadia na Alemanha e que representam incidentes críticos, os quais podem ser positivos os negativos.

Os incidentes críticos, analisados com base no processo "Qualitative Content Analysis" permitem identificar, no final do processo, os standards culturais relativos que resultam da comparação entre duas culturas, neste caso a cultura alemã e a Portuguesa. Estes resultados, válidos apenas quando comparamos duas culturas, não permitem generalizações ou extrapolações na comparação com outras culturas. Ou seja, não podem ser utilizados para caracterizar uma cultura, como é o caso da alemã, em termos gerais, tal como é feito nos modelos baseados nas dimensões.

Os resultados obtidos, standards culturais relativos, referentes à cultura alemã na perspectiva dos portugueses, é um contributo para todos aqueles portugueses que tenham que trabalhar com alemães e necessitem de compreender melhor as diferenças entre as duas culturas. Por outro lado, este trabalho poderá constituir-se como uma reflexão para todos os alemães que venham a Portugal ou que de alguma forma tenham que lidar com portugueses, pois permite-lhes reflectir nos aspectos que os portugueses consideram como mais marcantes da cultura alemã, quando comparada com a portuguesa.

The purpose of this study is to identify the cultural standards of the Germans from the Portuguese perspective. The methodology used is the Cultural Standard Method, an innovative methodology that allows identifying with much more detail and rigor the cultural differences between two cultures. The instrument used is the narrative interview, a kind of open interviews in which interviewees, which are all Portuguese

with an extensive working experience in Germany, present, by the order they consider more significant in terms of culture shock, the stories of incidents that occurred during their stay in Germany, which represent critical incidents that may be positive or negative.

Critical incidents, analyzed with base on the process "Qualitative Content Analysis" allow to identify, at the end of the process, the relative cultural standards that result from the comparison between two cultures, in this case German and Portuguese culture. These results, only valid when comparing two cultures, do not allow generalizations or extrapolations in the comparison with other cultures. That is, they cannot be used to characterize a culture, as is the case of Germany, in general terms, as it is done in the dimension-based models.

The results obtained, relative cultural standards, concerning German culture from the Portuguese perspective, are a contribution to those Portuguese who have to work with Germans and need to better understand the differences between the two cultures. Moreover, this work could be a reflection for all Germans who come to Portugal or that somehow have to deal with the Portuguese, allowing them to reflect on the issues that Portuguese regard as the most significant features of German culture, when compared with the Portuguese one.

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Executive Summary

O objectivo deste estudo consiste em identificar os standards culturais dos alemães na perspectiva dos portugueses. A metodologia utilizada é o Método dos Standards Culturais, uma metodologia inovadora que permite identificar com muito mais detalhe e rigor as diferenças culturais entre duas culturas próximas. Esta metodologia tem sido utilizada para identificar diferenças culturais entre culturas como por exemplo as culturas europeias. O instrumento a utilizar para a recolha dos dados necessários à concretização desta investigação é a entrevista narrativa, um tipo de entrevista aberta em que os entrevistados, todos portugueses que tiveram larga experiência de trabalho na Alemanha, apresentam, pela ordem que os marcou mais em termos de choque cultural, as histórias de incidentes que aconteceram durante a sua estadia na Alemanha. Estas histórias chamadas de incidentes críticos são a base para a construção de toda a identificação dos standards culturais relativos. Os incidentes críticos não são necessariamente todos negativos e muitos deles representam, até, aspectos muito positivos e que reconhecidamente marcam a opinião que um elemento de uma cultura tem sobre outro elemento de outra cultura.

Os incidentes críticos, analisados com base no "Qualitative Content Analysis" permitem identificar no final do processo os standards culturais relativos que resultam da comparação entre duas culturas, neste caso a cultura Alemã e a Portuguesa. Estes resultados, válidos apenas quando comparamos duas culturas, não permitem generalizações ou extrapolações na comparação com outras culturas. Ou seja, não podem ser utilizados para caracterizar uma cultura, como é o caso da Alemã, em termos gerais, tal como é feito nos modelos baseados nas dimensões.

Neste trabalho é dado um enfoque muito especial à definição de cultura apresentada pelos conhecidos autores Fons Trompenaars e Geert Hofstede. Também os seus modelos baseados em 7 e 5 dimensões respectivamente, são detalhados e relacionados com os resultados obtidos no decurso desta dissertação. Esta análise é concretizada através da comparação de cada um dos standards culturais obtidos, com

uma ou mais dimensões de cada modelo e verificando se os resultados coincidem com os obtidos pelo estudo.

Tomando em linha de conta com alguns dos incidentes críticos mais significativos e moldando-os para que, no final, se transformem em autênticos estudo de casos, é possível, em sala de aula, com um grupo de formandos, trabalhar as competências ao nível das atitudes, sensibilizando-os para a importância das diferenças culturais. Ou seja, trata-se de uma aplicação prática dos resultados desta investigação, tendo em vista melhorar a preparação de portugueses que necessitem de trabalhar com alemães.

Por último, de salientar que o estudo apresenta diversas diferenças culturais entre a cultura Alemã e a Portuguesa que devem ser tidos em consideração. A principal razão apontada que impede alguém de conseguir vencer noutro país é a dificuldade em perceber como é que os naturais do país se comportam, como é que reagem a determinadas situações e assim sendo, identificar claramente e com rigor as diferenças a ter em atenção é de capital importância.

1. Introduction

To identify and understand cultural differences between two very distinct cultures, for example, a European culture and an Asian culture, is a clear necessity for workers and managers in order to avoid misunderstandings and reach success. So, logically, it is a top priority to do before the first contact. However, when it comes to identify the differences between two cultures that share the same background, the same roots, as for example two European cultures, it is not so clear for the majority of the people, the purpose of that, and in that sense it is, sometimes, neglected. Perhaps, in a similar culture, the impact of a negative action should be smaller and less important, then in a totally different culture, however for a worker living in a foreign country, with a different language, anything that contributes to difficult the communication should be avoid .

The purpose of this study is to identify the cultural standards of the Germans from the Portuguese perspective. The methodology used is the Cultural Standard Method, an innovative methodology that allows identifying with much more detail and rigor the cultural differences between two cultures. The instrument used is the narrative interview, a kind of open interviews in which interviewees, which are all Portuguese with an extensive working experience in Germany, present, by the order they consider more significant in terms of culture shock, the stories of incidents that occurred during their stay in Germany, which represent critical incidents that may be positive or negative.

Critical incidents, analyzed with base on the process "Qualitative Content Analysis" allow to identify, at the end of the process, the relative cultural standards that result from the comparison between two cultures, in this case German and Portuguese culture. These results, only valid when comparing two cultures, do not allow generalizations or extrapolations in the comparison with other cultures. That is, they cannot be used to characterize a culture, as is the case of Germany, in general terms, as it is done in the dimension-based models.

The results obtained, relative cultural standards, concerning German culture from the Portuguese perspective, are a contribution to those Portuguese who have to

work with Germans and need to better understand the differences between the two cultures. Moreover, this work could be a reflection for all Germans who come to Portugal or that somehow have to deal with the Portuguese, allowing them to reflect on issues that Portuguese regard as the most significant features of German culture, when compared with the Portuguese one.

This dissertation is organized in seven chapters and the bibliography.

Chapter 1, Introduction, presents the structure of the work and defines the problem and the general goal of the dissertation. It makes also a brief description of each chapter and in the end presents the final conclusions.

Chapter 2, Literature Review, presents the theoretical framework and it is structured into 2 sections: the first one, Definition of Culture and the second one Cross-cultural Research. Cultural differences between two countries are only possible to identify if based on a solid definition of culture. Section 1, describes the definition of culture by Fons Trompenaars. He represents culture as half an onion. He argues that what makes the difference between two cultures is the way each other responds to some problems, dilemmas. These dilemmas, could be related to people`s relationship to time, to environment and to other people.

In this section it is also presented the definition of culture by the researcher Geert Hofstede. This author argues that people carry "mental programs" which are developed in the family in early childhood and reinforced in schools and organizations, and that these mental programs contains a component of national culture. However the mental programs cannot be directly observed. What we can observe is the representation of this mental program, like words, behaviours, reactions to specific situations, etc. He represents culture as half an onion, in which it is possible to observe "Values" in the core of the onion and coming up to the outskirts "Rituals", "Heroes" and "Symbols" subsumed under the term "Practices".

In section Research in Cross-cultural, it is mentioned, in detail, the adopted models of Trompenaars and Hofstede and also the Cultural Standards Method. Trompenaars model, with 7 dimensions and Hofstede model, based in 5 dimensions,

allow identifying the cultural differences between several countries, included Germany and Portugal. The difference between these models and the Cultural Standard Method lies in the way each of the models approach the problem. For Trompenaars and Hofstede models, each country as an absolute value in each dimension and these values are unchangeable. The latter looks at differences valid only in the comparison between two cultures. The differences identified are relative differences and only valid when comparing two specific cultures. By given a more detail in terms of differentiation allows the possibility to study the differences between cultures that are relatively closed.

Chapter 3, Adopted Methodology, develops the method applied and gives also a brief description of the instruments used to collect and analyse pertinent information needed to this work. This chapter is structured into 3 sections: section 1, Cultural Standard Method, presents the theoretical framework that supports the method used, section 2, Data-gathering, includes an explanation about the Narrative Interview used to collect data and section 3, Data-analysis, describes the Qualitative Content Analysis – inductive category development used to analyse data, which tries to reconcile the advantages of applying a technique based on qualitative analysis with the advantages of the techniques of quantitative analysis.

Chapter 4, Results from the primary research method, starts with the sample characterization, following by the analysis of Inductive Categories. Then it has a section called Cultural Relative Standards, devoted to the results of joint analysis carried out by a small group of Portuguese and German, not included in the first place in the sample, Based on the critical incidents and inductive categories, which deserve wide discussion on his part, thus resulting in the identification of Relative Cultural Standards.

Chapter 5, Comparison between results and other studies, makes a comparison between results obtained during this work and the two main models previous referred in chapter 2, Trompenaars and Hofstede models. This comparison tries to perform an analysis by placing each Relative Cultural Standard in comparison with one or more dimensions of each model and verifying if they are coincident.

Chapter 6, Training from the Relative Cultural Standards, deals with the practical application of the results obtained from this study. Taking into consideration the most significant critical incidents and shaping them so that in the end, they become authentic case studies, it is possible in the classroom with a group of trainees, work skills in terms of attitudes and making them aware of the importance of cultural differences.

The last chapter, Conclusions, presents a summary of the results obtained in this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of culture

Many authors have presented several ways of defining culture. One definition belongs to Kluckhohn and states that "*Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.*" (1951, p. 86)

Trompenaars also stated that "*Cultures can be distinguished from each other by the differences in shared meanings they expect and attribute to their environment.*" People within a culture do not all have identical sets of artefacts, norms, values and assumptions. Within each culture there is a wide spread of these. This spread does have a pattern around an average. So, in a sense, the variation around the norm can be seen as a normal distribution. Distinguishing one culture from another depends on the limits we want to make on each side of the distribution. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 24).

Trompenaars (1997, p. 22) suggested a model of culture represented by half onion with its layers indicating several levels of deepness in culture.

The outer layer represents explicit products, observable reality of the language, food, buildings, monuments, etc. This layer symbolises the explicit culture, easily observable by others.

