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OPENING FRENCH DOORS: AN EXAMINATION OF FRENCH BUSINESS EXECUTIVES' PERSPECTIVES ON WORK DISPARITIES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND FRENCH WORK CULTURES IN THE DALLAS-FORT WORTH METROPLEX

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OPENING FRENCH DOORS: AN EXAMINATION OF FRENCH BUSINESS
EXECUTIVES' PERSPECTIVES ON WORK DISPARITIES BETWEEN
AMERICAN AND FRENCH WORK CULTURES IN THE
DALLAS-FORT WORTH METROPLEX

by

YAHAIRA ARNEROS

Presented to the Faculty of the Honors College of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

HONORS BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS WITH FRENCH

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Thank you to the readers who chose to study this research and explore the possibilities one can find when you learn to study and accept cultural differences.

November 15, 2019

ABSTRACT

OPENING FRENCH DOORS: AN EXAMINATION OF FRENCH BUSINESS EXECUTIVES' PERSPECTIVES ON WORK DISPARITIES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND FRENCH WORK CULTURES IN THE DALLAS-FORT WORTH METROPLEX.

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The University of Texas at Arlington, 2019

Faculty Mentor: Charles Miller

The United States is no stranger to hosting foreign business subsidiaries in our ever-growing international business world. As the US opens its doors to native French business executives, one asks how their culture perceives US workers and how to ensure that business relations between the two flow as smoothly as possible. Qualitative data was gathered from three native French business executives, in three native French subsidiaries in the DFW Metroplex. Data was gathered in face-to-face personal interviews conducted in French about disparities between French and American work culture. Similarities in perception of US work culture by the French were found including, but not limited to, possible coworker insincerity, an intense American corporate execution spirit, and stricter time restraints. Through assisted US cultural immersion for native French workers and

proper French culture training for American workers, work relations can be strengthened to create a more successful work environment and improve work performance overall.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why the French?

Globalization is a phenomenon that transformed our world into the international trade-focused world we see today. As physical, economic, and political barriers fall, countries experience more trade opportunities and an increased expansion of business negotiations in different forms like exports or expatriates. The United States (US) is known as one of the most powerful countries in the global market and is constantly working with other countries in business fields. France is the US number one source of Research and Development in IT and electronics and is the 3rd largest foreign source of employment in the US. (“The French Economic Footprint In The U.S.”) How do American business executives work with French business executives in order to assure successful work that benefits both cultures?

1.1.1 French Background

France is known by many as a country breeding arts, fine wines, and other luxurious items that several nations have come to love. Its rich history is full of life like the renaissance and death like the French revolutionary war and is no stranger to expansion. At one point in time the French were dominating the globe, leading an expansion of their culture and language. As of 2018, there are approximately 315.2 million French speakers worldwide (“French Speakers around the World”) and with a metropolitan population of

approximately 62.8 million people, it can be easily discerned that they are a populous nation that can play a significant impact on international business.

1.1.2 International Business Perspective

Although France may only have an area of 643,801 sq. km., it is an economic force that plays a significant role in global business. Its approximate \$2.6 trillion GDP makes the French economy one of the world's largest economies; France is also known to be one of the world's top exporter of weapons ("The French Economic Footprint In The U.S."). French business can be seen in many places, in their weapons that are distributed, and even at your local Trader Joe's store where you'll find camembert and pinot noir. The French have successfully integrated into several markets around the globe through trade and other forms of business, so how have they integrated themselves into the United States market?

1.1.3 French Impact on the United States

What does France's global economic power have to do with the United States? In 2018, US trade in goods with France reached about \$79 billion, which was a 2.6% increase from 2017 according to Eurostat (Embassy of France in the United States). "There are \$326.4 billion (dollars' worth) of French FDI stock in the US and French companies in the US employ approximately 730,000 people making France the 3rd largest foreign source of employment in the US" ("The French Economic Footprint in the U.S."). While French trade is prominent in the US, this project is limited to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex (DFW), so how prominent is the French footprint in Texas?

1.1.4 French Impact on Texas and DFW

According to the French treasury in the US, there are approximately 62,000 jobs in Texas that have been created by French companies and there is a 7.1 million-dollar trade

with Texas alone. France is #2 in job creation in Texas and has a great impact on the DFW Metroplex as well (“TEXAS AND FRANCE”). “According to the Dallas Regional Chamber, there are 120 French companies operating in the Dallas – Fort Worth region, which includes both large companies and SMEs. In addition, the annual trade between Dallas – Fort Worth and France amounts to \$1.42 billion, which includes \$377 million of exports from DFW to France and \$1.04 billion of imports from France to DFW” (“TEXAS AND FRANCE”). Those 120 French companies located in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex are significant in several industries such as various technological ones.

1.1.5 Research Question

With so many French company subsidiaries in the DFW Metroplex, there is a need for both American and French business expertise leading to both DFW locals and French expatriates or French native citizens with a work visa to run these companies. When these two groups of people partner together and work in the same firm, tensions can arise from cultural differences leading to miscommunication and inefficiency. The literature and research through qualitative data collected from three personal face-to-face interviews is intended to show differences in French business culture and American business culture, specifically in the following categories: Work Hierarchy, Boss Relations, Coworker Relations, Social Culture, and Overall Work Culture. What creates the differences between American and French business culture, how are those differences represented, and what steps can be taken in order to ameliorate work environment for improved firm efficiency?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 French Culture Studies

Many differences between French and American business/work culture can be traced back to French and American culture. Differences in upbringing, education, and societal norms can manifest into certain values and expectations that can be brought into the workplace. These innate differences can create tension and disrupt work from flowing freely and smoothly through French workers and American workers in a firm.

2.1.1 French Values and Behavior

Many French business behaviors can be attributed to their cultural upbringing, stemming from their home lives, education, and social lives. The French create both physical and emotional barriers from a young age, which may cause other cultures to perceive them as cold or even closed off which can cause unnecessary tension in the work environment. How does their culture affect the way they work?

2.1.1.1 French Home Structure

La “petite enfance” (little childhood) and “l’enfance” (childhood) play an extremely crucial role for a French person’s cultural identity formation (Wylie and Brière, 86). French children tend to have a greater level of respect for their elders than American children do which causes a certain level of formality which Americans do not necessarily use. This formal relationship style is only magnified as French children learn that direct family is sacred and that one must not easily trust people. This can be reflected in a work

culture as the French tend to be very formal in business settings and tend to always be on edge, stemming from their pessimistic point of view. Erin Meyer, an American author, recalls how in her childhood, she learned that smiles should be generous, and that southern hospitality is extremely important which is not the case for the French. When a French woman came to visit Meyer's family in Minnesota, she was taken aback by their "peachiness" and felt uncomfortable and suspicious as to what their true intentions were. (Meyer, 176) The French woman felt as if they were intruding on her privacy and that they should not be trusted.

From a young age, French children learn to keep to themselves and keep their innermost thoughts private. The French find power in being able to keep their thoughts to themselves while Americans find power in being able to express their innermost thoughts aloud (Wylie and Brière, 99). This can cause communication problems in work as French business executives may keep their true opinions private while American business executives expect them to use authenticity and the utmost truth.

2.1.1.2 French Social Structure

The French have a constant muscular tension throughout their whole body which is an unconscious manner of self-expression. From a young age they are taught to control everything they can - which is one of the reasons they learn to present themselves in a manner which is seen as a "typically French" manner by other cultures (Wylie and Brière, 70-72). French men and women are known to cross their arms much more frequently than Americans, which causes tension between the two because Americans tend to observe crossed arms as a signal of disagreement or disapproval when it is merely a social French custom.

In America, people have the tendency to make friends very easily and they tend to have a big social circle, while French people tend to have only one to two close friends which they trust as much as their family. (Wylie and Brière, 140) French business executives are used to being social with a group of select individuals, so an American coworker looking to become close friends with a French worker may appall the French worker, causing the French business executive to feel uncomfortable and thus accidentally create unnecessary tension.

It is customary for Americans to be social with everyone they come across: smiling at a stranger, saying hello to a waiter, or talking to whomever sits by them. The French prefer to limit their social interactions and are exclusive with whom they speak to, if the French do not see the possibility of establishing a relationship or have no interest in maintaining a relationship with someone, they will not address them or talk to them (Wylie and Brière, 77). A simple conversation to pass the time between two American strangers is a social norm that may be considered blasphemous to some French people. This cultural difference can be seen in the workplace when French business executives may be perfectly content eating next to someone in the breakroom without uttering a single word to them.

2.1.2 French Education

Education creates personal identity in ways such as thought formation, self-expression, and perception. The educational upbringing of a person can significantly affect how a person responds to conflict, how they choose to elicit a response from someone else, and how they initially respond to a question or problem. The French education system is vastly different in comparison to the American education system which can help explain expression and communication differences between the two cultures.

2.1.2.1 Early Childhood Education

The National Ministry of Education in France controls all public-school education and centralizes all grade school education. From an early age, French children learn that being wrong is detrimental to oneself and society and being wrong should be avoided at all costs. Meyer recounts that while in the United States, her young daughter would receive gold stars and praise on her homework while in France her daughter would receive very negative feedback such as “Skills not acquired. Apply yourself (Meyer, 79)!” This is a clear example of direct negative feedback which comes naturally to the French - which at times can offend their American coworkers. This can put strain on a work relationship and cause problems in the work environment.

French students are expected to strive in all aspects of their lives and especially so in their studies. French culture is known to prioritize quality over quantity, and this can be expressed in their thought manifestation and expression. French students are taught to reflect thoroughly on what they would like to say before saying anything aloud in efforts to produce a quality answer. Americans often tend to say the first thing that comes to mind when prompted, while a French person will reflect for a bit on what was asked and then deliver an answer. This begins in early education and continues into their future studies.

2.1.2.2 High School and College Education

In the United States, we are accustomed to a standardized curriculum mixed with some flexibility in our electives, although there may be some variation throughout different states, it is generally similar. In France, students are tested in several subjects and get put into a specialized curriculum based on their strengths; they are placed into S (Physical Sciences and Mathematics), ES (Social and Economical Sciences), L (literature and

Philosophy), or a technical school (Wylie and Brière, 196). The French like to categorize their strengths and weaknesses and specialize in what they excel in; this categorization can be expressed in their college choices.

Almost all colleges in France, save a few private ones, are free and specialized according to what career the person would like to specialize in. French students that would like to pursue a business degree often choose to go to a Grands Ecoles de Commerce (Business Colleges) where internationalization may not be as taught as one would expect to occur. Kumar and Usunier state, “The elite institutions (Grands Ecoles de Commerce) and their graduates cannot see internationalization without a strong French ethnocentric bias...” (Kumar and Usunier, 20), this point of view that some French business graduates may have, can ultimately affect their work in other countries such as the US - if they hold the same ethnocentric beliefs.

2.1.3 Implications for French Immigrants in the United States

The creation of physical and emotional barriers created by the French are an automatic response which was ingrained since birth. This can cause assimilation problems for French immigrants who are unaccustomed to a friendly and more open culture such as the one the United States possesses. Those protection-based facets of the French personality can be transferred into the work environment. Home culture, social culture, and education can influence and create a more reserved, reflective, and perfection-based French individual who can be misunderstood by an American coworker causing work inefficiency.