The middle layer of the onion represents norms and values. Norms represents the common sense that a group shares about what is right or wrong and values their definition. It takes shared meanings of norms and values that are stable and salient for a group`s cultural tradition to be developed and elaborated. The middle layer is considered also as explicit culture.

The inner layer, the core, symbolises the assumptions about existence. He argues that the best way to test if something is a basic assumption is when the question provokes confusion or irritation. This deepest meaning has escaped from conscious

questioning and has become self-evident, because it is a result of routine responses to the environment. In this sense culture is anything but nature. This layer represents the implicit culture. Finally the different layers are not independent from one another, but complementary.
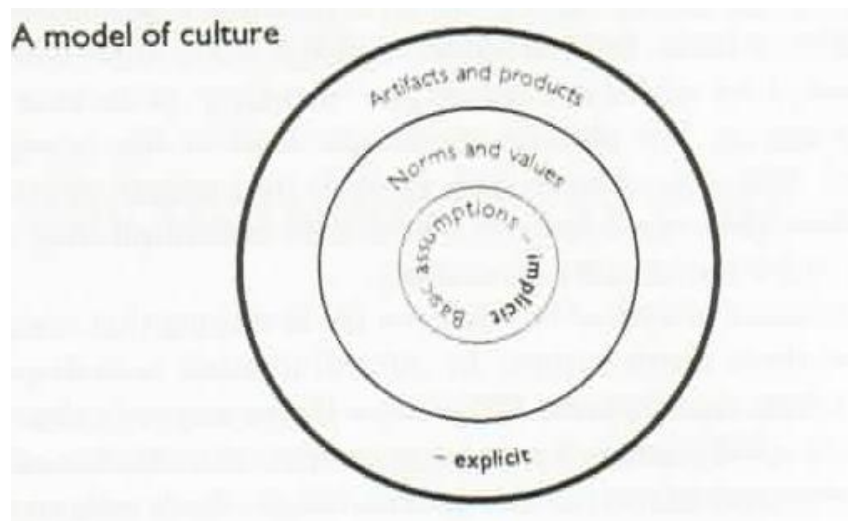
Figure 2-1 – Representation of culture (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 22)

In every culture a limited number of general and universally shared human problems need to be solved. Trompenaars distinguish different cultures based on the solutions that each group of people presents to three common problems they all face, people`s relationship to time, to environment and to other people (1997, p. 28). From the solution that different cultures have chosen to these universal problems, he could identify seven fundamental dimensions of culture.

Five dimensions are related to relationships with people, Universalism versus Particularism, Individualism versus Communitarism, Neutral versus Emotional, Specific versus Diffuse and Achievement versus Ascription cultures. The other two are Attitudes to time (orientation to past, present and future) and Attitudes to environment (Internal versus external-oriented cultures).

Another author (Hofstede, 1984) argues that people carry "mental programs" which are developed in the family, in early childhood, and reinforced in schools and organizations, and that this mental program contains a component of national culture. However the mental programs cannot be directly observed. What one can observe is only behaviour, words, etc. When behaviour is observed we infer from it the presence of stable mental programs. He also point out that the key element to describe mental programs are values and culture. Values are defined as a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others and culture as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. In this definition of culture, Hofstede includes a system of values which are among the core block of the essence of culture. He also compares culture to personality and says that culture is to humans what personality is to an individual. Culture marks the uniqueness of a human group as personality distinguishes each individual.

In his book Software of the Mind (Hofstede, 1991, p. 5), he developed the concept of culture, starting to say that culture is not inherited but is something that is learned. It derives from one`s social environment, not from one`s genes. He also stated that one must distinguish between individual`s personality and human nature. Figure 2.2 represents his view of the uniqueness of the mental programming.
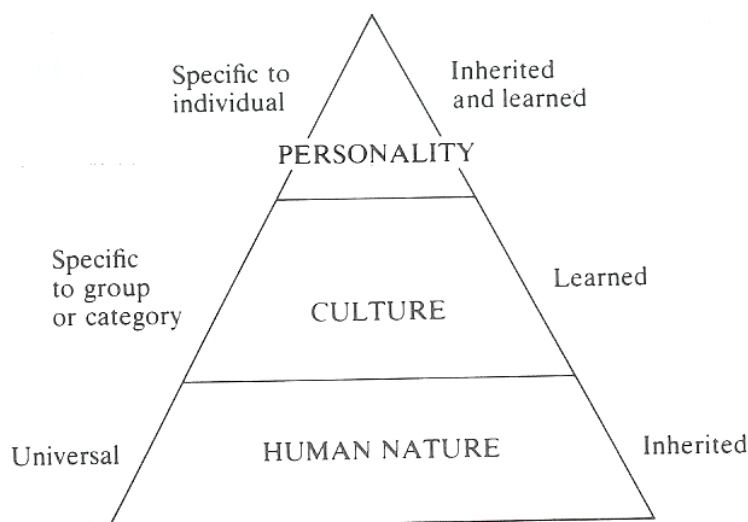
Figure 2-2 – Levels of mental programming (Hofstede, 1991, p. 6)

Culture is specific to a group or category and is it learned during life in contact with society and it is nothing to do with heredity, race, or ethics. It can be observed through symbols, heroes, rituals and values. Hofstede (1991) represents the manifestations of culture as the skins of an onion. In figure 2.3 it is possible to see the "Values" in the core of the onion and coming up to the outskirts "Rituals", "Heroes" and "Symbols" subsumed under the term "Practices".
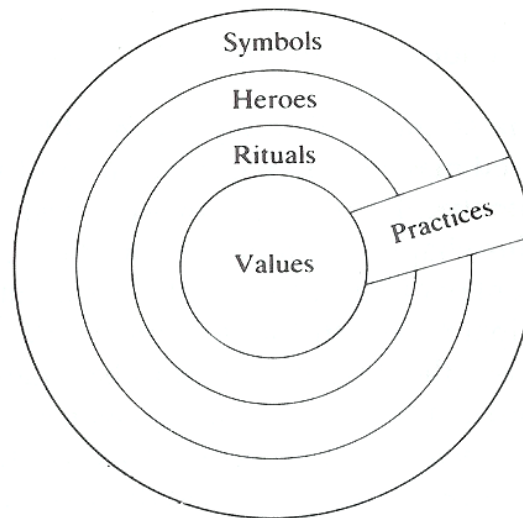
Figure 2-3 – Onion diagram. Manifestations of culture (Hofstede, 1991, p. 9)

Hofstede (1991) also identified different levels of mental programming that everybody carries unavoidable within themselves and depending on several factors like ones country; regional, ethics, religion and linguistic affiliation; gender level; generation level; social class level associated to the opportunities in terms of education and also the organization that one`s belong. He considers that such factors influence in different degrees the way people act and see the world.

Finally he defines the scope where to apply the word culture. (Hofstede, 1984, p. 21) "The word "culture" is usually reserved for societies (in the modern world we speak of "nations") or for ethics or regional groups, but it can be applied equally to other human collectivities or categories: an organization, a profession, or a family."

2.2. Cross-Cultural Research

Based on material collected from more than 30 companies and a database with 30.000 participants (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997), identified 7 dimensions of culture, depending of the solutions that each culture gave to three specific problems. For each dimension it is possible to identify the main differences and fit into a table format.

The differences between a Universalist and a Particularist culture:

Universalist	Particularist
Focus is more on rules than relationships.	Focus is more on relationships than on rules.
Legal contracts are readily drawn up.	Legal contracts are readily modified.
A trustworthy person is the one who respects his or her word or contract.	A trustworthy person is the one who honours changing mutuality's.
There is only one truth or reality, that which has been agreed to.	There are several perspectives on reality relative to each participant.
A deal is a deal.	Relationships evolve.

Table 2-1 – Universalist versus Particularist (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 48)

The differences between an Individualism culture and a Communitarism culture:

Individualism	Communitarism
Orientation to the self	Orientation to common goals and objectives
More frequent use of "I" form	More frequent use of "We" form
Decisions made on the spot by representatives	Decisions referred back by delegate to organization
People ideally achieve alone and assume personal responsibility	People ideally achieve in groups which assume joint responsibility
Vacations taken in pairs, even alone	Vacations in organised groups or with extended family

Table 2-2 –Individualism versus Communitarism (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 67)

In this dimension it is also possible to compare the scores of Portugal and Germany:

Questions	Portugal	Germany
The quality of live (% of respondents opting for individual freedom)	44	53
Which kind of job (% of respondents where individual credits is received)	59	62
Whose fault was it (% of respondents opting for individual responsibility)	36	55

Table 2-3 – Scores Portugal versus Germany (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997)

Affective versus Neutral cultures is another dimension that was study and the differences are as follows:

Neutral	Affective
Do not reveal what they are thinking or feeling	Reveal thoughts and feelings verbally and non-verbally
May (accidentally) reveal tension in face and posture	Transparency and expressiveness release tensions
Emotions often dammed up will occasionally explode	Emotions flow easily, effusively, vehemently and without inhibition
Cool and self-possessed conduct is admired	Heated, vital, animated expressions admired
Physical contact, gesturing or strong facial expressions often taboo	Touching, gesturing and strong facial expressions common
Statements often read out in monotone	Statements declaimed fluently and dramatically

Table 2-4 – Neutral versus Affective (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 79)

In this dimension the scores of Portugal and Germany are as follows:

Questions	Portugal	Germany
Feeling upset at work (% of respondents who would not show emotions openly)	47	35

Table 2-5 – Scores Portugal versus Germany (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997)

The differences between Specific versus Diffuse cultures:

Specific	Diffuse
Direct to the point, purposeful in relating	Indirect, circuitous, seemingly "aimless" forms of relating
Precise, blunt, definitive and transparent	Evasive, tactful, ambiguous, even opaque
Principles and consistent moral stands independent of the person being addressed	Highly situational morality depending upon the person and context encountered

Table 2-6 – Specific versus Diffuse (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 100)

In this dimension the scores of Portugal and Germany are as follows:

Questions	Portugal	Germany
Painting the house (% of respondents who would not help the boss)	73	83

Table 2-7 – Scores Portugal versus Germany (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997)

The differences between Achievement versus Ascription cultures:

Achievement	Ascription
Use of titles only when relevant to the competence you bring to the task	Extensive use of titles, especially when these clarify your status in the organization
Respect for superior in hierarchy is based on how effectively his or her job is performed and how adequate their knowledge	Respect for superior in hierarchy is seen as a measure of your commitment to the organization and its mission
Most senior managers are of varying age and gender and have shown proficiency in specific jobs	Most senior managers are male, middle-aged and qualified by their background

Table 2-8 – Achievement versus Ascription (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 118)

In this dimension the scores of Portugal and Germany are as follows:

Questions	Portugal	Germany
Acting as suits you even if nothing is achieved (% of	39	40

respondents who disagree)		
Respect depends on family background (% of respondents who disagree)	86	74

Table 2-9 – Scores Portugal versus Germany (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997)

The differences between past, present and future oriented cultures:

Sequential	Synchronic
Only do one activity at a time	Do more than one activity at a time
Keep appointments strictly: schedule in advance and do not run late	Appointments are approximate and subject to "giving time" to significant others
Relationships are generally subordinate to schedule	Schedules are generally subordinate to relationships
Strong preference to following initial plans	Strong preference for following where relationships leads
Time is tangible and measurable	Time is like a wide ribbon and intangible

Table 2-10 – Time oriented cultures (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 139)

In this dimension the scores of Portugal and Germany are as follows:

Questions	Portugal	Germany
Long versus short-termism: time horizon (0-7years)	5.62	4.69

Table 2-11 – Scores Portugal versus Germany (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997)

The differences between Internal and External oriented cultures:

Internal control	External control
Often dominating attitude bordering on aggressiveness towards environment	Often flexible attitude, willing to compromise and keep the peace
Conflict and resistance means that you have convictions	Harmony and responsiveness, that is, sensibility
Focus is on self, function, own group and own organization	Focus is on other, that is customer, partner, colleague
Discomfort when environment seems "out of control" or changeable	Comfort with waves, shifts, cycles if these are "natural"

Table 2-12 – Internal versus external cultures (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, p. 155)

In this dimension the scores of Portugal and Germany are as follows:

Questions	Portugal	Germany
Controlling nature (% respondents who believe it is worth trying)	44	30
The captain of their fate (% respondents who believe what happens to them is their own doing)	62	66

Table 2-13 – Scores Portugal versus Germany (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997)

Also in (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) it is possible to match organizational structures with the cultural preferences of their leaders and employees. To the question "What makes a good manager?" 68% of Portuguese and 87% of Germans answers that they opt to be left alone to get the job done. In another question related to the same subject "The reason for organization", 92% of Germans and 98% of Portuguese answers that they opt for organization for functional purpose rather than personality.