2.2 Business Culture Studies

In business, culture means everything when working internationally. Companies and individuals must learn to respect and at times adhere to other cultures, in order to assure

that business negotiations, flow smoothly. Business culture is a topic that has been explored regularly and is constantly utilized as a measure of work efficiency between two nations. When conducting international business, studying and respecting other countries' business cultures is no easy feat, but a plethora of research has been conducted on the matter including by the "King of Culture" studies, Geert Hofstede. Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist, who is best known for his pioneering study of cultural differences between nations in his development of five cultural dimensions. He is the author of several culture books which help define the ways culture work and how different cultures interact with each other, and his work is some of the most influential work ever conducted about cultures. The consensus in literature is that business cultures can be vastly different and there are ways to maximize efficiency when working together.

2.2.1 General Business Culture

Several studies have been conducted on culture as an external factor to a company's work. "In comparative management studies, culture is considered to be a background factor (almost synonymous with country), an explanatory variable (Ajiferuke and Boddewyn, 1970) or a broad framework (Cummings and Schmidt, 1972) influencing the development and reinforcement of beliefs (Smircich, 343)." In her research, Smircich examined how culture has been studied as an external factor that influences the beliefs a company holds. Companies with different cultures must work together to create their own company culture after understanding each other's cultures. How can business culture be affected by different cultures and what commonalities and differences can be found between French and American business culture?

2.2.1.1 Hofstede's Five Dimensions

Business culture is a topic that has been studied by many and one of the most influential people in the field is Geert Hofstede. He is known by many as the “King of Business Culture” due to his groundbreaking work and creation of five dimensions which explain innate differences between different cultures which can explain several business culture differences. His five dimensions which explain how business culture works for a country are the following: power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation versus short-term orientation.

Power distance is the dimension that describes how people handle differences in equality of power, essentially how comfortable people are or are not with separation in power such as hierarchical differences in business (Hofstede et al., 55). Collectivism versus individualism helps define how a culture values interest of the group versus interest of the individual. In a more collectivist society, interest is placed on ensuring the greatest amount of good for the group, while in individualistic cultures, emphasis is placed on the best outcome for the individual (Hofstede et al., 90-91). Femininity versus masculinity defines different goals cultures have in the work environment. The masculine side focuses on earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge - while the feminine side focuses on management, cooperation, living area, and employment security (Hofstede et al., 139). Uncertainty avoidance defines the willingness a culture has when being placed in an uncertain situation. Cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance will be risk averse and avoid uncertain situations while cultures with a low uncertainty avoidance will be more risk-seeking and less afraid of uncertainty (Hofstede et al., 189). Long-term orientation

versus short-term orientation, the fifth dimension, is less frequently used and describes how comfortable a culture is with adapting to new societal changes in comparison to their previous customs. A country with a low score is hesitant to changes and values customs and norms, while a high scoring culture will be open to changing traditions and leaving behind certain cultural customs.

Together these dimensions form a model which describes the differences between different national cultures; countries are scored on each dimension for comparison (Hofstede et al., 31). How do the United States and France compare in the five dimensions and how are those differences expressed in the work environment?

2.2.1.2 France and United States Dimensions

In power distance, France scores a 68 while the US scores a 40; this signifies a greater acceptance of inequality in French culture than in the United States culture which can be attributed to the French's elder-respect oriented upbringing. In individualism, France scores a 71 while the US scores a 91, this signifies the significant importance the US places on benefit of the individual which can be seen through the well-known "American dream" individuals possess. In masculinity, France scores a 43 while the US scores a 62, meaning that the US cares more about increased work opportunities such as rising in the ranks while France cares less about job advancement. In uncertainty avoidance, France scores an 86 while the US scores a 46, this explains how the French like structure and official planning more than the US - where business executives may make "business plans" on a golf course. In long term orientation, France scores a 63 while the US scores a 26, demonstrating how important cultural traditions and norms are to France while the US is very open to new and innovative changes in their lives. These scores were

found on Hofstede Insights, a website which has a 6D-model creation where one can compare the differences between countries (“Country Comparison”).

2.2.2 French Business Culture Studies

Several studies have been conducted about French business culture and some aspects that may be misunderstood by other cultures can be attributed to French upbringing and customs. While some business customs may be second nature to the French, those same business cultures may be perceived as rude or strange by other business cultures such as the US. What are some of the most misunderstood French business practices and why are they misunderstood?

2.2.2.1 Misunderstood French Corporate Cultures

As stated, French business culture can be attributed to several French norms which have been ingrained in their lives in their upbringing and education. French business executives working in a French subsidiary in the US may feel attacked by Americans wanting to be friendly and build a relationship. The resistance a French coworker may exert towards building relationships stems from their culture’s norms of keeping anyone but a trusted few from getting too close both emotionally and physically. Their behavior and seclusion should not be perceived as a form of hostility or indifference; it is part of the world they have grown up accustomed to.

When working in America, “on time is late” is one of the most common expressions you hear about American time perception. American culture is known to be strict with deadlines in order to ensure a smooth and efficient work environment pace. This cannot be said for the French, whom are well known to be late to everything. Meyer had heard about the French being tardy often and did not truly comprehend its reality until working in

France. “After many years working in both the United States and France, I can now confirm that in most cases you get about ten more minutes’ leeway (to run late, start late, end late, take a tangent) in France than you would in the United States (Meyer, 221).” This time difference may be unprofessional to some, but it is focused on the French’s quality over quantity aspect. They want perfection in their work and are not afraid of going over set times to ensure they have reached perfection in their work tasks.

2.2.2.2 Communication Differences

Although they may not initially open up and express negative sentiments at first, the French are known to express harsh critiques more commonly than other cultures such as Americans. While negative language may create an uncomfortable work place for Americans, the French are accustomed to it. “In France, which scored moderately feminine in the IBM studies, there is occasionally a lot of verbal insult, both between employers and labor and between bosses and subordinates, but behind this seeming conflict there is a typically French “sense of moderation,” which enables parties to continue working together while agreeing to disagree (Hofstede et al., 167).” This French sharp and blunt communication style may affect business relations with American coworkers who expect negative news to be sugarcoated. These differences in oral communication can cause problems in the work environment and written communication between Americans and the French are no exception to cultural differences.

Americans who conduct business with French executives may not be aware of how different the written communication styles might be. “The French epistolary style, unlike its English counterpart, is a highly structured mode of expression, and neither grammatical competence in the language nor a familiarity with American commercial correspondence

are sufficient to help the student avoid the pitfalls associated with the writing of business letters in French (Herman, 12).” American written communication such as emails, tend to be strictly business and very formal and to the point; there is no sentimentality attached to emails like what the French use. “Whether or not the French writer feels any particular degree of respect toward, or humility before, the duchess, the priest, the government official, or the dowager with whom he is corresponding is of little consequence. His personal feelings may be as sterile as if he were writing a ‘Dear Sir/Madam’ letter, but it is socially incumbent upon him to employ a set formula to denote respect or humility. It is a part of his cultural heritage, one may say. Yet, within that rigid framework of expression, there is room for personal nuances, shades of feeling that can be conveyed, adjectives or adverbs that can be substituted for others, to let the correspondent know that some degree of thought has entered into the closing of the letter. All of this can seem quite foreign, difficult to comprehend, for an American student, accustomed to satisfying all needs and expectations, that of writer as well as of correspondent, with a single, genderless, meaningless, and all-encompassing formula such as ‘Sincerely yours’ (Herman, 14).”

Although the French recognize the importance of making sure business negotiations are clear and precise, they like to accentuate their writing and may even include some humor to lighten things up. The French always make sure to add some sort of relationship element in their writing to build a connection with the recipient such as making sure to address the recipient with their formal title and using a formal tense throughout their writing. French business executives feel that the “Sincerely Yours” written by many Americans is in fact insincere and that Americans often do not respect formal etiquette enough when it comes to written business communications.

2.2.3 Implications for French Workers in the United States

Both written and oral communication can be difficult in an international workplace due to different social norms and expectations. A French business executive working in the United States may need to accept the commonplace “strictly business” written style that Americans are accustomed to and even may even need to adhere to it in order to ensure communication is open and clear between the two cultures. While time may be more flexible in France, French business executives may need to adhere to the “time is money” mentality that most Americans have and be more punctual. Punctuality is key in the American business world so more attention will need to be placed on ensuring that the French business executive is on time. Differences like these are based on customs from France and can be easily adjusted to ensure a more secure work efficiency between French and American business executives.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Inspiration

As a junior, I created an Honors College contract with Professor Charles Miller that needed to pertain to my field of studies - International Business with French. This Honors College contract was so successful and stimulating that we decided that an expansion of it for this research would increase the significance of the research and provide more accurate data given the addition of more participants.

3.1.1 International Business Law Honors Contract

In the Fall of 2018, an Honors College contract was created for Professor Miller's International Business Law Class where I had to interview a French business executive about work disparities between American and French business culture, write a 6-10 page research paper on my findings, and present those findings to our International Business Law class in a 15 minute presentation. The inspiration for this contract was based on my experience in a French Contemporary Culture Class taught at The University of Texas at Arlington in Fall of 2018. This class used the textbook "Les Français" by Wylie and Brière, which is the most informative French culture book I have ever read. This book helps explain how French culture differs from American culture and the reasons as to why French culture is the way it is. The explanation for the differences between the two cultures was fascinating, and the interview with the French business executive was meant to affirm the

reasonings as to why French business culture is different than American business culture from a firsthand perspective.

The French business executive needed to be from France, needed to have worked in France, and needed to be currently working at a French subsidiary in the DFW Metroplex in order to be qualified for the contract. Professor Miller set up the meeting with aid from one of his prior students who was currently working at Firm X, a French firm located in the DFW Metroplex. The interview was face-to-face and an hour long at Firm X, conducted in French by myself, and recorded for future direct translation. The participant was questioned about several facets of French culture (See Appendix A); these questions were translated into English as well (See Appendix B) for use by my mentor and me.

3.1.2 Results and Significance

The contract proved to be successful as most, if not all, of the explanations for French business culture found in “Les Français” were considered true and expanded upon by the participant. After concluding the research and contract, one of the constraints mentioned was the limitations concerning there only being one participant. The participant’s personal views and experiences could have happened to coincide with the French business culture tendencies in “Les Français” while another native French business executive’s views could have differed significantly from the French business culture tendencies explained in “Les Français.”

3.2 Contract Expansion

After seeing what a success the first interview was in studying French business culture and American business culture from a native French business executive’s perspective, the contract was used as the main inspiration for an expansion into a research

project. The participant from Firm X became Participant X and was the first of three participants that would be interviewed for this research project.

3.2.1 Interview Details

The interviews were conducted on two more native French business executives, Participant Y and Participant Z, from two different French subsidiaries in the DFW Metroplex, Firm Y and Firm Z. The interviews were conducted in French at the participant's respective French subsidiary, lasted approximately an hour, and were recorded for future translation. The questions asked were the same questions Participant X was asked (See Appendix A) and the English transcripts for all three interviews can be found in the appendix. (See Appendix C, D, E).

3.2.2 Interviewee Qualifications

To be qualified as a participant, the participant needed to be a business executive not an entry-level worker; the participant had to be originally from France- not just any francophone nation; the participant needed to currently work in a French subsidiary located in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex; the participant needed to have work experience in both France and the United States; the participant had to be willing to be interviewed and recorded. The participants were found through contacts both Professor Miller and I had, as most foreign firms are suspicious of letting unknown college students in their work environment.

3.2.3 Questions

The questions were created based from personal experiences encountered while studying French culture, business culture, and French and American Business culture. These questions were written down before Participant X's interview, asked in succession

while being read, and were being recorded by a cellular device. The original questions were asked in French (See Appendix A) and were later translated by the author, me, into English for the research team's use. (See Appendix B) The same questions were asked to all three participants in the same succession with some minimal room for prompting such as "Do you have any examples?", "Can you elaborate on that?", etc.