Another author, Geert Hofstede, based on data collected from a large survey from people over 50 countries, identified 4 main dimensions (recently one more dimension was added). The database contains more than 100.000 responses (from IBM staff) to a questionnaire about values. The 5 dimensions identified, along which dominant value systems can be ordered and which affect human thinking, organization, and institutions in predictable ways. This dimensions derived from basic problem areas found in the study and represents aspects of a culture that can be measure relatively to other cultures. Taking into account previous studies in the social area, Hofstede (1991, p. 13) tried to synthesized and define dimensions on which cultures can be meaningfully ordered. He primary based is findings in the studies conducted by Alex Inkeles and Daniel Levinson in 1954, where they identified 3 issues qualified as common basic problems worldwide with impact in societies and groups as follows:

1. Relation to authority;
2. Conception of self in terms of:
   ▪ the relationship between individuals and the society;

- the concept of masculinity and femininity;

3. Ways of dealing with conflicts.

The 5 dimensions identified by Hofstede are "Power Distance Index (PDI), from small to large" and is related to the first issue mentioned early, "Individualism Index (IDV)" and "Masculinity Index (MAS)" related to the second issue, "Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), from weak to strong" related to the third issue, and "Long term versus Short term orientation".

PDI can be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. In the next table it is presented some key differences between low and high PDI concerning Family, School, and Work organization.

Low PDI	High PDI
Parents treat children as equals	Parents teach children obedience
Teachers treat students as equals	Students dependent on teachers
Student-centred education	Teacher-centred education
Decentralized decision structures; less concentration of authority	Centralized decision structures; more concentration of authority
Flat organization pyramids	Tall organization pyramids
Subordinates expect to be consulted	Subordinates expect to be told
Subordinate-superior relations pragmatic	Subordinate-superior relations polarized, often emotional

Table 2-14 – Key differences between low and high PDI (Hofstede, 2001, p. 107)

Individualism Index describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society. It deals with the way people live together. In table 2.15 it is presented the key differences between low and high IDV concerning Family, School, and Work organization.

Low IDV (collectivism)	High IDV (individualism)
Horizontal integration: people live with or close to relatives or clan members	People live in nuclear or one-parent families
Harmony: confrontations to be avoid	Confrontations are normal
More conformity behaviour	Less conformity behaviour
Employees perform best in in-groups	Employees perform best as individuals
Belief in collective decisions	Belief in individual decisions
In business, personal relationships prevail over task and company	In business, task and company prevail over personal relationships
Direct appraisal of performance is a threat to harmony	Direct appraisal of performance improves productivity

Table 2-15 – Key differences between low and high IDV (Hofstede, 2001, p. 236)

Hofstede consider that the PDI and the IDV are negatively correlated, i.e., if one country scores high in PDI he also scores low in IDV and vice-versa. However there are exceptions, France and Belgium combine medium PDI with strong IDV. In the next figure it is possible to see the scores of 50 countries joint in 5 main groups.
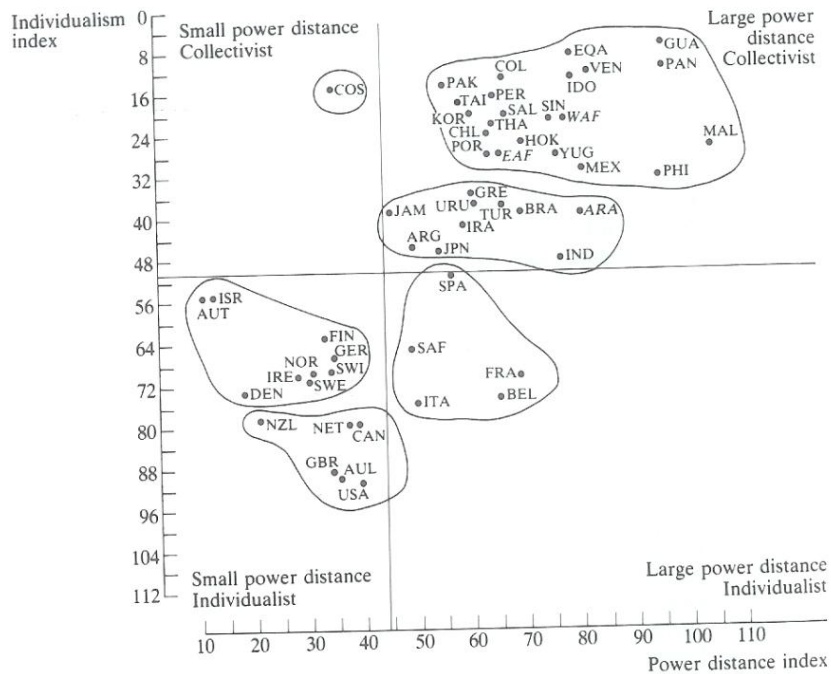

Figure 2-4 – PDI and Individualism / collectivism dimensions (Hofstede, 1991, p. 54)

Germany belongs to the group fit in the lower left-hand quadrant that scores low PDI and high IDV. According to Hofstede (1991, p. 54) "In cultures in which people are relatively independent from in-groups these people are usually also less dependent on powerful others."

Portugal belongs to the group fit in the upper right-hand quadrant that scores high PDI and low IDV. According to Hofstede (1991, p. 54) "In cultures in which people are dependent on in-groups these people are usually dependent on power figures."

MAS measures to what extend respondents in a country tend to endorse goals usually more popular among men or among women. Hofstede (1991, p. 82) said that "The importance of earnings and advancement corresponds to the masculine, assertive, and competitive social role. The importance of relations with the manager and with the colleagues corresponds to the feminine, caring, and social-environment oriented role." In table 2.16 it is presented the key differences between low and high MAS concerning Family, School, and Work organization.

Low MAS (feminine)	High MAS (masculine)
No gender differentiation in children`s playing goals	Boys prevail in performance games, girls in relationships games
Failing in school is a minor accident	Failing in school is a disaster
Average student is the norm	Best student is the norm
Family and acquaintances important	Family important
Managers are employees like others	Managers are cultural heroes
Meaning of work for workers: relations and working conditions	Meaning of work for workers: Security, pay, and interesting work
More participation in voluntary activities and associations	More participation in voluntary activities and associations

Table 2-16 – Key differences between low and high MAS (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 306-330)

Comparing countries scores with relation to both PDI and MAS results in the map shown in Figure 2-5 were it is possible to join in 7 groups all the countries analysed.

25

Figure 2-5 – PDI and MAS dimensions (Hofstede, 1991, p. 87)

Germany belongs to the group fit in the lower left-hand quadrant that scores low PDI and high MAS. According to Hofstede (1991, p. 88) in countries from this group "the norm is for nondominant parents to set an example in which father is tough and deals with facts and mother is somewhat less tough and deals with feelings."

Portugal belongs to the group fit in the upper right-hand quadrant that scores high PDI and low MAS. According to Hofstede (1991, p. 88) in countries from this group "represents a societal norm of two dominant parents, sharing the same concern for the quality of life and for relationships, both providing at times authority and tenderness."
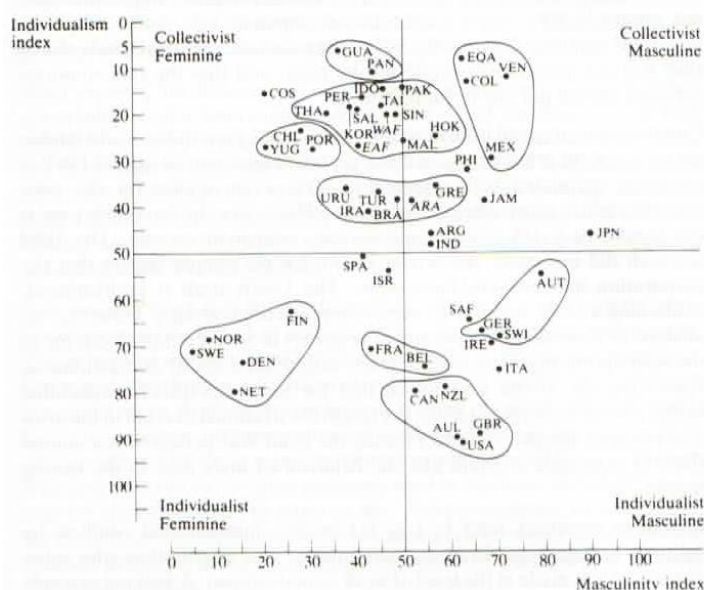
Figure 2-6 – IDV and MAS (Hofstede, 1991)

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), scores from weak to strong and can be defined "as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. This feeling is among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules." (Hofstede, 1991, p. 113)

In table 2.17 it is presented the key differences between low and high UAI concerning Psychological characteristics, Family, School, Politics and Work situation.