3.3 Interviews

The interviews were conducted at each participant's respective firm, Participant X's interview was held at Firm X, Participant Y's interview was held at Firm Y, and Participant Z's interview was held at Firm Z. Each interview was approximately one hour and was recorded. The interviews were mainly conducted in French with minimal English that was used with specific American jargon such as "backstabbing" or in order to clarify something in French that was not 100% understood.

3.3.1 Firm X and Participant X

The interview with Participant X was conducted on October 18, 2018. Firm X is one of Texas's largest French subsidiaries and the company has more than 10,000 employees worldwide. The connection with Participant X was made through one of Professor Miller's prior students who was interning at Firm X. Participant X was a Senior Financial Analyst, approximately 25 to 35 years old, male, and single. Participant X had been working for Firm X for 3.5 years at the point this interview took place.

3.3.2 Firm Y and Participant Y

The interview with Participant Y was conducted on August 14, 2019. Firm Y is another one of Texas's largest French subsidiaries and the company has more than 10,000 employees worldwide. The connection with Participant Y was made through one of

Professor Miller's contacts at The University of Texas at Arlington who reached out to this individual. Participant Y was a US Consumer Innovation Director, approximately 40 to 50 years old, female, and married with two kids. Participant Y had been working for Firm Y for 5 years at the point this interview took place.

3.3.3 Firm Z and Participant Z

The interview with Participant Z was conducted on October 11, 2019. Firm Z is one of Texas's smallest French subsidiaries and the company has approximately 200-500 employees worldwide, which is significantly less people than Firm X and Firm Y. The connection with Participant Z was made through one of the researcher's prior French professors at the University of Texas at Arlington. The professor contacted Participant Z, whom she knew from a DFW Francophone group that meets together on occasions. Participant Z was a General Manager, approximately 35 to 45 years old, male, and single. Participant Z had been working for Firm Z for 3 years at the point this interview took place.

CHAPTER 4

INTERVIEW RESULTS

All interview responses can be found in the English transcripts found in the appendix (See Appendix C, D, E). The participants were all asked the same questions and their answers were used to determine their perspectives on the five following topics:

1. American Work Hierarchy
2. American Boss Relations
3. American Coworker Relations
4. American Social Life
5. Overall American Perspective

Direct quotes will be used from their interviews for the different topics. For reference, for Participant X (See Appendix C), for Participant Y (See Appendix D), and for Participant Z (See Appendix E).

4.1 Participant X

For the English transcript, where direct quotes are taken from (See Appendix C).

4.1.1 American Work Hierarchy Perspective

Participant X felt as though hierarchy in France was more intense than in the United States, “I would say that in France, there is...I feel more hierarchy in France than here. There is a hierarchy to respect, but I feel that the environment of that hierarchy is more intense in France than in the United States.” Although he recognized that there is some form of hierarchy at Firm X in the US, he felt it was more constricting when he was in|

France. This work hierarchy respect level can be explained by the lower power distance score of 40 found in the US compared to the power distance score of 68 in France (“Country Comparison”); the lines are more blurred in the United States which creates a less rigid work hierarchy.

The work hierarchy was easier to work with in the US due to increased opportunities for advancement and more opportunities for freedom in the workplace in Participant X’s opinion, “The most important differences, um I think that one has more opportunities (In the US). Of tasks, the level of tasks that one can do. Uh, here one gives me, one gives me the key...of the car and I can drive it.” Participant X felt as though there were more controlling limitations in France and that he had more freedom at Firm X than in France, which can be attributed to the more structured French hierarchy where the higher levels of management control the decisions. In America a higher individualistic culture could explain how Firm X gave him more control over his assignments, trusting that his work would reflect self-interests which would then affect the firm in a positive way.

4.1.2 American Boss Relations

Participant X has not had an American boss but expressed how his French boss at Firm X was a little different because he was expatriated instead of in his home country. He stated that every boss he has had is different and that he has grown accustomed to it, “I have had several bosses and every person, it is always a different relationship, from the point of view of my personality with another personality.” He did not see a vast difference between a French boss in an American work culture in comparison to a French boss in a French Culture.

4.1.3 American Coworker Relations

As noted, before, Americans are very punctual when it comes to business and their jobs which is something that surprised Participant X, “The difference is very shocking, especially when it comes to work rhythm. It is completely different; the people arrive early and leave early. In France one shows up very late and leaves very late.” This can be attributed to the French’s need for perfection which can be summarized by Participant X’s thoughts about which culture worked harder, “The French, they would like to see the problem and assure themselves that the process is done right. And if a hard time is passing during the process, (the French worker) would like to be sure that the job was done right.” Participant X even stated that he was always late to everything including meetings, which is something Meyer learned when in France. She noted that, “After many years working in both the United States and France, I can now confirm that in most cases you get about ten more minutes’ leeway (to run late, start late, end late, take a tangent) in France than you would in the United States (Meyer, 221).” This French tardiness applied to meetings, appointments, and conferences which could cause work inefficiency due to wasted time in an American business executive’s eyes.

When it came to which of the two were more professional, Participant X said that they were both professional in different ways; the French were more professional in the execution of a task while their presentation skills may be lacking and that an American might be very professional in the way he or she presents and expresses themselves. He noted that both cultures had their strengths and weaknesses when it came to professionalism.

When asked which of the two was friendlier, American or French coworkers, he stated that generally Americans “are more polite, they smile more, they talk more about their personal lives at work” and that they were more friendly in his opinion. When communicating with his coworkers he notes that Americans are not as pessimistic and are sensitive to complaining which the French are very accustomed to, “If a French person arrives, I will complain, I will complain, I will... the French complain a lot, I very dramatically as well. Yes, yes, yes, it’s true. We say - it is a catastrophe to make sure that our problem is well understood. For a French person, if I said that, that’s okay, but it is not grave. The French, they want to have attention, they want attention on them. If I say it is a catastrophe on the contrary, an American is sure to panic.” These differences in expression can cause panic in the workplace and thus cause work inefficiency when not addressed properly.

4.1.4 American Social Life Perspective

The cultural diversity found at Firm X was something that both surprised and was appreciated by Participant X, and he felt as though American social culture outside of work was really just more work, “I see life is more tough, it’s more like you work all your life haha.” This perspective is very common for the French because French culture believes that one “Works to Live,” one works in order to ensure that they have the resources and opportunities available to truly live life. The French perspective regarding American work is one where an American “Lives to Work,” the French believe that Americans choose to spend all their time working, instead of enjoying themselves with vacations and leisure time, and that work means more to Americans than everything.

Socially, participant X felt as though it was easier to make friends in the US initially, “In France, people, they guard themselves without talking, so I think that here (the US) it does not matter who, I will talk to them, I will sit close to them and I will speak to them. In France, one sits far away and is more indirect.” This coincides directly with what “Les Français” and Meyer stated about the French being more reserved and unwilling to socialize with people they do not know.

4.1.5 Overall American Perspective

Participant X found that American business culture is more open spirited than French business culture even though they have their own set of codes and regulations he had to adhere to while working at Firm X. when asked what he would bring from French business culture to American business culture he responded, “I think that in my culture, I would like to bridge the gap between the headquarters and the subsidiaries here, in terms of communication, in terms of organization and in terms of the knowledge of FIRM X.” He noted that his French colleagues in France are not necessarily aware of all the cultural differences between France and the US, and he would like to help bridge the gap to ameliorate communication between the two cultures.

4.2 Participant Y

For the English transcript, where direct quotes are taken from (See Appendix D).

4.2.1 American Work Hierarchy Perspective

Participant Y expressed that she felt a stronger entrepreneurial spirit in the US and that it seemed to be freer than the hierarchy in France, “Um...it was the first thing that was expressed to me. In France, people...um...are more likely to listen and ask what you do, here there is more self-initiative. I find that, it is because I rose in the hierarchy and then I

became boss so I had more power, but in the general sense, I think that my boss- he is French, I can make several propositions. I think one is freer and it is a lot faster.” Although she had a French boss at Firm Y, she believed that the process was a lot faster and that there was more self-initiative affirming the more individualistic culture that the United States possessed in comparison to France.

As mentioned in Hofstede’s studies, France scores higher on the long-term orientation meaning that traditions are preferred over innovation and that they are more unwilling to part with their old ways than the US. Participant Y mentioned this when speaking about work hierarchy, “One more easily finds doing things in a new way and one is not obligated to have everything fully planned (In the US)...um...it is...it is more complicated (In France), one asks for everything to be planned by everyone in France, in order to do a job - a protocol.” She was accustomed to doing things in a traditional way in France and felt that she had more freedom and a greater ability to solve problems since she could now use more self-initiative.

4.2.2 American Boss Relations

While Participant Y had a French boss at Firm Y, she had previously worked with American bosses and was able to recount the differences she noted between the two, “ The difference between the two, I have not had one that is very strategic, the American ones are more about execution, very efficient execution but he searches to find how and why things work, several things, more connections with other businesses, things like that. So really, my two bosses the French one has a more worldwide view but that’s because he was very high in FIRM Y. The American was more about execution.” In Participant Y’s eyes, her American boss was highly concerned with execution as a masculine culture would do

and the French boss was focused on the worldwide relationship view which is a more feminine trait according to Hofstede's studies (Hofstede et al., 139). Those choices made by the bosses make sense considering that the US is a more masculine culture while France is a more feminine culture.

4.2.3 American Coworker Relations

Participant Y expressed similar views as Participant X when speaking about her coworkers' time orientation. She mentioned that the French are often tardy but expressed negative feelings that she experienced in comparison to her American coworkers at Firm Y, "In France, if you arrive after 9AM it is very strange, if you eat a very long time it is strange, if your meal is very long they say oh she doesn't work. The work is serious...they (the French) take several coffee breaks, but between 9AM and noon, and between 2PM and 5PM, you must be at the firm. If not, it is seen as bad. There is a judgment from people that I find bad and that is very oppressing." She felt as though the French were constantly berating her and putting her down with their negative comments which is common for French people. The French have a more pessimistic view about the world and will bluntly say what they feel is wrong.

When asked who was friendlier, she described two common phenomena, where American friendliness can be seen as ingenuine and how the French like to keep only a couple of close friends, "Uh...that depends on who. It is a cliché but it is true, not the whole world but a tendency is that people here will ask how your family is and you tell them everything like you have a kid and their age but they don't memorize it so it could be a bit fake. It isn't disagreeable because at least you have someone that says hello and likes to talk and won't just arrive and head straight for the coffee machine...if you build

relationships in France, I have several true, true friends, in France that I don't just have a superficial relationship with. Here it is a little superficial. I do have super friends here, but I have them in France as well. But globally, Americans are more superficial, and the French are more profound with friendships." While Americans are more friendly to her she feels as though French friendships are more sincere as stated in "Les Francais."

When asked which of the two cultures works the hardest, she mentioned they both work hard and she expressed the "Work to Live" and "Live to Work" mentality she's encountered, "I work more here than over there. A lot more but that could be due to the promotion here and that I am more interested in the work here...The Americans can have very long workdays, one day an American can work very hard and then the next day the boss will tell him to take a day off because he deserves it after such hard work. In France, it is three months of break." It is very common in French culture to work efficiently throughout the year and then take a one to three-month vacation, usually in June through August, since French workers are entitled to 30 vacation days. It is a French cultural norm to take those vacation days off in succession and travel during that time. This can be shocking to US workers who at times struggle to get two weeks of work off a year. Her explanation of why she works more can be attributed to the US being a more masculine culture that is focuses on advancement and challenges in the work environment (Hofstede et al., 139).

4.2.4 American Social Life Perspective

Participant Y found that people, whether they be American or French, tend to express themselves the same way they do at work outside of work. She found that Americans are just as friendly outside of Firm Y as they are in Firm Y, "Um, I find positive

attitudes all the time, in France they are dramatic. Customer service! I'll speak about that since it is a struggle. Customer service in the United States is incredible, it is shitty (in France), (I didn't say that)." She explained how in France social interactions are often rude and indifferent in comparison to the American social life which tends to be amicable and open.

When it comes to building friendships in the US, she also expressed that it was easier to make friendships here although they may not always be genuine, "One can make friends anywhere in the world if you have some commonalities in life, so I don't think...I think it is difficult to scratch past the surface with Americans, I have American friends. If I am open, if I speak about my problems or things that touch me a lot, that move me enormously...the things that touch me, profoundly, and I speak about these with Americans and they'll speak to me about theirs, that is past the surface and not fake with Americans. There are some people that do this and some people that don't. when one wants to open up to others, there are others that will open up to them." Participant Y expressed that some Americans can be ingenuine, but others will open up and real friendships with Americans can be built.

Participant Y even mentioned how socially Americans are more expressive and accepting of their emotions, "Americans, are more accepting of their emotions than the French. The French are very negative, it is true. And the French are elevated. One says, one does not show sadness in France or being mad. One should not show sadness or anger in France." This mirrors what "Les Francais" mentioned about the French being more reserved about their feelings, while Americans tend to open up and be expressive about their thoughts and innermost feelings.

4.2.5 Overall American Perspective

Participant Y summarized some point about general American work culture and emphasized how much she liked its structure, “What I have already stated that they are nice, that I feel at ease here, all that. I think that the way and content are very important, the way to be, the way to present, the way to organize a meeting, the way to prepare the agenda, um...all the frame that they give our work or event, it is very important here. When I first arrived, I understood what worked well here, the reunions, the projects, things like that, things to eat, I would eat in the lab because the people like to talk so I am at ease.” When interviewing Participant Y, she mentioned that she always felt like an American in way and that even her French coworkers called her “the American.” She stated she didn’t see the point in being negative and prefers working in the US significantly more than France, and that she wishes to stay here as long as possible. In Participant Y’s eyes, the US has a better business culture in several ways that have helped her advance in her work field and have allowed her to more thoroughly enjoy her job.

4.3 Participant Z

For the English transcript, where direct quotes are taken from (See Appendix E).

4.3.1 American Work Hierarchy Perspective

Participant Z was candid about his work experiences regarding work hierarchy in Firm Z and the other larger French subsidiaries he had worked at, “In France, my experience with FIRM Z is different because they are a smaller company in a global context. It isn’t like [REDACTED], so me today, in today’s society, I talk to the president on the phone every day, while before in the more American society, it is really a thing that - there is less communication between different levels. Like that. It is a little complex because I

work with a French company right now and it is a little job, while (before) I worked for massive American companies.” He acknowledged that the different sizes in firms can attribute to why he felt as though the French have less of a hierarchical structure. Participant Z works at Firm Z which is significantly smaller than both Firm X and Firm Y and quite smaller than the other French subsidiaries he had worked for.

4.3.2 American Boss Relations

While Participant Z had a French boss at Firm Z, like Participant X and Participant Y, he had American bosses in the DFW metroplex at two other French subsidiaries. He explained how he was close to his Firm Z boss due to the firm’s size and he explained that at his previous jobs with American bosses, the relationship was strictly business, “My American boss at [REDACTED], he tried to...he only talked about work, only work. There weren’t conversations outside of work. They were kept at a minimum. 95% of all conversations were about work. And in the morning, it was the morning, there was rarely a “good morning”, we didn’t talk to each other a lot in the morning, there was no interaction, while in France there is a lot of interaction, asking how you are, your life, your family, things like that. More social based interactions and more proximity relationship wise. Because in the morning. In France in the morning, in France we shake hands in the morning, if not you are considered impolite. One grabs a coffee, at [REDACTED] there were a lot of French expatriates, so we met at 7am in the morning, interacted and talked a bit then, then after we started our work. That was our thing. At [REDACTED], which was more American, the American boss was very detached, everyone got their coffee on their own, no extra discussion, the only discussion that was had was work related.”

It is quite possible that the reason the French workers were so amicable at the American boss company was because they were expatriates who found a home with each other at work. Being an expatriate is not an easy feat and often times, expatriates will become friends with one another to feel at home in a host country. His American bosses' interactions can be attributed to the masculine culture seen in the US in comparison to the French. As seen in various examples, Americans tend to be more execution-oriented and focused on professional business.

4.3.3 American Coworker Relations

When asked about the first difference he noted between American and French coworkers he mentioned language, "The first difference I found was between the level of French and English in American business. Because all the French that were based in France, do not have the same level of English, one can see that, but in attitudes, the attitudes of people, when it comes to things that are written like emails, the French care a bit more, they joke around a bit more than Americans, who are more cold and stay factual in their communications and mmmm...and who do not include personal feelings." He experienced similar perceptions of the "strictly business" facet of American coworker interaction in written communication as expressed in the literature review.

When asked which of the two cultures was more friendly, Participant Z expressed similar sentiments as the other two participants who thought Americans were friendlier but that it was insincere, "It is a true reaction from a person. In the US, there is always a mask placed, and one must act as if everything were okay, even if it isn't. And when the person leaves, after, they talk about the person, "stab the person in the back," like that. I find that here there is a lot of acting. While in France, things, people are very true in their

communication and their expression of problems and feelings. They'll say no I do not agree because of this this and this. Or I don't like that." His experiences reflect the severity of French truth which was expressed in "Les Français" and how American friendliness can be seen as insincere compared to the French's small circle of trusted true friends.

4.3.4 American Social Life Perspective

Participant Z noted that Americans place an emphasis on drinking as a culture and that there is a certain importance to it. In order to be social and create a friendship with an American, one needs to be ready to go out and have some drinks in comparison to a different more laid back French culture, "One has, if you have good relations with someone, you'll say on Sunday morning, let's eat, I am inviting you. That is good. That is an example from France. In the US, if you have good relations with someone, hey let's go get a drink on Friday night."

Participant Z even mentioned that sports are vastly important in American social culture and that can even manifest in work, when clients try to strike up a conversation about a current sports game, "One must know, understand football, understand the teams, understand the roles of the players, know their names, know who won what and where, the score, and me, I don't watch TV a lot so I don't watch a lot of football and I know that that hurts me. Even in my professional life...Because, at times, clients, at times they'll say "Hey. Did you watch the game this weekend? What did you think about it? Did you see how amazing, what this one guy did?" and me, I can't say that because football doesn't interest me." He noticed that American social culture revolves around drinking and sports in comparison to France.

4.3.5 Overall American Perspective

Overall, Participant Z stated that he liked that American business culture is based on achievements and can help you rise in the ranks, “I’ve had lots of work here (the US) and I’ve liked it. Uh...I like that its, that’s it’s a work culture, based on merit. On results... I really like that. Like I said before, if you are a hard worker, you will rise. It is, that is super good.” This once again showing how the American work culture is more masculine than the more feminine French culture. Participant Z often emphasized how there was a strong sense of “corporate America” which effectively made Americans hard working and made execution essential for American business culture.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

The participants shared similarities and differences in their perspectives of American and French culture. Most generalized ideas were consistently supported by the participants, but a few questions created different thoughts of pattern. What were the similarities and differences perceived by the native French Business executives concerning those topics and what constraints did the research have that could affect the accuracy?

5.1 American Work Hierarchy Perspective

All three participants noted that American business culture tends to express an almost overbearing “corporate execution” mentality which puts work above all else in life but leads to job responsibility growth and job advancements which are not achieved in the same manner as those in France.

5.1.1 Similarities

All the executives expressed that the “American corporate execution spirit demanded hard work but in return provided ample opportunities for growth, Participant Z expressed this when asked which of the two cultures works harder, “In the US, if one is a hard worker, in France one can be a hard worker but you won’t have the same feedback from bosses and not the same evolution in the business. It is a huge difference, a huge difference. The evolutions in a firm. Here in the US, if the person is very strong and does

their work very well, the person will rise. In France, if you don't have a diploma here and a diploma over there, you won't rise. It's all about diplomas.”

The participants noted the significance in time restraints in the American business culture that were not as prevalent in French business culture upon arrival in the US but that often helped work flow more smoothly and in a more rapid manner, Participant X noted, “One can do a lot of things if they wish (in the US), the hierarchy will say go on go on. If it is a project and you have the chance to launch it, if you have the need to recruit, you can recruit. Um...there are a lot of things that are more direct and faster.” The willingness of a firm to move at a set pace and job mobility created a better execution which was something all the participants admired about the time restraints.

5.1.2 Differences

While the participants generally agreed on similarities in work culture, there were some minor differences noted in the way the hierarchy was structured according to Participant Z. Participant Z's experience at a large French subsidiary with an American boss reflected more distance between the levels of hierarchy than the ones he experienced in a smaller French subsidiary, Firm Z, where he spoke to the President of the company daily. Participant X and Y both noted that there was a stronger hierarchical difference in France which created limitations for them that they did not experience as often with American business culture which can be explained by the higher power index score France has in relation to the US.

5.2 American Boss Relations

When working in a French subsidiary in the US, one can experience an American culture from the workers and upper management can control the work culture. Although

all three participants had French bosses at their respective firms, they had experienced working with American bosses and studied the differences in their relationship with both bosses.

5.2.1 Similarities

As reflected by the “American corporate execution” spirit, the bosses from the participants’ respective firms were task and execution-oriented meaning they placed work efficiency above all else in the work environment. Participant Z stated, “My American boss at [REDACTED], he tried to...he only talked about work, only work. There weren’t conversations outside of work. They were kept at a minimum. 95% of all conversations were about work.” Work and its execution were at the forefront of the American bosses’ minds which was something all of the participant noted; the noted that American business culture need to be very professional and ensure that all tasks are done quickly and efficiently to improve work efficiency.

5.2.2 Differences

Although Participant Z expressed that his American boss had an “American corporate execution spirit,” he noted that his American boss required more respect than in France, “Um yes, yes. I think that there is more...a relationship with respect towards the hierarchy here. I think there is more respect towards the hierarchy. That means that, I...I have heard that in the US, for example when I worked with [REDACTED], I had to listen more, and respect the...the boss more, more than here with the more French structure. It’s more laidback here in the French style.” He expressed that his experience at Firm Z with a French boss was more laidback, which contrasted with what Participant X and Participant Y stated

about their French bosses but Participant Z mentioned that his perception of it could be due to the size differences of the firms he worked at.

5.3 American Coworker Relations

All three participants noted that American business culture tends to express an almost overbearing “corporate execution” mentality which creates a pressure to be on time and creates a professional barrier which can cause American business executives to seem cold and insincere to French business executives.

5.3.1 Similarities

All participants noted a “faux friendliness” or “fake friendliness” when it came to American coworkers; although the participants found it was easier to make friends with Americans-it was often superficial and perceived as insincere. All the participants noted how open Americans were and how willing they were to try and establish a friendship even though it is extremely uncommon to do so in France, as stated by Participant Y, “Understanding French culture has helped me enormously with my American coworkers here. When they get bad information that they got from France, oh they don’t understand and they don’t give them what they need because they don’t see the Americans and so I will send them a quick message like can you send me the report tomorrow and they’ll do it fast. It could be because they’re afraid of strangers because Americans are very open.” The French are unaccustomed to being open and tend to be more reserved than Americans, this can cause unnecessary tension for a native French business executive who feels suspicious as to why an American wants to befriend them rapidly.