Low (UAI)	High (UAI)
Emotions have to be controlled	Expression of emotions normal
Company loyalty is not a virtue	Company loyalty is a virtue
Less resistance to changes	More resistance to changes
Acceptance of foreigners as managers	Suspicions of foreigners as managers
What is different is curious	What is different is dangerous
Relationship oriented	Task oriented
Tolerance for ambiguity in structures and procedures	Highly formalized conception of management
Belief in generalists and common sense	Belief in specialists and expertises

27

If necessary, employees may break rules	Company rules should not be broken

Table 2-17 – Key differences between low and high UAI (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 160-181)

Comparing countries scores with relation to both UAI and MAS results in the map shown in Figure 2-7 were it is possible to join in 10 groups all the countries analysed.
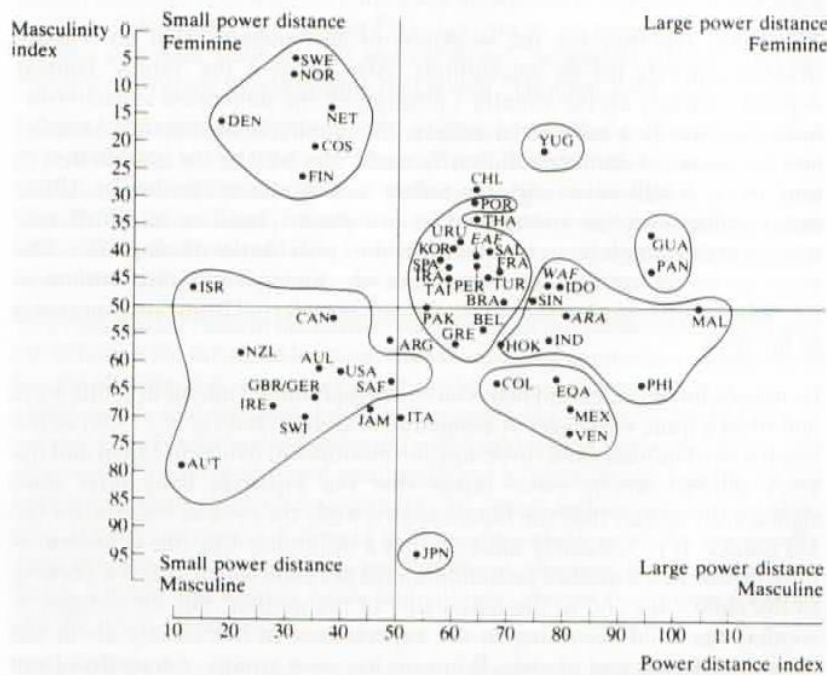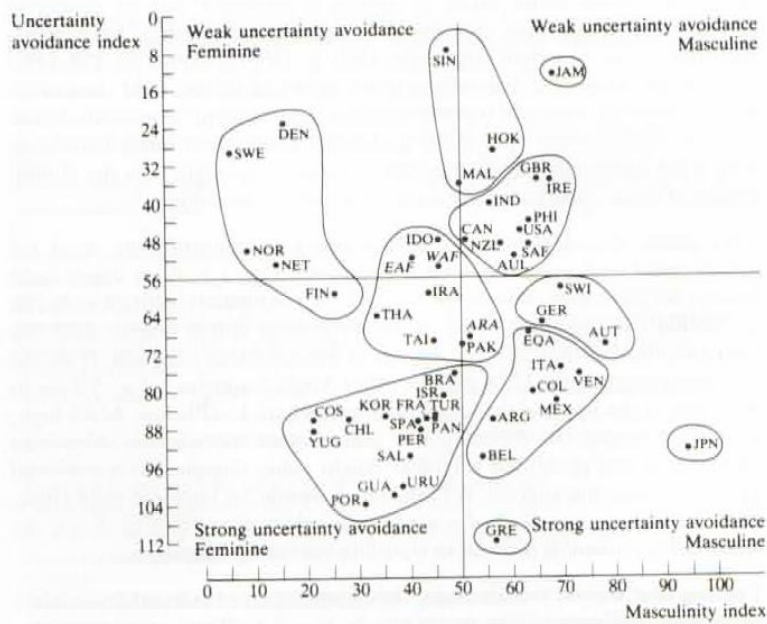

Figure 2-7 – UAI and MAS dimensions (Hofstede, 1991, p. 123)

Germany belongs to the group fit in the lower right-hand quadrant that scores strong UAI and high MAS. According to Hofstede (1991, p. 125) in countries from this group the supreme motivators will be security and esteem.

Portugal belongs to the group fit in the lower left-hand quadrant that scores high UAI and low MAS. According to Hofstede (1991, p. 125) in countries from this group "the supreme motivators will be security and belongingness."

Comparing the two countries, Germany and Portugal, in terms of dimensions, it is possible to summarize the index results in the next table.
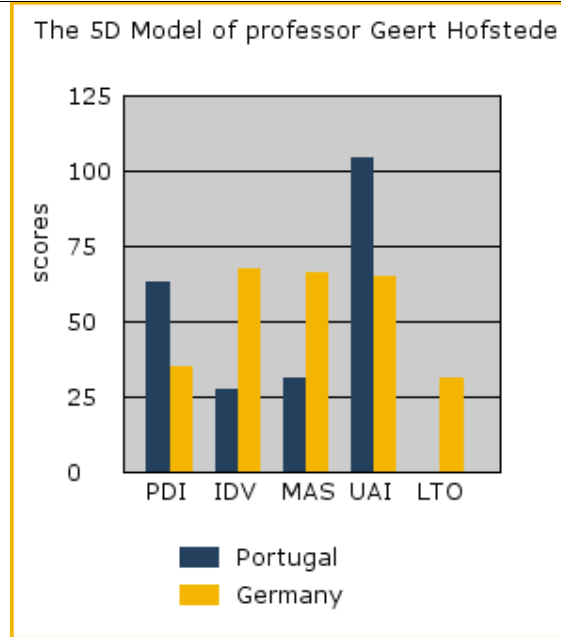
Figure 2-8 - Geert Hofstede™ Cultural Dimensions ((Hofstede, itim - international, 2010)

Geert Hofstede in his article "Riding the waves of commerce: A test of Trompenaars` "Model" of National Culture Differences" (1996, pp. 189-198), presents an analysis of Trompenaars Model, testing the correlations between each dimensions and factor analysis at the country level. He found that only two dimensions could be confirmed statistically. The dimensions were Individualism/Achievement and Universalism/Diffuse. He argues that Trompenaars (1996, p. 195) "...confuses conceptual categories with dimensions. Conceptual categories are present in the mind of any investigator who sets out to do research." In that sense categories presented by Trompenaars belongs to the culture of the creators, American sociologists of the 1950s and 1960s.

He also made a comparison between the two models, finding the correlation between his 5 dimension model and the 4 factors that result from an amalgamation of the 7 identified Trompenaars dimensions. He stated that "Trompenaars' questionnaire measures mainly what I called Individualism; the large number of intercorrelated items dealing with this concept can be split into two groups, one combining Trompenaars' Individualism with Achievement, and the other Universalism with Specific/ Diffuse.

The other external correlations found point to possible additional connotations in Trompenaars' questions that he has not explored." (1996, p. 195)

Another way of researching cultural differences is the innovative Cultural Standard Method. This method presented for the first time by Alexander Thomas (1993) is based on a qualitative research approach which combines the advantages of quantitative methods with the possibility of using qualitative methods, necessary to fine tune differences and go deeply in the cross-cultural analysis.

The main difference between Cultural Standard Method and other cultural methods like the ones referred early in this section, developed by Trompenaars and Hofstede, is that in the latter's they present general and broad cultural dimensions applied in any situation and in the former it looks for relative cultural characteristics valid only when comparing two cultures. This method will be fully explained in the next section "Adopted Methodology".

An author that recently did a research about German Cultural Standards was Sylvia Schroll-Machl. In her research (2008) she identified six German Cultural Standards, which was:
- Orientation to task;
- Appreciation for rules and structures;
- Internal Control and rule-oriented;
- Time planning;
- Separation of personality and living spheres;
- Direct and low context communication.

Orientation to task - When people meet, they make it at least at two levels: content, task and interpersonal level, relationship. For the Germans the most important is the task, what to do, and the roles and professional competence of those involved.

Appreciation for rules and structures - In Germany there are numerous rules, regulations and laws. Its variety, strict interpretation and strict observance and the ready

sanctioning of the offense contrast with other cultures, where this occurs to a lesser degree.

Internal Control and rule-oriented - For Germans laws and standards are universal and valid for everyone, and it did not meet any particular case or a special relationship.

Time planning - It is absolutely important to respect what was planned for every moment and focus on what is supposed to be done - and not other things. From the outside, this behavior appears as planned, but is also very inflexible. This is the typical behavior of Germans with respect to time.

Separation of personality and living spheres - The Germans make a strict separation between different spheres of life. Professional – Private; Rational – emotional; Post – person; Formal – informal.

Direct and low context communication - The Germans communication style is known to be very direct and explicit. The Germans formulate what is important to them using words that describe as clearly and unambiguously what they want.

3. Adopted Methodology

3.1. *Cultural Standard Method*

The study of cultural differences was for years a very important subject in order to overcome the difficulties in understanding the dissimilarities between different people with different cultural background. Nowadays in the literature it is easy to identify studies that compare different cultures. As referred in the previous paragraph, some important authors like Hofstede (1984) and Trompenaars (1997) identified in a list of cultures different general characteristics, dimensions of culture that stand alone and give the basis for defining a given culture. However, if the goal is only to compare two cultures, in an one to one basis, and define each culture not by general and broad terms applied in any case, but by the single differences that each other means only when they are face to face, it is necessary to apply a method that allows a deeper detail.

An innovative way of researching cultural differences is the Cultural Standard Method. This method looks at differences that are valid only in the comparison between two cultures. The differences identified are relative differences and they are only valid when comparing those specific cultures. By giving more detail in terms of differentiation it allows the possibility of studying the differences between cultures that are relatively close like those from European Countries.

For Alexander Thomas cultural standards can be defined as *"combine all forms of perception, thinking, judgement and behaviour which people sharing a common cultural background rate as normal, self-evident, typical and binding for themselves and for others. Thus, cultural standards determine the way we interpret our own behaviour as well as the behaviour of others. They are considered"basic", if they apply to a variety of situations and determine most of a group´s perception, thinking, judgement and behaviour. Furthermore, they are highly significant for perception-, judgement- and behaviour mechanisms between individuals.* (Thomas (ed), 1993)

Since we are not consciously aware of the basic cultural standards, we cannot examine them directly: Identifying cultural standards is extremely difficult, because they seem to automatically determine our perception, judgement and behaviour (Thomas (ed.), 1996). As Brueck & Kainzbauer said "*an interesting aspect of cultural standards is that they can only be identified in a cross-cultural context. We are not aware of how much they determine our actions in our familiar cultural environment, but as soon as we come into contact with people from a different culture, whose behaviour is based on a different set of cultural standards, we are able to consciously experience their existence.*" (2002, p. 4)

The personal involvement in particular situations, the confusing behaviour of others and the insecurity regarded as critical and caused by a confrontation with unfamiliar cultural orientation systems, are recorded in narrative interviews and so-called critical incidents. Usually, researchers interview people with experience of critical contact situations (e.g.: Germans in China or vice versa). An analysis of these critical incidents consequently enables us to identify the corresponding cultural standards. (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002, p. 4)

In the case of the current study, the identification of German cultural standards from the Portuguese perspective does not represent a universally valid German cultural standard, but is it merely a German standard identified in a comparison with the Portuguese culture. The cultural standards identified in this situation are totally out of context and they are not valid when applied to third cultures. This limitation does not allow any generalization and have a clearly relative bilateral character.

Naturally, the German cultural standards identified by the cultural standard method used in this study should not be seen as rigid behaviour regulations which are binding for all representatives of the German culture. As Figure 3-1 demonstrates, cultural standards are shared by the majority (but not necessarily by all) of the representatives of a particular culture. This singular fact can be represented in the form of a normal distribution.
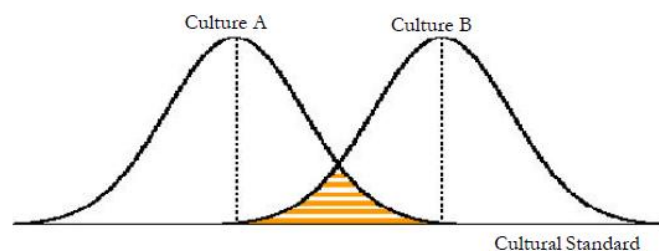
Figure 3-1–Distribution of cultural standards in two cultures (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002, p. 5)

The statistical mean value shows the relatively most frequent manifestation of a cultural standard. This could be called a prototype of a cultural standard in a group or culture. This indicates that there is the tendency, in the behaviour of the members of this group or culture, to act according to this prototyped cultural standard (although different behaviour is tolerated in that culture as well). As a consequence of socialisation, these cultural standards are not apparent to the people sharing a common cultural background (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002).