5.3.2 Differences

While Participant X and Participant Z noted that almost all American friendliness was superficial, Participant Y expressed that when prompted she could build genuine relationships with her American coworkers, “I think it is difficult to scratch past the surface with Americans, I have American friends. If I am open, if I speak about my problems or things that touch me a lot, that move me enormously...the things that touch me, profoundly, and I speak about these with Americans and they’ll speak to me about theirs, that is past the surface and not fake with Americans. There are some people that do this and some people that don’t. when one wants to open up to others, there are others that will open up to them.”

Throughout the interview, Participant Y often expressed feelings of resentment towards France and the general French coworker. She mentioned that she was always seen as an American because of her friendliness and open communication style which was very unusual and frowned upon in France. This resentment could possibly cause her to see the best in Americans and skew her view on American business culture, but several correlations were found in her answers that matched Participant X’s and Participants Z’s answers.

5.4 American Social Life Perspective

The participants realized that American social culture is very friendly and at times can be between two strangers who just met. The differences in social relationships between French and American culture is often based on general American culture instead of the private connections made between French individuals.

5.4.1 Similarities

Participant Y, like the other participants, realized just how socially-friendly Americans are in all settings, smiling everywhere and even in customer service- which she mentioned is horrible in France, “Um, I find positive attitudes all the time, in France they are dramatic. Customer service! I’ll speak about that since it is a struggle. Customer service in the united states is incredible...” She found in that most social setting Americans are much nicer than the French who she mentioned would question why she was smiling at them when her only intention was to be polite. Participant X and Z both mentioned how casual friendships can be in the US, they spoke about how two strangers sitting next to each other could end up considering each other as friends. This is not common in French culture, as strangers don’t talk to one another and if they do - there is no real connection or friendship built in their perspective.

5.4.2 Differences

Participant Z placed a great emphasis on drinking being a very important cultural social norm to Americans, “In France, that does not exist, there is no bar, there are bars, but it isn’t a common social place. You don’t tell people, let’s go grab a glass at the bar tonight. It isn’t, it isn’t normal. Uh, the culture here is very used to drinking, because people want to work hard during the week, and they want to drink a lot on the weekend.” This participant was the only one that spoke in depth about the United States drinking culture and claimed that the reason Americans drink on the weekend is because they work so hard at their job during the week. This explanation can be attributed to the “American corporate execution spirit” that demands workers produce their most efficient work in the fastest way

possible. This “work hard” culture pushes Americans to let loose and drink on the weekends as a way to cope with working so hard at their jobs during the week.

Participant Z was also the only one to bring up sports as a sizable facet of American culture, he even stated that at times it has come to affect his work life when clients want to talk about the game the night before or that game that is coming up soon.

5.5 Overall American Perspective

The participants all enjoy their work in the United States and attribute some of that enjoyment from their increased opportunities for job advancement that they did not have in France. Their overall perspectives were positive and there were a limited number of differences in overall American culture perspective.

5.5.1 Similarities

The participants all enjoyed their jobs at their respective firms and agreed that the “American dream” of achieving something if you work for it was in fact true. Participant Y stated that rising in the ranks is easier in the US since it can be attributed to work ethic, “in the United States there is an entrepreneurial spirit...(which is) Much stronger...than in France I have found. Um...it was the first thing that was expressed to me. In France, people...um...are more likely to listen and ask what you do, here there is more self-initiative. I find that, it is because I rose in the hierarchy and then I became the boss, so I had more power.” These feelings were reflected by both Participant X and Participant Z who felt that the “American corporate execution spirit” can be utilized in order to advance into a higher position at a firm. All three participants felt as though they had more power in the American business culture than they did in the French business culture.

5.5.2 Differences

The consensus for American culture was that it was more open and friendlier than the one found in France, which stems from the differences in upbringing and education styles. The differences found in the research were the longevity of the participants' time in the US working for their respective firm. While Participant X was prepared to leave the following year to work for another subsidiary in another country for the same French company, Participant Y enjoyed her work and the US so much that she wanted to stay as long as possible. This can be attributed to their different lifestyles because while Participant X is a younger male, Participant Y is an older woman with an established husband and kids in the United States. This can cause a bias towards the US because moving out of the US would not only affect Participant Y but her husband and two daughters.

5.6 Constraints

All research projects have their constraints or limitations, and the researching team must do their best to either avoid these limitations or explain how those limitations affected their research. In this research, 3 different constraints were noted that could affect the outcome of the research, they are the following: firm size differences, interviewees' ages, and job positions.

5.6.1 Firm Size Differences

When choosing the participants for this research, an emphasis was placed on whether the research should consist of 3 large companies or if a smaller company should be included. Professor Miller and I decided to examine a smaller French subsidiary in order to help grasp whether size differences of the firm affect a native French business

executive's experience. Ultimately, the research team decided to include 2 large French subsidiaries, Firm X and Firm Y, and a significantly smaller French subsidiary, Firm Z.

Participant X and Participant Y seemed to share more commonalities in their responses than Participant Z did, and this can be attributed to the difference in size of their respective firms. Participant Z even mentioned that the smaller size of firm Z could affect his perception of French and American business culture, especially when considering his relationship with his boss.

5.6.2 Interviewees Ages

When conducting research in a business field, employee age is a significant factor in an employee's perception of their firm and the firm's hierarchy. The ages of the participants ranged approximately 20 years and helped provide a different perspective on business culture. An older more experienced employee could be more aware of cultural differences in a workplace and be more understanding of them. All the participants chosen were at their respective firms for at least three years which gave them an opportunity to experience American business culture.

The participants ages also could have influenced their perception due to their time spent in France. Participant Y had lived in France several more years than the other two participants which could have influenced her views about her home country. Participant Y was also married with two children, which can create a better sense of home and a healthier home environment, which could affect her views on social culture. The two other participants, Participant X and Participant Z, were single males who do not run in the same social circles as a mother of two would in the United States. This age and relationship status difference can affect a native French business executive's views on work due to the

importance of their work in their lives. Having a family takes up a significant part of a person's life, so it is possible that Participant Y may not have been as exposed to negatives that could be found in the American business culture at her firm.

5.6.3 Job Position

When choosing participants for this research, the research team decided to limit the native French workers to native French business executive workers. This addition helped because a native French business executive would not necessarily have the same perspective on American business culture as an entry level French worker. As a business executive, people are more experienced in work culture since they have a broader scope of experience and power. The participants were all native French business executives but held different positions at their respective firms, Participant X was a Senior Financial Analyst, Participant Y was a US Consumer Innovation Director, and Participant Z was a General Manager.

Although the research team knew they were business executives, the extent of their power and influence was not specifically discerned. Even the most minimal difference in power could change a participant's perspective on the firm, if they had more power in their respective firm, they could possibly feel better about the firm's overall American work culture.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF FRENCH AND AMERICAN BUSINESS RELATIONS

This research was not only intended to find the native French business executives' perspectives on work disparities between American and French business culture but was also meant to provide ways to ameliorate business relations between American and French business executives. Recommendations were made for the selected five topics which were highlighted in this research. The recommendations are the following categories:

1. Work Hierarchy Recommendations
2. Boss Relation Recommendations
3. Coworker Relations Recommendations
4. Social Life Recommendations
5. Overall American Perspective

Ameliorating business relations between two cultures is never one-sided, both cultures must learn to study and accept each other's differences in order to improve work efficiency in the long run. Recommendations were created for both American and French business executives to ensure acceptance of each other's cultures and allow both cultures to work in unison to improve their business relations.

6.1 Work Hierarchy Recommendations

When working for a French subsidiary in the United States, it is essential for native French business executives to realize the severity of the “American corporate spirit” and take advantage of its growth opportunities. The native French business executives should be trained and made aware of the time restrictions American culture has and adhere to deadlines created by the firm in order to be successful and avoid problems with American coworkers and clients. These time restraints should be emphasized for meetings, since a late start to a meeting can cause unnecessary tension in the work environment or can cause a potential American client to lose interest. French firms in the United States need to acknowledge the time differences between local and French culture and make sure they implement a time management strategy that is understood by both cultures. The firm should also inform their American workers of the time differences found in French culture, so that less problems arise between French business executives and American business executives who may struggle seeing eye-to-eye about a deadline.

6.2 Boss Relation Recommendations

As a native French business executive working in the United States, one must assure that a proper level of respect is given to an American boss. While there may be a stronger hierarchical inclination in France, American bosses expect a certain level of respect and expect an employee to follow their orders in order to assure that the company executes their tasks quickly and efficiently. Native French business executives working in the US should be trained on how to speak to their bosses, given that Americans have a more direct style of communication. Emails and other forms of written communication to their American bosses should be done in an American manner - direct and bluntly.

American bosses tend to give more positive feedback to their employees than French employees receive in France. This form of encouragement is something that should be increased since it helps French workers feel as though they are performing well which helps increase their productivity and improves their work efficiency which is what an American boss seeks. American bosses should be aware of cultural differences their French employees might have such as their time differences and an indirect style of communication and should encourage their native French business executives to speak more freely about their opinions and thoughts.

6.3 Coworker Relations Recommendations

As a French business executive working at an American firm, one must realize that American culture is focused on friendliness, especially so in the South. When working in the United States, a French business executive must set aside their pessimistic view and open up to the possibility of friendship - this can be helped with the implementation of an “American business culture” introduction for new French business executives entering a French subsidiary in the US. While this training takes place for the French, the American workers in a firm must also be informed about differences in French culture such as their unwillingness to open up instantly.

American business executives looking to build a relationship with native French business executives should respect native French business executives’ privacy and know that a strong relationship with a French person is not easily acquired. Recommendations include buying the native French business executive a cup of coffee as an excuse to start conversation and being aware that the French business executive may take a while to “warm up” and trust the American business executive. Once the relationship is made

though, it is sure to be genuine and long-lasting after the French business executive learns to trust the American business executive.

6.4 Social Life Recommendations

When asked what it takes to be American, the participants mentioned being friendly and more open to friendship possibilities. They also mentioned that it was important to be caught up with television, whether that be the news or popular shows that can come up in everyday conversation. As a French business executive working in the US, one must accept that Americans will always try to be friendly, as it is ingrained in their social upbringing and is not meant to harass or make the French business executive feel uncomfortable. American business executives should pursue new ways to make social connections with the French, whether that be through studying their culture or starting off conversations about non-personal things like the weather or what kind of foods they enjoy.

6.5 Overall Recommendations

To ensure work efficiency and good relations between French and American business executives, it is recommended that the firm create an immersion assistance program for native French business executives and that the firm provide information about French home, social, and business cultures to their American coworkers to ensure that business flow smoothly between the two.

The immersion assistance program should aid native French business executives by providing them with information about American business culture, how their culture is seen by Americans, the reasons as to why they are seen that way, and a way to incorporate French culture into their lives. That may be implemented through connecting them to other

local French natives or providing cultural assistance as needed when a communication error occurs between French and American business executives.

When working for a foreign firm, American business executives may already be aware that there will be cultural differences found in the workplace. An orientation presentation should be presented to American coworkers that helps explain French home, social, and business cultures. The presentation should highlight main differences between American business culture and French business culture, the reasons behind those differences, and what the American business executive can do to ensure that communication is clear. This can eliminate awkward situations between French and American coworkers leading to a better working environment and improved work efficiency.