Cross-cultural contacts, by exposing different cultural standards with different types of behaviour for the same events, generate a normal reaction and awareness for unfamiliar situations that can result in incidents perceived as problematic or awkward and that lead to the standards being consciously experienced. These incidents, critical because they are unusual and show the iceberg that are beneath, are the intermediary in which cultural standards materialise and will serve as raw material for cross-cultural research. The analysis and categorisation of these critical incidents lead to the identification of relative cultural standards.

Critical incidents are identified by interviewing people of one culture who have considerable working experience in the other culture. For the comparison of Germany and Portugal for instance Portuguese with working experience in Germany were interviewed. The most suitable interview method for this purpose is the narrative interview.

3.2. Data-gathering

In the case of other investigations described early in section 2.2, the goal was to find dimensions of culture applied not in a comparison between cultures but as an absolute value, that stands alone to define one culture. In those cases there was the need to use questionnaires in order to get a massive answer and a positive correlation between the questions to be answered and the results obtained from the sample. However, the goal of this investigation was to find the relative cultural standards obtained from the comparison between two cultures and only valid between them. It is a more refined and subtle work that need to have at the disposal not short and direct answers, but as Brueck and Kainzbauer said "*critical incidents in which cultural standards materialise serve as raw material for cross cultural research.*" (2002). So, the methodology needed to be different.

The methodology adopted in this work for collecting the data was the interview. In order to find the critical incidents that result from the living experience of members of one country working in another country, and necessary to build the relative cultural standards, as mentioned early in section 3.1, the type of interview used was an open-ended interview. There were 25 Portuguese interviewed which had considerable experience in contacts with German culture, for a length of time spread from 6 months to several years.

One limitation that must be clearly stated concerning the sample used to this investigation, concerns the weight that was given from selecting 11 out of 25 interviewees from the Portuguese Navy, working in Germany on the HDW dockyards and belonging to the evaluation team of the Portuguese submarines construction. They are there following the project, step by step, assessing all the moments and taking part in all the decisions concerning the project. They are characterized by holding very high technical skills, in the subject area, but also in project management and auditing. They deal with German culture in an everyday basis but from the perspective of costumers, very demanding costumers and this situation brings to the investigation several critical

incidents resulting from the differences of dealing with such important subjects as project management, auditing, weapons, live support, etc.

In the open-ended Interview the passive role of the interviewer has the advantage of creating the right environment that allows a good relationship between the interviewer and the test people centred on the subject. By avoiding the traditional check-list of questions and its implied disadvantages, the tested person sees himself directing the interview and regards the interviewer merely as an audience for his narration. However, the role of the interviewer is difficult, as there is always the risk of influencing the tested people and introduces bias in the result. In order to reduce the disadvantages of the open-ended interviews there was the need to apply a special technique called the Narrative Interview created by Schütze (cf. 1977).

The Narrative Interview Technique was used in the work of Bruck and Kainzbauer (Bruck & kainzbauer, 2000), Horváth/ Meierewert and Shroll-Machi, when comparing cultural standards from two countries, as described in (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002, p. 9). In Figure 3.2 it is presented the procedure applied to all the interviews.

Each interview begins with the Explanatory stage, a sort of "ice break" in order to create the necessary empathy to help the interviewee felling less defensive. Immediately after the interviewee is given a general idea of the topic without too many details, the Introductory stage.
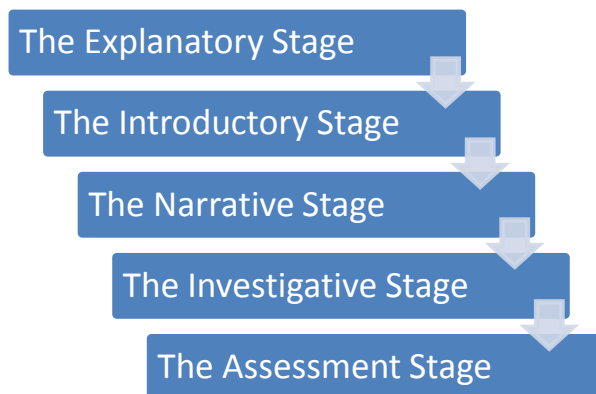
Figure 3-2 – Procedure for Narrative Interview (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002, p. 7)

The Narrative stage represents the core of the interview and it is the time for the interviewee to tell the stories that he/she felt were more important. After the narrative is finished, the interviewer can try to get additional information in order to complete the stories with more detail, but without changing the order or the narrative character of the interview. This stage is called the Investigative stage. Assessment stage is the last stage in this process and it is the time to the narrator and interviewee asseses and interprets the narrative sequences (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002, p. 7).

3.3. Data-analysis

For data-analysis the methodology developed by Mayring (2000) was applied – the Qualitative Content Analysis – inductive category development, and used by Brueck and Kainzbauer (2002) in their work. The qualitative content analysis is described as a series of techniques for systematic text analysis, and intends to preserve the advantages of quantitative content analysis and at the same time enables us to transfer them to the qualitative analysis.

KRIPPENDORFF defines "*content analysis as the use of replicable and valid method for making specific inferences from text to other states or properties of its source*" (1969, p. 103). Marying (2000) refers also that qualitative content analysis can be seen "*as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification*".

This method can be applied in two different ways, either in a deductive category application or an inductive category development. As described by Mayring (2000) the first one deal with prior formulated categories, theoretically derived from analysis and links them to the text. The inductive procedure is different, because the categories are tentative and step by step deduced, bearing in mind the theoretical background and the research question, which determines the parts of the text to be counted for.
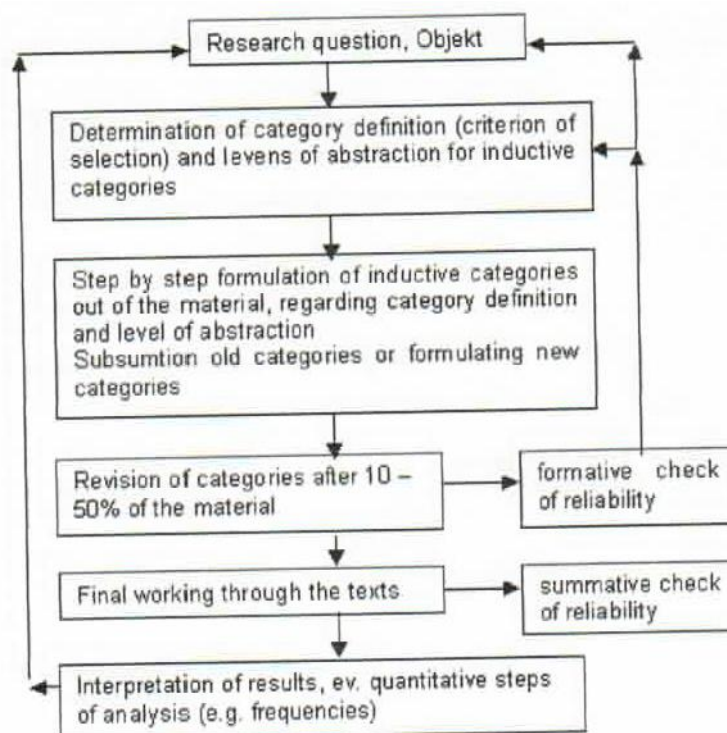
Figure 3-3 – Step model of inductive category development (Mayring, 2000)

In Figure 3-3 it is possible to see from the work of Mayring (2000) that in order to reach an interpretation of results it is necessary first to go throughout the determination of category definition and level of abstraction for inductive categories. Formulation of inductive categories from the narrative interviews is the next step. From there it is time to make a revision of categories after 10 to 50% of the materials. Finally it is necessary to do a summative check of reliability by working through the text and correct any thing that is wrong.

From the Narrative interviews as mentioned early in section 3.2, results are small stories experienced by the interviewees. These stories considered also as critical incidents are analysed and during this process it is possible to form initial categories in an inductive way using the method described above. The identification of the cultural standards is based upon these categories. "*The results are needed to demonstrate typical cultural distinctions between two cultures and are not to merely describe personal*

experiences." (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002, p. 7). Finally some tested people were asked to have access to the critical incidents and confirm the results.

The figure below summarizes the entire research process of identification the relative cultural standards.
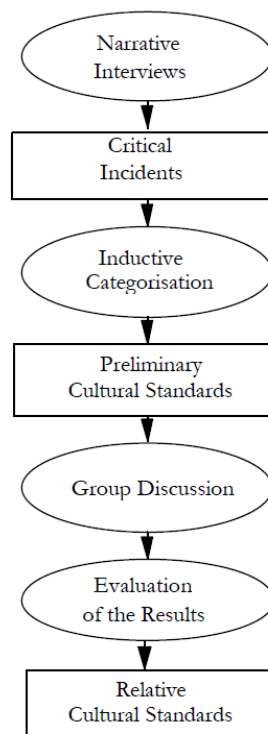
Figure 3-4 – The identification process of cultural standards (Brueck & Kainzbauer, 2002, p. 8)

4. Results from the primary research method

4.1. Characterization of the sample

This investigation was based upon 25 open-ended interviews to Portuguese that had considerable working experience in Germany, for a length of time spread from months to several years. The goal was to have a sample broader as possible, including not only younger's but also people with a large experience of life. The same was applied to academic grades, gender, regions and type of work, as it is possible to see in the next table.

	Average
Age	42
Time in Germany (years)	3,6

Gender	
Feminine	7
Masculine	18

Grades	
4ª grade	1
Secondary	4
Bachelor	9
Master	11

Types of work	
Shipyard	11
Teacher/Trainer	2
Employed in a Company (services)	8
Chamber of commerce	2
Construction	1
Restaurant	1

Cities of work	
Berlin	2
Cologne	1
Dusseldorf	1
Hannover	3
Kiel	11
Stuttgart	4
Munich	3

Table 4-1 – Sample Characterization

4.2. Results: Inductive Categories

After interviewing the selected sample according to the narrative interview technique, applying all the stages from the Explanatory to the Assessment stage and taking into account the methodology explained previously in section 3 it was possible to, in a first moment, identify one by one the critical incidents described by interviewees in the 25 interviews. These critical incidents, small stories representative from ones experience and reported in a first hand, were the raw material for the identification of cultural standards.

Another step in the process was carried on by analysing all the critical incidents using the Quantitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) and matching each other in broad categories called Inductive Categories. This categorization process, as described by BRUECK & KAINZBAUER (2002, p. 7) resulted in a list of categories included in Table 4-2.

Inductive categories (Germany)
Distinction between private and business live.
Direct Communication.
No distinction between formal and informal communication. Everything is formal.
Afraid of became ridiculous. Without sense of humour. Shy.
More rude in the relationships.
Don't speak openly about their mistakes, their fragilities.
Do one thing at a time. Difficult to deal with several things simultaneously.
More organized. Each one knows exactly what to do in the organization.
Difficulties in improvising. Everything must be planned. Strong bet in the planning stage and in one defined strategy. Inflexibility. Difficult to change opinions.
Devotion to regulations and proceedings. Everything must be written.
Strict observance of timetables.
Assessment from the process.
Worker waits boss orientation.
As a rule the workers are reliable.