International companies and their subsidiaries can be a strong asset to their respective countries due to their unique differences in business perspectives, their different ways of conducting business, and the multicultural collaboration that can occur and generate new world-altering products and services. Recommendations like the ones explained throughout the research are ways to ameliorate relationships between American and French business executives leading to a strong bicultural relationship which can increase work efficiency and provide benefits for both France and the United States.

APPENDIX A
FRENCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions

- 1) Bonjour. De quelle partie de France êtes-vous ?
- 2) Est-ce que vous commencez votre travail pour (Compagnie X) en France ?
- 3) Combien d'ans est-ce que vous avez habité et travaillé pour (Compagnie X) en France ?
- 4) Combien de temps est-ce que vous avez travaillé aux Etats-Unis ?
- 5) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez que c'est la différence entre la structure de travail et la hiérarchie de travail entre les Etats-Unis et la France ?
- 6) Quand vous êtes arrivé, qu'est-ce que c'est que vous trouviez le plus choquant de la compagnie aux Etats-Unis ?
- 7) Qu'est-ce que vous trouvez que sont les différences plus importantes dans les travaux aux Etats-Unis ?
- 8) Quelle structure est-ce que vous préférez ? La structure de France ou la structure d'ici ?
- 9) Si vous pouvez apporter quelque chose de la structure française à la structure américaine, qu'est-ce que vous apporteriez ?

- 10) Qu'est-ce que vous avez trouvé que c'est la différence la plus choquante entre vos collègues de travail ?
- 11) Est-ce qu'il y a quelque autre chose ?
- 12) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez que c'est la différence entre la relation avec ton patron ?
- 13) Entre les travailleurs d'entreprise français et les travailleurs d'entreprise américaines, qui est-ce que vous pensez que c'est le plus amicale ?
- 14) Est-ce que vous avez trouvé cela avec tous les américains ?
- 15) Qui est-ce que vous trouvez qui travaille le plus dur ? Pourquoi ? (Américains contre Français) Vous avez des exemples ?
- 16) Qui est-ce que vous trouvez qui est le plus professionnel ? (Américains contre Français) Vous avez des exemples ?
- 17) L'année dernière, j'étais dans une classe de « French Contemporary Culture » à mon université et la classe était très intéressante parce qu'elle exprimé des perceptions que les américains ont sur les français et le livre que nous utilisons pour cette classe parlée de choses différents entre les français et les américains. Le livre était une « ouverture des yeux » pour moi parce qu'il parle de comment les français sont plus réservés, comment ils ont une petite circule, comment ils pensent beaucoup avant de dire quelque chose, et comment ils ont des différences avec le temps. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de cela ? Est-ce que tu penses qu'ils sont vrai ?

- 18) J'ai lu qu'on a dit que les Français n'aiment pas la faiblesse, qu'ils n'aiment pas avoir tort, et que les français préfèrent mentir que dire qu'ils ne savent pas quelque chose. Est-ce que vous pensez que les américains doivent accepter ces qualités et prendre ces choses dans leurs vies professionnelles ? Est-ce que vous êtes d'accord ?
- 19) Est-ce que vous devez vous présenter d'une manière différente ici ? Est-ce que vous devez comporter différent ici et en France ? Comment ? Vous avez des exemples ?
- 20) Si vous pouvez remonter le temps avant de commencer à travailler aux Etats-Unis, qu'est-ce que vous voudriez savoir des américains et de leur culture de travail ? Quel conseil donneriez-vous aux autres cadres français qui veulent travailler aux Etats-Unis ?
- 21) Comment est-ce que vous trouvez la culture de travail aux Etats-Unis en général ? Vous avez des exemples ?
- 22) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de l'importance du gouvernement dans le travail ici ? En France, le gouvernement est tous centralisé mais ici il est un peu décentralisé parce qu'il y a des lois d'états, des lois des villes, et des lois fédérales. Est-ce que vous avez rencontré des problèmes avec le travail à cause de cela ?
- 23) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de la culture sociale, la culture américaine en dehors du travail ?
- 24) Quels sont des choses que vous avez appris dans votre vie pour « être américain » ?
- 25) Est-ce que vous pensez qu'il est plus facile de faire des amies aux Etats-Unis ou en France ?

26) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de la différence de la nourriture ici et en France ?

APPENDIX B

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF FRENCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions

- 1) Hello. From what part of France are you from?
- 2) Did you start working for (Compagnie X) in France?
- 3) How many years have you lived and worked for (Compagnie X) in France?
- 4) How long have you been working in the United States?
- 5) What do you think is the difference between the work structure and the work hierarchy in France and in the United States?
- 6) When you arrived, what is it that you found to be the most shocking/surprising of the company in the United States?
- 7) What do you find that are the most important differences in working in the United States?
- 8) What structure do you prefer? The structure of France or the structure here?
- 9) If you can bring something from the French structure to the American structure, what would you bring?
- 10) What do you think is the most shocking difference between your co-workers?

- 11) Is there anything else?
- 12) What do you think is the difference between the relationship with your boss?
- 13) Between French business workers and American business workers, who do you think is the friendliest?
- 14) Have you found that to be true with all Americans?
- 15) Who do you think works the hardest? Why? (Americans vs. French) Examples?
- 16) Who do you think is the most professional? (Americans vs. French) Examples?
- 17) Last year I was in a class of "French Contemporary Culture "at my University and the class was very interesting because it expressed perceptions that the Americans have about the French and the book, we used for this class spoke of different things between the French and Americans. The book was "eye opening" to me because it talks about how the French are more reserved, how they have a small circle of trusted friends, how they think a lot before saying something, and how they have differences with time. What do you think of these? Would you say these are true?
- 18) I read that it has been said that the French do not like weakness that they do not like to be wrong, and that the French prefer to lie than to say they do not know anything. Do you think Americans have to accept those qualities and bring these qualities into their own professional work lives? Do you agree?
- 19) Do you have to show yourself in a different way here? Do you have to behave differently here and in France? How? Examples?

20) If you could go back to in time before you started working in the United States, what would you have liked to know about the American and their work culture before working in the United States? What advice would you give to other native French business executives who want to work in the U.S?

21) How do you feel about the work culture in the United States in general? Examples?

22) What do you think about the importance of the government in working here? In France the government is all centralized but here it is a little decentralized because there are states laws, city laws, and federal law. Have you encountered challenges with work because of it?

23) What do you think about social culture, American culture outside of work?

24) What are some things you have learned in your life to "be American"?

25) Do you think it's easier to make friends in the United States or France?

26) What do you think about the difference in food here and in France?

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT X ENGLISH INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Questions

1) Hello. From what part of France are you from?

I was born in the east of France, close to Britain, in a village called Notre...and I grew up in the east, I grew up 10 years in Paris, I grew up 3 years in south France where I was hired at FIRM X. And so yeah.

Ah, okay. Thank you.

2) Did you start working for (FIRM X) in France?

Yes.

3) How many years have you lived and worked for (FIRM X) in France?

In France, I worked two years for FIRM X and after those two years, I left to work two years in Canada for FIRM X...in Quebec- the French speaking. And after that I left for the United States after Canada.

4) How long have you been working in the United States?

Three years and a half.

5) What do you think is the difference between the work structure and the work hierarchy in France and in the United States?

I would say that in France, there is...I feel more hierarchy in France than here. There is a hierarchy to respect, but I feel that the environment of that hierarchy is more intense in France than in the United States.

6) When you arrived, what is it that you found to be the most shocking/surprising of the company in the United States?

The firm, not the people.

The most shocking...what shocked me when I arrived...it wasn't shocking but a positive, a positive feeling, is the multiculturalism.

Especially here, Texas is very multicultural.

Yes, and for me, it's something that I appreciate a lot, working with several different cultures.

7) What do you find that are the most important differences in working in the United States?

The most important differences, um I think that one has more opportunities. Of tasks, the level of tasks that one can do. Uh, here one gives me, one gives me the key...eh of the car and I can drive it. In France throughout the hierarchy, it is possible because FIRM X is from France, so it is close to headquarters, I think that one has a smaller scope, a lot more restraint and here one can do everything.

Oh yes.

One can do a lot of things if they wish, the hierarchy will say go on go on. If it is a project and you have the chance to launch it, if you have the need to recruit, you can recruit. Um...there are a lot of things that are more direct and faster.

8) What structure do you prefer? The structure of France or the structure here?

I prefer here, because one has more opportunities to grow professionally.

9) If you can bring something from the French structure to the American structure, what would you bring?

I think that in my culture, I would like to bridge the gap between the headquarters and the subsidiaries here, in terms of communication, in terms of organization and in terms of the knowledge of FIRM X. In bridge the gap cultural for example between a boss from

France and a boss from here. I would help them communicate in the workplace because I know the culture here - that the French people don't exactly know. That could help them communicate in between...things like that.

Perfect.

Your French it is very good.

Oh, thank you! I have studied it 6 years.

Oh OK.

Close to 7 years.

Ah yes, you are very close to fluent, it is very good.

Thank you, thank you!

10) What do you think is the most shocking difference between your co-workers?

The difference is very shocking, especially when it comes to work rhythm. It is completely different; the people arrive early and leave early. In France one shows up very late and leaves very late.

11) Is there anything else?

Continuing, the work level, it is possible...That is more oriented in the process here in the United States...In France there is more responsibility towards finishing a project- one must finish it. Here one must respect the process and one would say...uhhh...I respect the process, and I do my part of the work period. In France one will wait for more employees to work together, I think.

12) What do you think is the difference between the relationship with your boss?

My boss is French here so...It is a little different because the relationship with the French boss in America, it's a little different because one is a little bit expatriated, but uhm that's

the same thing with the French boss, I have had a Canadian Quebecois boss, and it is different culturally, in the level of exchanges, but I haven't noticed a different hierarchy, I don't really feel a big difference between Canadian and French bosses. I have had several bosses and every person, it is always a different relationship, from the point of view of my personality with another personality.

Yes, um... I studied this summer inside Montreal... in Montréal.

Ah, yes, okay.

I studied there a month and I visited Quebec City, and oh my gosh...I adored it.

Yes, it is like a village in Britain.

Yes! Exactly. All my life I have said France, France, France. France is everything, but after visiting it, I have realized that there are plenty of things and there is also French work there like you have said with FIRM X.

I really love Quebec, it is very young, I would love to return and work there one day because Quebec, it is like a cousin a bit - there is a French connection, it is very different at the same time though. So. It is very interesting culturally.

Yes, when I was there. It was a bit difficult because in school one learns metropolitan French, but there it is Quebecois. And when I was in Quebec City, there was a person, a young man, I talked with him, and he had a very strong accent. So, I had to focus in order to understand him.

Yes, it is very difficult, the French...it's different, the different Quebecois it is not the same vocabulary, it is not the same expressions, it is not the same articulation.

Yes!

13) Between French business workers and American business workers, who do you think is the friendliest?

I would say the Americans, more easygoing, nicer, more polite.

14) Have you found that to be true with all Americans?

It is hard to generalize, because, for a culture, yes in a general sense - they are more polite, they smile more, they talk more about their personal lives at work. One has more than one does with the French. But that also happens with my French friends.

15) Who do you think works the hardest? Why? (Americans vs. French) Examples?

The French. It can be life-to-life, being responsible about a task, I would say that, I do not like to make generalizations, but I would say that...yes when the process is finished, if one has respected the process and there I was problem in the process that they saw, it is not a big deal. The French, they would like to see the problem and assure themselves that the process is done right. And if a hard time is passing during the process, he would like to be sure that the job was done right.

Ah okay.

16) Who do you think is the most professional? (Americans vs. French) Examples?

That's a hard question. Hahaha. The most professional...in between the two...it is really the both of them, I can't say one is more professional than the other. Because those two really...for the both of them, they try to do things professionally. At the end, they are going to try to as professional as possible. I think that a French person might appear less professional, he will be a little late, he will express himself less, less well...an American will express himself well and his meetings will be very impressing, and on the other end,

yes, French work will be done late in order to try to finish their work perfectly, when the Frenchman goes to his presentation, he will present poorly, but the backup is perfect. So, they are different forms of professionalism, but both are very nice to try.

17) Last year I was in a class of "French Contemporary Culture "at my University and the class was very interesting because it expressed perceptions that the Americans have about the French and the book, we used for this class spoke of different things between the French and Americans. The book was "eye opening" to me because it talks about how the French are more reserved, how they have a small circle of trusted friends, how they think a lot before saying something, and how they have differences with time. What do you think of these? Would you say these are true?

Yes.

And the French think a lot, they think, and they reflect before saying it, before saying anything and Americans think "I must be fast" for their response.

Mhmm.

And there are differences like the culture, like time.

Yes, that is very true.

We are always on time, but in my Mexican culture, it is not the same thing, one can be late.

Me, me also. I am late all the time.

Yes.

Except for this interview. Hahaha. I am normally always running late.

And it is interesting because if one learns to think about the perceptions that the word, the world has, one would say that the world would be different if one learned to study other cultures.

Yes, one learns several things about others, and it is very true what you say...um...I, it is important that I work a lot to be at ease about expressing myself about a subject. If I am not sure about a subject, it is very bad, I am very quiet, I cannot express myself a lot. If I know my subject well, there is no problem with speaking...on the contrary yes - I have American coworkers that arrive, and that don't know the subject. But they will help, it will become a workshop, they will block other subjects until everything is discussed, everything right, done very fast. Yes, it is very true, I agree.

18) I read that it has been said that the French do not like weakness, that they do not like to be wrong, and that the French prefer to lie than to say they do not know anything. Do you think Americans have to accept those qualities and bring these qualities into their own professional work lives? Do you agree?

Umm...yes, it's true, I think so. The French...it is bad in life to be wrong. It would be a bad way to live, they take it wrongly, if one says I am wrong, I will go verify it. I will verify if I was wrong, and if I am wrong- I say that I am wrong, but I do not like to say I am wrong. It is similar with corrections, the French, one does not accept the corrections, and ones sees them negatively although for an American that could mean another chance or a good occasion to do another or yeah...I think that it's a thing that one does to find the manner that one will express themselves, if you tell a French person, but you are wrong...the French person will be very upset, if one uses little culturally intelligent phrases - say...I think that that could cause an error in the process or I don't know...On

the other hand, it can help ease the communication process when it comes to something that is blocking or that is problematic.

Thanks.

19) Do you have to show yourself in a different way here? Do you have to behave differently here and in France? How? Examples?

Yes, a little bit, I have to adapt myself the same way that...uh...It is intelligent to adapt a little bit with a French person who is wrong. Me, I'm going to adapt if I talk to an American...Mexican...a French person, an executive, I will adapt my communication culturally according to their rapport...their age, their hierarchy, their culture, I would do everything to make the communication occur in the best way and that one's behavior change, my behavior is fair, an American - I will be more smiley, positive, and present problems in a positive light. If a French person arrives, I will complain, I will complain, I will...the French complain a lot, I very dramatically as well. Yes, yes, yes, it's true. We say - it is a catastrophe to make sure that our problem is well understood. For a French person, if I said that, that's okay but it is not grave. The French, they want to have attention, they want attention on them. If I say it is a catastrophe on the contrary, an American is sure to panic.

Yes. Ahahha. It is very true.

An American, he will quickly panic, one cannot say uh it's wrong, there is something... something bad happened, what happened, where is the manager, a manager will panic, especially since I work in finance, they are afraid for their money, I must explain it in a way where they won't panic.

Yes, I am in agreeance.

I am dramatic, I will panic the Americans.

20) If you could go back to in time before you started working in the United States, what would you have liked to know about the American and their work culture before working in the United States? What advice would you give to other native French business executives who want to work in the U.S?

At work or??

Yes, at work.

What would I like to know about Americans...um yes...it is interesting, it's just that American culture is everywhere in the world, in series, television, movies, so contrary to other cultures that I have discovered, Americans have a lot of clichés. So, I would've liked to know if those clichés were true or not. So, for example, the clichés about the day and time one takes to eat. It's true. Americans eat twice as fast than me. Yes, I will take my time to eat, it is a true cliché, clichés that are false, I don't have an example, but I know that they are untrue as well....Ah yes...Americans, we have a cliché in France that they do not have any culture and they do not know geography like where capitals and countries are. That is false, there are some that are interested in that, not everyone is interested, so there are clichés that, yes, American culture I know that they love pizza Friday. That is true. They have clichés that are not true at all.

You said that you would've liked to know more about clichés? If they are right or wrong, before coming here?

Yes, ah. Before coming here, I asked myself if...um...if my false image of the United States, if my imagination of the United States was real. Or if it was a false image. And I have found that sometime it is and sometimes it is not.

Perfect.

21) How do you feel about the work culture in the United States in general? Examples?

I really like it. It is very openly spirited. On the other hand, I find that there are a lot of codes to respect and phrases one must not say, words one must not say. So, there is an open spirit, with codes and rules. Afterwards, I had the impression that, that in cultural integration. It is very advanced; it requires a know how in the different cultures. Here in working, it is impressing that the names of different cultures are well put together. About the culture...uhhh, it is very diverse, a lot more diverse than the culture France has. One has a lot of countries represented. One could say that there is much to learn.

I will utilize this in a paper and a presentation, are you okay with me using your name?

Uh, yes, no problem,

Your name is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (SPELLS OUT LAST NAME)

Are there any accents?

Eh, no.

And you are a senior financial analyst, correct?

Yes, exactly, yes. Almost finance manager, almost, not officially.

Do you think FIRM X would be okay that I use their company, the company name?

Mmm. I don't know, I think that shouldn't be a problem, but I will ask for an authorization.

Okay, thank you. There are several times that I am writing in English or in French,

because I'm thinking about both of them and I say Oh my God.

Me too. It is the frequency of the language. I have a friend that is writing a thesis about the frequency of language and effectively switching all the time. It's really another exercise than speaking one language and another one the next month. 2 at the same time is very...uh...

Spanish is my first language.

Okay.

When I begin French in high school when I was 14, everything was good. My English was here, my Spanish was here, and my French was here. My French, with the time I have studied it, what has happened, my French is here, my English is here, my Spanish is here, I say Oh my God...I never knew that learning more French would affect my other languages the way it has.

My Spanish, I know a lot, I like to speak Spanish and I understand it very well, I can express myself and everyone says I speak it well but because of my English, because I use it a lot in my work , the Spanish is over here, so I know to go to Spanish countries in practice a little bit.

Exactly, I found that when I sometimes speak English, there are sounds that I utilized in French that um...

That resemble...

That resemble French a little bit, and when I speak in English there are certain words that I pronounce like French, when I think of that...is it because...because I think I can speak French well?

Yes!

But I don't know if I am fluent. Because I don't know if I just translate very rapidly in my head or if I think in French. Do you understand me?

Yes. It is...yes. not exactly translating. But at the beginning one has the choice and I ask of myself, I look back on my first day here Anne I translated the first day and the second day, the 3rd day I think about it in English and you start to think in a language and you stopped translating a new language into your native tongue...It is translating a phrase with the same construction in French. It would not work in English or Spanish, they have other constructions...yes, it is true, but your French is very good.

Thank you!! Uh...one thing. A funny thing. What is a phrase that you, an American phrase, that you heard that you did not understand and that you think is very funny?

Funny?

Mhmm.

Um...it is a very simple phrase...ummm...it is How are you doing? Because when I was...when I was in Ireland, they have a very strong accent there, and for me it was how-are-you-doing? And they were howareyoudoing, and they were like switching that fast the words, the words that I was impressed for one year maybe of the way they were saying how are you. That anybody was telling me how are you doing.

That makes sense.

It is not easy and for me in French the pronunciation is a revolution. My learning of English, it is just that when one doesn't speak in English one must think in it. I really tried, I listened to the television or I heard English speakers in order to have the correct pronunciation.

My professor told me all the time, one has to watch French television, listen to French music, everything to perfect your French and...and I agree and I listen to a bit but I do not have time to watch French television and things like that.

For me, I know that watching everything in English and later in France watching in French, it makes me miss the French, but English is good for keeping good English so... and um...yes...that helped me a lot - movies. At the beginning, movies with subtitles and while watching television.

22) What do you think about the importance of the government in working here? In France the government is all centralized but here it is a little decentralized because there are states laws, city laws, and federal law. Have you encountered challenges with work because of it?

Yes, at the beginning there were not any problems, but uh...I am conscious of the importance of the government, both state and federal, because of taxes, and a lot of reporting, and lots of information, lots of surveys, lots of everything in work regarding numbers and lots of numbers and lots of information. The exchanges with governmental structure, one does not play with...one must really respect it. Also, with diplomas or degrees, the importance of degrees because I don't know local rules, I received my education, my formal education in France so I know French rules. Here I do not have a CPA.

You don't like it? Umm. I mean, you don't have it?

I do not have a CPA in the United States. So...um...there are enterprises that did not recruit me because I do not have my CPA, even though I am very confident in the quality of my work here and I have a specialized masters in finance from France, and I do not

have any problem working in finance and...a diploma, in my experience I am very confident in myself, but about the CPA and not knowing local regulations, that could be a weakness. Um...I forgot. Uh, faiblesse.

I do that all the time in English- its fine.

It is the switching.

Yeah, haha. No, I completely understand that.

And so, yes, yes. One feels the difference between centralized and decentralized, especially in Texas...one has a lot of...the state isn't like New York...there are lots of worlds of states.

23) What do you think about social culture, American culture outside of work?

What do I think of it?

Mhmm.

Um...huh. American culture, so, I am very impressed, it is a culture that is constructed of several cultures. Oh, sorry do you need the room?

Oh, its 10:30 they might need their room.

They are looking for another one.

Oh.

I think we are good now. Ummm. What were we talking about?

Oh um...what you think about American culture outside of work.

Oh um, in French or in English?

Uhh...I mean either one.

So yeah, I think it's really built from many cultures, which I uh...see outside. I see life is more tough, is more like you work all your life haha.

Yeah.

The health scare because of the unemployment. Um...and umm. So, I can see its very dichotomic, everything is very positive, it can be very harmful or very successful for someone.

24) What are some things you have learned in your life to "be American"?

Um...hmm...the personal life is sort of American territory. I think that it is very true that a life...ummm I think that in order to make friends, how do I say it...uh...not nationality, but residential force, the green card nationality, and for them, I had to be trained for several tests and really like the federal government for...like the state...I don't know... politics, the president. One must really...ah yes patriotism - patriotism. I think that patriotism is very intense here.

Mhmm.

The flag, the hymn, all that- it is very important in order to be American. And...in finance, one must be real in their work and in their personal life, your group of friends, all that, all that plays into being American. Especially the people of everyday life, having a family.

Yes, I am studying the French system right now...

Mhmm...

With judges and magistrates and everything...the government is completely different.

Yes.