In companies what matters is the merit.
Great technical confidence.
Great importance in the qualification of workers. Training is an investment.
They feel a great need in showing what they do and what they achieved.
Simplicity and pragmatism in the search for solutions.
Fear of what is outside. Fear that they spoil the harmony, the organization. Suspicious of the new, the novelty.
Compliance with laws is internalized, although the detection and punishment of offenders are effective.
More civic.
Submission to contracts. Reputation above all.
The organization and planning gives them the feeling of superiority that translates into mistrust and arrogance toward others.
Much more demanding of others than themselves.

Table 4-2 – Inductive categories

4.3. Results: Relative Cultural Standards

From the inductive categories listed in Table 4-2 and comparing them to similar situations and examples it is possible to identify Preliminary Cultural Standards between German and Portuguese cultures that demonstrate typical distinctions between them and not only unique and personal experiences that do not reflect the cultural standards.

Relative Cultural Standards were obtained allowing the participation of a small group of Portuguese and German people, not included in first place in the sample, to read the critical incidents and the inductive categories and to discuss the results among themselves. Some adjustments needed to be made to the Preliminary Cultural Standards and in the end the result was the identification of the Relative Cultural Standards.

The German Relative Cultural Standards from the Portuguese perspective identified during the process of cultural standards were as follows:

- Distinction between private and business life;

- Direct and formal communication;

- Neutral as opposed to Affective;

- Planning, organizing and rules devotion;

- Achievement;

- Internalized control.

In the first relative cultural standard Portuguese see Germans adopting a clear **distinction between what is private life and what is business life**. A stance that sometimes is very confusing and even annoying for Portuguese because between them it is frequent not to split both. One experience related to this characteristic can be shown in the following story "Germans are better on separating the sentimental plan from the professional one, which makes the Portuguese think they are a bit rude. But in reality there is indeed a separation that we can't do so well, and sometimes we mix things up. I could not yet overcome this difference."

Another example that shows this difference and sometimes the feeling of frustration and distant is "Germans are not able to talk a lot about their families and about what they do after work, so I have almost no relationship with them, excluding four or five people and still we just change some superficial data or some information, but they don't say anything about their families, about what they think; it is completely different from what we have in Portugal."

The next relative cultural standard identified was the use of **direct and formal communication** in personal and professional relations. In the next story it is possible to see clearly the differences between a culture that uses formal and informal communication in several contexts and moments even mixed each other and the difficulty in understanding why others don`t do the same. "Germans don't distinguish between what we consider off the record, and that shouldn't be used officially, and what is actually official, and this situation has already happened to me during a meeting,

when I had previously expressed my opinion about a certain subject in a very informal and general way during a coffee break and then that was used in the meeting as a fact."

Related to the use of direct and indirect communication, it was referred by interviewees that Germans are very linear. What they want to say they say it in a straight forward way without going around in circles. They go straight to the point even in a rude and unpleasant way to others. In the following stories it is possible to observe two sides of the problem. In the first one a message delivered by a Portuguese and received by a person used to deal with direct communication could lead to misinterpretations "An important person would come for a visit and a trip on the river was scheduled, so the head of the mission asked the secretary to know if that person could go on the trip. They said yes, there wouldn't be any problem. However, the head of the mission had known that the person would bring a dog and then he said to the secretary that they could count on the person with a dog, and he didn't say anything else. As she knew already the Portuguese and she was a little surprised with the latest information, she decided to ask her boss if he wanted her to ask if the dog could also go on the trip. The boss was of course surprised by the question, after all why had he said that the person had a dog. If he hadn't said anything, she wouldn't inform the organizers that the person would bring a dog and she wouldn't consider strange that the head of the mission had told her that the person had a dog. We often think that is implied and it is not."

Dealing with emotions even if it is in an informal environment could be tricky or even jeopardize an entire business. A joke that in a culture could be very amusing and open the doors for a kick off in business, could be the trigger to ruin a business in another culture. This is true in business or in the personal environment. Here the differences between the two cultures can be easily identified. The Portuguese see Germans as less affective in the relationships and this usually results in a negative first impact. They also perceived that Germans have difficulties in dealing with humour and sense of humour that is considered by Portuguese a relatively important thing in society. The relative cultural standard identified as "**Neutral as opposed to Affective"** could be better explained by some of the following examples. "The other day I was talking to a

German, that speaks Portuguese, but he has that "errs" accent, which I find funny, and he spoke very well. So I started to imitate him by kidding, because I knew him for some time. He became very serious and asked me if I was making fun of him. I told him I was just playing with his pronunciation, because I thought it lovely. But he didn't like it and after that I stopped being able to talk openly with him."

Another example that characterized this cultural standard "An architect lady worked in the building department of naval architecture, and this lady was always discreetly running away from me. Whenever she saw me approaching, she went to another side, avoiding talking to me and becoming yellow. One day I realized she thought she had poor English and as I had excellent English she felt very badly. So I decided to start talking to her in German, giving a lot of mistakes and she laughed a lot, and from there she began to feel much more comfortable so we started talking in English and German. Germans like the sense of humour when they realize that this is an intermediate step to solving the problem."

One characteristic that easily pop up when Portuguese worked with Germans is without any doubt the way they related to **organizing, planning and rules**. The way Portuguese see the Germans ability to organize them and plan things with such accuracy and long term orientation compared to their own ability shows without any doubt that the differences are big enough to be needed to take into account when someone intends to work in Germany.

They are more organized and each person knows exactly what to do in the organization and this situation is completely different from the perception that Portuguese have about their own organization, or lack of one, less organized, mixture of competences and unclear tasks are the main complains. For those that had the experience to work on Portuguese and German firms, they feel very comfortable working in German companies, they say it is easier and less stressful.

Planning for Germans is a must; everything must be planned in advance. However they have a great difficulty in improvising, if something planned change during the process it will be very difficult to adapt to the new circumstances. This is a process that sometimes is not fully understood by Portuguese. It was referred also by interviewees, with previous experience in Portuguese companies, that they consistently show difficulties in planning in advance. On the other hand, they referred also that improvising is an art, and decision taking in a few minutes, "on the knees", were routine. It is easier to a Portuguese to change opinion than to a German.

Furthermore, for Germans rules and regulations are always to obey and each individual acts as a controller for the others. For Portuguese there is a very different way of seeing things. Rules and regulations can be broken and in that sense it is difficult for Portuguese to understand some behaviours that Germans have and their devotion to rules.

Another characteristic pointed out by the interviewees is related to the previous aspects concerning the need to respect schedules and timetables. For Portuguese a timetable, or schedule is an intention and it is not to fully obey. For Germans to arrive late is a sin and demonstrates a lack of respect to the other.

From the critical incidents it is possible to understand that the differences are significant and they are also deeply embedded in each culture. The following examples of critical incidents picked up from a group, intended to illustrate the major differences. "A man from Alentejo had bought a very expensive mowing machine, but after some time that machine stopped. This man was muddled and he called the company, which then called Germany and after a few days, the German technician, the translator and a mechanic, Mr. J., from Alentejo appeared. When they arrive, the German says immediately that he had a big problem there, because there was a part that had to be replaced by a special machine. The part had to come from Germany, and this would take two weeks to be repaired. Our man was very worried and said that he couldn't wait two weeks. So, Mr. J. said he could solve the problem. He asked for a bit of wire, a piece of iron, a hammer and started to make a hole here and hammering there, and the

German, very surprised, said he couldn't see that, because if in Germany they knew that was being done like that, and that he had authorized it, he would be in trouble. Mr. Jacinto told him not to worry because that would work. The German said he knew that it would work but he knew that in three or four weeks it would break again, but at that time, the farmer said that after four weeks he would finish the harvest and at that time he could stop and take the machine to the workshop for 6 months if needed. For the German's despair, the machine started working without being repaired with the special tools. The German spent the way back saying he hadn't seen anything of that, and he was very concerned because they could fire him. The true is that the machine worked, it did the harvest and then went to the workshop and was repaired according to the German regulations, as Mr J. was a very competent technician who knew very well what he was doing. From that time, the German who often came to Portugal said, as a joke, "ah the Portuguese tool, the "arrrame" (wire) and "marrtelo" (hammer)."

Another relative cultural standard identified was the **Achievement**. From the point of view of Portuguese, Germans are always concerned with the goals and objectives, and they focus their attention on the merit of workers and pragmatism in the search of solutions. It was referred by several interviewees that it was very rewarding to see the way Germans deal with the qualification of workers. The perception from the Portuguese point of view is that Germans see training as a necessary investment to prepare workers to perform in a better way, without stress and doubts, different from the idea that they have about their own companies. In that sense they mentioned that it was easier to work in a German cultural environment then in a Portuguese one.

One example of pragmatism is brought by the following story "…on a SAP R3 platform, they tend to reduce the problems and find solutions on a basic way, where they try to find the simpler solution and with less complications and we sometimes have some difficulties. When we are talking about a component, we must respond to legal premises and there we cannot break the rules. This leads us to more complicated solutions which are a puzzle for them because, when managing systems, they look for the simpler solution."

Another example that demonstrates their care and attention to problems associated with workers performance "They give a lot the benefit of the doubt and only as a last resource do they act against someone and after assurance that all the opportunities were given. Only after they take their decision and that is irrefutable. I consider this one of the most positive situations about German people. It's a slow and gradual work process, very positive and that only becomes negative when a decision must be made. But then, things are well supported. For us sometimes it's better to take a bad decision than taking none, I have taken that kind of decisions."

For Portuguese, Germans demonstrate a great confidence in their technical skills and on their companies, and this confidence is translated into a specific way of doing business, and stay in the market. For a Portuguese to have the same degree of trust on a Portuguese company it is necessary to pass several stages and proof that deserve it. These two types of behaviour can be seen in the next critical incident "...we asked company A to perform the quality control and we had a situation concerning a valve test of a circuit subject to external pressure, which according to quality parameters of IRS, when checking these valves, all components were checked, not just checking a sample. The document said nothing about this, that all the components should be tested. The engineer had to watch two or three tests. After one test, the German said that everything was right and went away happy. The engineer reminded him that that was not a sample test but an extensive test to all the components as announced previously. He said that, as he knew the system, the quality of the company and everything else, he had the confidence as a responsible for company A. He argued and I told him that I represent the Portuguese part and that, according to the contract and the technical specifications, we must test everything and that I would test everything because that's what we do. Of course I felt that all that created a Great discomfort. Someone was immediately appointed as a contact, he called me and I explained the situation which they perfectly understood but they kept their position, that it was their criteria, they knew the quality control of the company and the related entities that give them assurance."

When in an organization people are rewarded not by their social contacts but by their merit to perform tasks and resolve problems it rises the need for showing how people are good in that thing that they do. This need to some Portuguese were not well understood in some ways and in the end could result in frustration or lack of knowledge on how well they perform the task "…they present many information using PowerPoint in a planned manner, showing what they are doing. While I do my job and generally achieve 100% of what I'm asked, I think that I don't need to show it but they don't. They feel the need to show, upwards and downwards, what they achieved. We think that the time we loose doing presentations and preparing the show-off, we could be doing something else more important. Well, another way of thinking."

The last relative cultural standard identified during the process was the **Internalized control**. To comply with the law it is, for Germans, a question of duty and they perceived themselves as agents with the obligation of denunciate any transgression. This behaviour is enhanced by the ability of authorities to detect and enforced the law and effectively any necessary punishment is applied. Sometimes it is difficult for Portuguese living in Germany to understand the reason why someone denounce a friend, colleague or neighbour to the police for things that, in their mind are not as important as friendship.

The next short story illustrates some difficulties experienced "In Germany cars cannot be parked with the engine running. Once, I needed to move and the truck that was going to do it had a problem with the battery and it shut down. So, when they turned it on again, it kept running while the moving was made. A neighbour called the police right away informing about the situation and the driver was fined. The neighbour knew me very well, we spoke regularly, he would say hello everyday and yet he talked about me to the police and even showed up when the police arrived."

Another story that indicates difficulties and incomprehension to the stance adopted by the majority of Germans concerning the denouncement of colleagues or neighbours or even friends "…I'm a little fed up of living in Germany because I am

tired of complying with all the rules and not being able to cross the line. You get caught right away and many times you're accused by your own colleagues, which leaves me really upset. In Portugal things are more flexible."

A positive and surprisingly situation concerning the same subject is described in the following story "We, in the Portuguese shipyards, have to put the tools in place at the end of the day. We place them in a box and we have to keep it in a locker, otherwise, the next day, everything is gone. Here, they don't arrange anything; they leave everything at their workplace. Initially, this created us some panic, since we work with extremely expensive tools and we feared they would disappear. But in the next day everything was in the same place, nothing was gone. I questioned one of my colleagues and he told me with surprise that it was like that. That was his tool and no one would take it."

"They assume that all the material they use in the company is theirs so you should not break it. The material is available to use, you just need to pick it up. For instance, if you want new working clothes everyday, you don't need to justify anything and there is no control. That is impressive. In Portugal, if we want working clothes, it's very difficult. This situation is so generalized among the society that, if we need working clothes and it rips off, you just get another one. They assume that people are responsible. They don't have checking mechanisms because there is no one doing it. This situation caused me great confusion. We are used to, when asking for a drill, they give us a set of drills because if we ask for it is because we need it. It's very different. All is done based on trust. "

"What I noted while I was in Germany is that, when leaving the factory there was much less control than in Portugal. There we have rules, people know that we must follow them and that's controlling is not so suffocating. They do it randomly and not like in Portugal where they do it to almost everyone. When we leave a vehicle, the chance of someone stopping us for a review is of 95%. In Germany, I left the factory more than a hundred times with a company vehicle and they stopped me 5 or 6 times."

"In Germany workers are much more complying than us, once the work is defined, they do it. So, they don't need so much control. Once I needed to bring a part home to test some ideas. In terms of bureaucracy that is very complicated, either here or there. We took it. They warned us not to do it again and they were very angry. We must comply with regulations."

As referred by the majority of the interviewees Internalized Control combines not only the ability for individuals to adopt a behaviour and react to others that do not comply with that rule or regulation in an autonomous way, but also the pressure to honour contracts.

5. Comparison between results and other studies

The German Relative Cultural Standards from the Portuguese perspective identified during the process of cultural standards methodology were as follows:

- Distinction between private and business life;
- Direct and formal communication;
- Neutral as opposed to Affective;
- Planning, organizing and rules devotion;
- Achievement;
- Internalized control.

In the next sections these cultural standards will be compared one by one against the Trompenaars model and after with the Hofstede model.

5.1. Comparing results against Trompenaars model

Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997) identified 7 dimensions of culture, as described early in section 2.2:

- Universalist and Particularist;
- Individualism and Communitarism;
- Neutral and Affective;
- Specific and Diffuse;
- Achievement and Ascription;
- Sequential and Synchronic and
- Internal and External control.

When analysing the 7 cultural dimensions taking into account the scores of the Germans and Portuguese it is possible, in broad terms, to identify several major differences. In terms of the relationships with people Germans are more Individualistic

than Portuguese, they regard themselves primarily as individuals and less as a group. Also it is possible to see from the score that Germans are more Affective than Portuguese and in that sense it is natural to express emotions. For Germans a contract is more important than relationships and also when they communicate they go direct to the point, purposefully in relating and so they are more Specific culture than the Portuguese. They tend to focus more on Achievement, which means that what is important is what ones know. In terms of attitudes to environment Germans focus more on Internal control, they are afraid of what is unknown.

Taking into consideration the 7 dimensions mentioned early and the 6 relative cultural standards identified during the study, it is time to compare the two lists.

In the first cultural standard identified "Distinction between private and business life", Portuguese see the Germans adopting a clear distinction between what is private life and what is business life, a stance that sometimes seems very confused and distant. There is no clear dimension that matches with this cultural standard.

The second standard identified from the research "Direct and formal communication" can be compared to the Specific/Diffuse dimension. The dimension and the relative cultural standard went in the same direction. It was referred by interviewees that Germans are very linear when they communicate. What they want to say they say it in a straight forward way without any kind of evasive, tactful, ambiguous or even opaque communication.

The third standard identified from the research "Neutral as opposed to Affective", can be compared to the Neutral/Affective dimension. Here the results from the research when comparing to the Neutral/Affective dimension are different. Based on the stories collected from the interviewees, Portuguese see Germans as less affective in the relationships and also with more difficulties in dealing with humour and sense of humour. On the other hand, in Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner dimension model, the German culture is considered more affective, emotional than the Portuguese culture, quoted as more neutral.

Planning, organizing and rules devotion is a cultural standard and represents the way Portuguese see the Germans ability to organize them and plan things with such accuracy and long term orientation. Furthermore, for Germans rules and regulations are always to obey and each individual act as a controller for the others. It is possible to compare this cultural standard with the Universalism/Particularism dimension. For Germans the focus is more on rules than relationships. Also legal contracts and deals are of a capital importance, so they tend to be more a Universalism culture.

Achievement, as a relative cultural standard is concerned with the goals and objectives, and the focus on the merit of workers and pragmatism in the search of solutions. It was referred by several interviewees that it was very rewarding to see the way Germans deal with the qualification of workers. Also for Portuguese, Germans demonstrate a great confidence in their technical skills and on their companies, and this confidence is passed into a specific way of doing business, and stay in the market. The dimension Achievement/Ascription can be, in part, compared with the cultural standard in the way that the respect for a superior in hierarchy is based on performance and knowledge. Germans tend to be more achievement oriented than Portuguese, in Trompenaars model.

The last cultural standard identified in the study "Internalized control" means that to comply with the law it is, for Germans, a question of duty and they perceived themselves as agents with the obligation to denunciate any transgression. This behaviour is enhanced by the ability of authorities to detect and enforce the law and effectively any necessary punishment is applied. As referred by the majority of the interviewees Internalized Control combined not only the ability for individuals to adopt a behaviour and react to others that do not comply with that rule or regulation in an autonomous way, but also the pressure to honour contracts. It is possible to compare this cultural standard with the Internal/External dimension. Germans tend to be more an Internal culture.

5.2. Comparing results against Hofstede model

Hofstede (1991) identified 5 dimensions of culture, as described early in section 2.2:

- Power Distance Index (PDI), from small to large;
- Individualism Index (IDV);
- Masculinity Index (MAS);
- Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), from weak to strong;
- Long term versus Short term orientation.

Analysing the 5 cultural dimensions by taking into account the scores of the Germans and Portuguese cultures it is possible to identify several differences.

As described early in section 2.2, PDI can be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally and IDV describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society. Germany belongs to the group that scores low PDI and high IDV; Germans are relatively independent from in-groups and they are usually also less dependent on powerful figures. Portugal belongs to the group that scores high PDI and low IDV; Portuguese are dependent on in-groups and they are usually dependent on power figures.

MAS measures to what extent respondents in a country tend to endorse goals usually more popular among men or among women. Germany belongs to the group that scores high MAS and Portugal belongs to the group that scores low MAS.

UAI scores from weak to strong and can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. Germany belongs to the group that scores high UAI and Portugal scores very high UAI.

For the first cultural standard "Distinction between private and business life", it is not possible to compare directly to any of the 5 dimensions described above and identified by Hofstede.

The second standard "Direct and formal communication" can be compared to High IDV dimension. Scoring high in the IDV means that for Germans direct appraisal of performance improves productivity and confrontations are normal, as referred also by interviewees in the study. In this case the cultural dimension and the relative cultural standard point out in the same direction.

The third standard identified from the research "Neutral as opposed to Affective", shows that Portuguese see Germans as less affective in the relationships and also with more difficulties in dealing with humour and sense of humour. It is not possible to compare directly to any of the 5 dimensions described above and identified by Hofstede.

Planning, organizing and rules devotion is a cultural standard that represents the way Portuguese see the Germans ability to organize them and plan things with accuracy, long term orientation, and rules and regulations played an important role. Associated with this context it was mentioned also that workers expect orientations from the boss, not orders. In order to make a comparison between this standard and the Hofstede dimensions it is necessary to split the standard into two parts. If considered only that for Germans it is usual to expect orientation from the boss and not orders as Portuguese do, it is possible to compare this part of cultural standard with the Power Distance dimension where German culture scores a lower PDI. If taking into consideration the other part of the cultural standard, planning, organizing and rules devotion, it is possible to compare to the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension, and here German Culture scores a higher UAI than Portuguese Culture. In this Hofstede dimension high UAI means that there is a strong concern about rules, organization and planning. For instance, company rules should not be broken; the work in companies is task oriented instead of relationship oriented; highly formalized conception of management and tolerance for ambiguity is not allowed; in the end German culture shows more resistance to changes than Portuguese. In the two parts from the cultural

standard analysed before and the dimensions compared they point out in the same direction.

Achievement represents the way Portuguese see Germans concerns with the goals and objectives, and their focus to the merit of workers and pragmatism in the search of solutions. It is not possible to compare directly to any of the 5 dimensions described above and identified by Hofstede.

Internalized control means that to comply with the law it is, for Germans, a question of duty and they perceived themselves as agents with the obligation to denunciate any transgression. This cultural standard is not possible to compare directly to any of the 5 dimensions of Hofstede, however the Power Distance dimension could partly explain the difference of behaviour. German culture scores lower than the Portuguese culture in PDI. When it is said that a culture has a low PDI it means that they choose to have in companies decentralized decision structures with less concentration of authority; that teachers and parents treat students as equals; education is based on students and not on teachers. This behaviour could contribute to a more awareness of the responsibility that each of us has in the world.

6. Training from the Relative Cultural Standards

As stated by (Yang, Wang, & Drewry, 2009, p. 325) "*the fundamental reason why culture impacts training in general and cross-cultural training in particular is that educational practice is not only an individual intellectual activity but also a social process that takes place in certain cultural context.*"

Although various kinds of classification of training contents were developed according to the commonly held taxonomy of three learning domains, Yang (2009) classify training contents into three categories and use cross-cultural training as an example to illustrate.

It is possible to see in Table 6.1, for each learning domain the linkage to cultural roots.

Training Contents			
Domains	Cognitive contents	Skill-based contents	Affective contents
Definitions	Cognition (beliefs)	Behaviour (skills)	Affect (values)
Examples	The area of human action which pertains to mental processes such as intellectual, learning, and problem solving.	The area of human action which emphasizes all types of body movements that relate to physical ability and skills.	The area of human action which emphasizes the affective processes such as emotion, feeling, interest, attitude, value, character development, and motivation.
	Factual information and knowledge about a country	Skills of language, communication, stress management, adjustment	Awareness, attitudes to different culture, motivation, self-efficacy and confidence
Cultural root	Shared beliefs	Acquiescent social norms	Dominated values

Table 6-1 A classification of training contents (Yang, Wang, & Drewry, 2009, p. 326)

The first category is related to cognitive contents. As an example, in a cross-cultural training program, Portuguese trainees strongly need to learn new rules and procedures in a host culture like German. As referred in the Chapter Results, the main concern for Portuguese arriving to German, despite other important related subjects, must be to be aware and know the rules and regulations and behave accordingly.

Second category, skill-based content: skills of language, oral and gestural are very important for an effective communication. Also from the results of the study, it was possible to distinguish different behaviours between Portuguese and Germans, related to communication. So in a cross-cultural training programme it is essential to consider this issue.

Third category is related to affective contents. Most training programs need to focus in changing attitudes in areas of raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes toward different cultures and customs, and assuring trainees' confidence, and that the cross-cultural training is normally designed to facilitate the acceptance of cultural differences.

The used of cultural assimilators became wide spread since the publication of the paper "The culture assimilator: an approach to cross-cultural training" by Fiedler, Mitchell and Triandis, in 1971.This method of cross-cultural training is based on critical incidents.

As stated by Bhawuk "*It should be noted that one of the key values of the culture assimilator technique is not learning the right way but unlearning the wrong behaviours resulting from stereotypes, which can be done well by using theory-based culture assimilator.*" (2001, p. 146)

A collectivistic culture, like the Portuguese, is associated with dependent learning while individualistic culture, like the Germans, is associated with independent learning. Learners from collectivistic cultures tend to acquire new knowledge and skills by studying and working together and more likely to pay attention to contextual clues.

This may be explained as the result of learners tending to check with each other in order to comply with social norms. In a culture with individualistic characteristics, learners enjoy greater personal autonomy and can engage in deductive learning where they do not have to accept other people's views before making a judgment. (Yang, Wang, & Drewry, 2009, p. 328)

Taking into account all the data collected from interviews and selecting the critical incidents it was possible, applying the method explained before, to identify the German Cultural Standards from the Portuguese perspective. These cultural standards should only be applied when members from Portuguese culture interact with members from German culture and in that sense they have a relative value. However, because the entire process of building the cultural standards is so comprehensive, it allows going forward into the next step, which is to identify areas where to focus attention in order to improve the cultural awareness of people.

Critical incidents, stories collected from interviews can be used not only to identify standards but also to develop materials, training materials, which could be part of a training scheme to prepare people to become more aware of the cultural differences between Germans and Portuguese. Each critical incident represents a special moment lived by an interviewee during his/her interaction with Germans. They could be positive moments or negative ones; however, in the majority of the cases, they tend to be more negatives. These stories could be adapted in order to provide a "case study" that represents a challenge to trainees and a moment of reflection about cultural differences.

Case studies can help people prepare for cross-cultural problems, situations and crises by providing an approximation of several environments. An obvious advantage to this mode of training is that it allows trainees the exposure to settings and contexts in advance prior to the experience itself. The case study method also incorporates the idea that trainees can learn from one another by engaging with each other and with each other's ideas.

Some examples of case studies taken from critical incidents with some adaptations are as follows:

Title	"The show off"
Description	Carla work in a Germany company as head of division for almost a year now. All head of divisions meet once a month with the president for sum up the important issues. Carla says that "They present much information using PowerPoint in a planned manner, showing what they are doing. While I do my job and generally achieve 100% of what I'm asked, but I think that I don't need to show it. They feel the need to show, upwards and downwards, what they achieved. We think that the time we loose doing presentations and preparing the show-off, we could be doing something else more important.
Questions	1. Do you agree with Carla when she say is a waste of time? Why? 2. Why Germans need to show what they are doing in every detail? 3. What are the differences between the Portuguese way of work and the Germans?

Table 6-2 - Case study "Show off"

Title	"The boss and the dog"
Description	In a Portuguese company in Germany, an important person would come from Portugal for a visit and a trip on the river was scheduled, so the head of the office asked the secretary (German woman) to know if that person could go on the trip. They said yes, there wouldn't be any problem. However, the head of the office had known that the person would bring a dog and then he said to the secretary that they could count on the person with a dog, and he didn't say anything else. As she knew

	already the Portuguese and she was a little surprised with the latest information, she decided to ask her boss if he wanted her to ask if the dog could also go on the trip. The boss was of course surprised by the question, after all why had he said that the person had a dog?
Questions	1. If the boss hadn't said nothing to the secretary what would be the results? 2. What should the boss said in order to achieve the pretended results?

Table 6-3 - Case study "The boss and the dog"

Title	"A question of trust"
Description	A ship under construction at a shipyard in Germany needs to be submeted to an independent inspection. João is the engineer responsible to follow the situation. João reported to his boss what happened: "In this case we asked company A to perform the quality control and we had a situation concerning a valve test of a circuit subject to external pressure, which according to quality parameters of IRS, when checking these valves, all components were checked, not just checking a sample. The document said nothing about this, that all the components should be tested. We had to watch two or three tests. After one test, the German said that everything was right and went away happy. I remind him that that was not a sample test but an extensive test to all the components as announced previously. He said that, as he knew the system, the quality of the company and everything else, he had the confidence as a responsible for company A. He argued and I told him that I represent the Portuguese part and that, according to the contract and the technical specifications, we must test everything and that I would test everything because that's what we do. Of course I felt that all that created a Great

	discomfort."
Questions	1. Do you agree with João stance? 2. What are the differences between the Portuguese way of work and the Germans? Can you explain?

Table 6-4 - Case study "A question of trust"

7. Conclusion

It was possible to see in section 2.1 that there are many definitions of culture from different authors with different backgrounds. However there is one constant in all the theories, the need to study the differences between each other. What makes the difference between one and another, what are the main characteristics? This is the kind of question that could lead to many answers. Indeed there are several authors that presented studies showing the differences between cultures, usually between Countries.

Some authors, important authors like Hofstede (1984) and Trompenaars (1997), identified in a list of cultures different general characteristics, dimensions of culture that stand alone and give the basis for defining a given culture. However, if the goal is only to compare two cultures, in an one to one basis, and define each culture not by general and broad terms applied in any case, but by the single differences that each other means only when they are face to face, it is necessary to apply a method that allows a deeper detail.

An innovative way of researching cultural differences is the Cultural Standard Method. This method looks at differences that are valid only in the comparison between two cultures. The differences identified are relative differences and they are only valid when comparing those specific cultures. By giving more detail in terms of differentiation it allows the possibility of studying the differences between cultures that are relatively close like those from European Countries.

Now it is time to return to the main question that guided this work and do a sum up of the results obtained. The German cultural standards from the Portuguese perspective identified during the process of the Cultural Standard Methodology were as follows:

- Distinction between private and business life;
- Direct and formal communication;

- Neutral as opposed to Affective;

- Planning, organizing and rules devotion;

- Achievement;

- Internalized control.

The distinction between private and business life represents one of the biggest differences found between Portuguese and German cultures. Portuguese are used to bring family related subjects to work as a common thing. On the other hand they see to Germans adopting a clear distinction between what is private life and what is business life. A stance that sometimes is very confusing and even annoying for Portuguese because among them it is common not to split both.

It was not possible to clear identify a dimension in Trompenaars model that matches this cultural standard.

It was also not possible to compare the cultural standard directly to any of the 5 dimensions identified by Hofstede.

Direct and formal communication was mentioned by several interviewees as a characteristic of German culture on the opposite side there is the Portuguese culture that uses formal and informal communication indistinctly in several contexts and moments even mixed each other. From this scenario results sometimes the difficulty for Portuguese to understand why others act in a different way.

This cultural standard could be compared to the Specific/Diffuse dimension from the Trompenaars model. The dimension and the relative cultural standard went in the same direction.

This cultural standard could be compared to Individualism/collectivism dimension of Hofstede model. Scoring high in the IDV means that for Germans direct appraisal of performance improves productivity and confrontations are normal, as referred also by interviewees in the study. In this case the cultural dimension and the relative cultural standard point out in the same direction.

Neutral as opposed to Affective was identified by Portuguese as a characteristic of German culture. They perceived Germans as less affective in the relationships and this usually results in a negative first impact. They also perceived that Germans have difficulties in dealing with humour and sense of humour.

This cultural standard could be compared to the Neutral/Affective dimension of Trompenaars model. However the results from the research when comparing to the Neutral/Affective dimension are different. In Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner dimension model, the German culture is considered more affective, emotional than the Portuguese culture, quoted as more neutral.

It was not possible to compare the cultural standard directly to any of the 5 dimensions identified by Hofstede.

Planning, organizing and rules devotion represents the way Portuguese see the Germans ability to organize themselves and plan things with such accuracy and long term orientation. They are more organized and each person knows exactly what to do in the organization and this situation is completely different from the perception that Portuguese have about their own organization. Also, for Germans rules and regulations are always to obey and each individual act as a controller for the others. For Germans everything must be planned in advance. However, they have a great difficulty in improvising, if something planned changes during the process it will be very difficult to adapt to the new circumstances. This process sometimes is not fully understood by the Portuguese. Another characteristic pointed out by the interviewees is related to the previous aspects concerning the need to respect schedules and timetables. For Germans to arrived late is a sin and demonstrates a lack of respect to the other.

It was possible to compare this cultural standard with the Universalism/ Particularism dimension where German culture is quoted as a more Universalism culture. In this situation the cultural standard points out in the same direction of Universalism dimension from the model.

It was possible to compare the cultural standard to the Uncertainty Avoidance and also to Power Distance dimensions of Hofstede model. German culture scores a

lower PDI and a higher UAI than Portuguese Culture. In the two parts analysed from the cultural standard and the dimensions, they point out in the same direction.

From the point of view of Portuguese Achievement means that Germans are always concerns with the goals and objectives, and they focus their attention to the merit of workers and pragmatism in the search of solutions. Also Germans sees training as an investment needed to prepare workers to perform in a better way, without stress and doubts, different from the idea that they have about their one companies. In that sense they mention that it was easier to work in a German cultural environment then in a Portuguese one.

This cultural standard can be, in part, compared with Achievement/Ascription dimension in Trompenaars model. Germans tends to be more achievement oriented than Portuguese, in Trompenaars model.

It was not possible to compare directly the cultural standard to any of the 5 dimensions identified by Hofstede.

Internalized control means that for Germans to obey the law is a question of duty and they perceived themselves as agents with the obligation of denunciate any transgression. Sometimes it is a difficult for Portuguese living in Germany to understand the reason why someone denunciate a friend, colleague or neighbour to the police for things that, in their mind are not as important as friendship.

It is possible to compare this cultural standard with the Internal/External dimension from Trompenaars model. Germans tend to be more an Internal culture.

It was not possible to compare this cultural standard directly to any of the 5 dimensions of Hofstede however the Power Distance dimension could partly explain the difference of behaviour observed when comparing the two cultures.

Taking into consideration what was presented in this work, could be useful for Portuguese workers that intended to go to German to work, to focus on the situations presented and also bearing in mind what was written by Harris & Moran (2000, p. 145) referring to expatriation: Fostering Acculturation:

- Be culturally prepared, also for the culture shock

- Learn local communication complexities as well as your own culture

- Interact with the host nationals, avoid the expat ghetto

- Be creative and experimental

- Be culturally sensitive

- Recognise complexities in host cultures

- Train your communicative capabilities

- Be patient, understanding, and accepting of self and hosts

- Keep your expectations most realistic

- Accept the challenge of intercultural experiences.

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