And oh my god.

Yes, it is very true, they are two very different structures, and one learns one, one can live their whole life without knowing the other, and it is interesting but difficult to comprehend.

Yes, exactly. I agree.

The news...the news is also important; the news serves to help me feel like I am part of the country. Watching the news, that helps me feel like part of their story.

25) Do you think it's easier to make friends in the United States or France?

Huh...that is a difficult question. Eh...I think that it is easier to start, speaking of the world here. In France, people, they guard themselves without talking, so I think that here it does not matter who, I will talk to them, I will sit close to them and I will speak to them. In France, one sits far away and is more indirect.

Mhmm.

Nut uh...once one knows each other one is more likely to close the gap and become friends. There are less opportunities but uh...lots of friends until the end. Here for example, you can meet someone at a party, talk to them an hour or two...everything is perfect and then you can exchange numbers but one is not obligated to contact each other and you continue your lives, if you see each other then you see each other.

Yes.

It is not a big deal.

26) What do you think about the difference in food here and in France?

That is difficult.

Hahahah, yeah.

Very difficult, at the beginning it was great...the clichés...all the burgers, all the junk food that I love, all of that stuff, and uh...after time passed, and after I missed the good food from super markets from France or a specialty or wine...things like that. It is very difficult for me; it is what I miss most- the food.

Is it true that the wine here is more expensive than in France?

Yes, yes, yes. Less good and more expensive.

Ah, okay. Everything is perfect, thanks for everything.

Okay.

I will ask [REDACTED], if I can use FIRM X, and if not, I can change their name in my paper and everything. But thank you for everything, this is excellent.

With pleasure. Me, I had to do interviews when I was in college so if I can help, I am very happy to help. It's with pleasure.

Thank you for everything.

No problem.

Oh my gosh this is exciting.

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT Y ENGLISH INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Questions

1) Hello. From what part of France are you from?

Paris.

Paris?

Yes, very simple.

Perfect.

2) Did you start working for (FIRM Y) in France?

Yes.

For how many years?

For 18 years, it was my first job, and I have studied several different things, but I am here so voila.

3) How many years have you lived and worked for (FIRM Y) in France?

I have been in Dallas for five years.

Do you like it?

Yes, a lot. A lot. A lot. I am very happy, I am, I am...I am not an expatriate, so there is not a moment where I have to return, so I am okay, and I can stay here as long as I'd like.

Ah Perfect!

4) How long have you been working in the United States?

It has been five years that I have worked here, for FIRM Y.

Ah it is the same thing.

Yes. I do not have another employer. Wait, I just read the question. I worked thirteen years for them in France and then five here.

Ah yes! Okay!!

5) What do you think is the difference between the work structure and the work hierarchy in France and in the United States?

Umm... in the United States there is an entrepreneurial spirit...

Mhmm.

Much stronger...than in France I have found. Um...it was the first thing that was expressed to me. In France, people...um...are more likely to listen and ask what you do, here there is more self-initiative. I find that, it is because I rose in the hierarchy and then I became boss so I had more power, but in the general sense, I think that my boss - he is French, I can make several propositions. I think one is freer and it is a lot faster.

Mhmm.

When one gets things running, it is much faster here in the United States.

Okay.

One more easily finds doing things in a new way and one is not obligated to have everything fully planned...um...it is...it is more complicated, one asks for everything to be planned by everyone in France, in order to do a job- a protocol.

Mhmm.

While here, I give you a pencil, and then I let go of your hand. So, in France they ask that you have formulas, that you have everything detailed. Do you understand?

Yes.

So, more initiative and faster here, I have found.

Do you like that?

Yes, it is the thing, yes, it is very positive. It is something that helps me be more efficient at my job, it allows me to be more efficient and faster...faster at trying several things... um...sometimes the plans don't occur, but one learns faster, I find. Uh...one is freer in the way things are done, like if my work is perfect, here it's great, but if I do my work here, over there, at home, it is okay. In France, if you arrive after 9am it is very strange, if you eat a very long time it is strange, if your meal is very long, they say, oh she doesn't work. The work is serious.

That is strange because I studied that in France, it is normal to be a bit late and it also normal to eat like two hours at your house.

Yes.

But I...

Yes, it is true. What you say is true. The French are always late usually by half an hour, um...they eat between noon and 2pm, here one eats at 11:30am and is done before noon.

Yes exactly!

Hahaha. Um...they take several coffee breaks, but between 9am and noon, and between 2pm and 5pm, you must be at the firm. If not, it is seen as bad. There is a judgment from people that I find bad and that is very oppressing.

Yes.

6) When you arrived, what is it that you found to be the most shocking/surprising of the company in the United States?

Shocking in a negative way?

Yes.

Negative...

Negative or positive.

I will give you one of each. What shocked me the most negatively...hm...uh I can tell you a positive, a lot of things, but as I had mentioned before, the punctuality. The people are very efficient, so one starts on time and finishes on time, so one has a time frame and everyone agrees with it. That I like a lot. That is a positive point. A negative point....

Umm...hm...when I arrived what was a negative point? It could be, the lack of open space style, that is a bit ugly? But in the United States but it could just be a FIRM Y thing.

Yes.

That is why I changed to the innovation lab, because the setup is tragic, very sad. Not old but it gives the impression of the 1940's in Russia. Without judgement because I have a Russian coworker, so I don't always speak of this that way. Yes, the cubicles are sad, it is informal, people put tiny pictures of their family there, oh so one can say look the perfect little family, soccer and all haha. But um...candy on the desk, you know, cute but I think it is a bit sad, I don't think that stems from the united states exactly but in the films its parallel - it is a bit American. It could be. It could be that in France, the offices have a little bit more charm, here it is proper and straight, it is square, everything has the same dimensions, very little space, yes it would be that. But fortunately, management allowed me to move and make my working space more inspiring and motivating because the other area is not.

Yes, it is a little sad. I agree.

7) What do you find that are the most important differences in working in the Unites States?

The biggest difference?

The most important difference.

The most important difference in what I have experienced. For me, a difference that has been the biggest, yes, I think it is very...the state of spirit...um more open, in the United states. Because Americans like...umm...umm...they really like...they are very positive. In France, people are very negative, it is not a legend, the French complain plenty, and that's the way they are. And here, it is a big difference, when I was in France- they always told me that I was like an American, because I have always been very positive and when something is bad, I would say it was fine. And if I said to a French person, oh it is good, they would be like oh don't tell me it is good to be nice, tell me the truth.

Mhmm.

Even though I think it is good, so I said it was good. The French don't say good things. They like to critique, but I mean one could say Americans can be "fake" but I think they're sincere. AH gorgeous, I love your hair blablabla, that could be a little fake, but I think it as a good thing. That is an enormous difference...um...the French are just not as positive, my colleagues, my family, my friends, the people I know the best are the more positive French people I know.

Perfect. Because I was in a French contemporary culture class and we learned that the French find liberty in hiding their thoughts, their actions, but in the united states one thinks there is liberty in expressing oneself and things like that.

Exactly.

So, do you prefer being more guarded?

No. I think that sharing is caring. I prefer to share, and I think it is more constructive and I think it helps build ideas. Make other's ideas bigger and others helping my ideas grow, basically building on each other, but voila. It is more constructive and sharing and learning from others and finding a better solution together, better than keeping thing to yourself and saying wow it is I, who has come up with this great idea because others can help enrich your ideas. So, I prefer that.

8) What structure do you prefer? The structure of France or the structure here?

You told me that you prefer the structure here.

Yes.

Perfect.

9) *If you can bring something from the French structure to the American structure, what would you bring?*

The kitchen. Hahahahahha.

Yes.

The meat. Hahahahahaha. That is sure.

Yes, I had another interview with another French executive at another company and he said the same thing.

Ahhahahaah. I'm looking around like what did I like...mmm...because, I have two offices, I have plenty of things, also I mean we are in Texas, there is plenty of space. In France, I always had lower level parking, here there's sunlight, and I don't want my car hit by hail. There isn't much space in Paris. I think that...that...the meetings are too long, the people are very negative, the coffee machines were very nice, but I have adapted to American coffee. I love Nespresso that I don't use often but it isn't very ecofriendly, but I

like good coffee. The food in France is something that is surely better, especially for a work cafeteria...better quality and less expensive than here where it isn't that good. It may not be professional, but it is still important.

Yes! Exactly.

10) What do you think is the most shocking difference between your co-workers?

I don't have a very good picture of France or my coworkers in France, but they aren't all like that, but globally, I don't like their non-punctuality, they are not punctual and they are not positive. And they are not motivated. In the United States, it can be seen as fake but at least one has the impression that they are motivated by something. Um I think that is something I would like to change.

11) Is there anything else?

Another difference in them or?

With your coworkers here. But I think it is different because you don't really like your French coworkers?

I like them. I have plenty of French friends that I like. Ummm. There are some that are positive as well, there's just plenty of French people that are not. And since I worked pretty much exclusively with French people that were positive, that were motivated by what they were doing, I just created a general character.

Ah.

There is just a vast majority that isn't motivated, because they don't want to do anything and they are on vacation all the time, but my French boss is extraordinary and there are people I work very well with, for me the important part is the people. When I have a new project, I prefer to work with people that are respectful and hardworking, that respect the

time and um...that are very positive things like that. Let's see something positive about my French coworkers. There are some with really nice strategic visions. My American coworkers sometimes don't have the whole business point of view or perspective and when I worked with people in France there was a lot of interesting strategic planning and constructive discussion with my colleagues. That's why I am here to connect the American business to French strategy.

12) What do you think is the difference between the relationship with your boss?

The relationship with my boss. My boss is French. But one could say I have several bosses and the ones I have in the United States is from an Indian culture, not an American, but I have had an American boss before. My last boss was American, to better respond to your question. The difference between the two, I have not had one that is very strategic, the American ones are more about execution, very efficient execution but he searches to find how and why things work, several things, more connections with other businesses, things like that. So really, my two bosses the French one has a more worldwide view but that's because he was very high in FIRM Y. The American was more about execution.

13) Between French business workers and American business workers, who do you think is the friendliest?

Uh...that depends on who. It is a cliché but it is true, not the whole world but a tendency is that people here will ask how your family is and you tell them everything like you have a kid and their age but they don't memorize it so it could be a bit fake. It isn't disagreeable because at least you have someone that says hello and like to talk and won't just arrive and head straight for the coffee machine. It's a caricature, because there are a lot of French people that are super nice and super friendly and whom you share several

things with. It is variable but the big part would be here, but if you build relationships in France, I have several true, true friends, in France that I don't just have a superficial relationship with. Here it is a little superficial. I do have super friends here, but I have them in France as well. But globally, Americans are more superficial, and the French are more profound with friendships.

Yes.

14) Have you found that to be true with all Americans?

Not everyone, but each person has their own personality and each person has things we like and don't like about them. One cannot be friends with everyone on earth but yes, yes, I have true friends here in the United States. It is true but it is true that the people I feel the closest too, because we have commonalities, are French people that have left France and are now here. Things we have in common like television, meat, medicine, things like that, that you are far from and that you discover you have in common, I mean when you grow up with the French, you can have strong relationships with French people. But I do have very, very good American friends that I do several things with.

15) Who do you think works the hardest? Why? (Americans vs. French) Examples?

Ahh...I think it is equivalent. I think it is in a different manner, it is very specific to each person. I know both French and American people that work very hard. Um...and French and American coworkers that literally do nothing...hahah...me, I work more here than over there. A lot more but that could be due to the promotion here and that I am more interested in the work here. Voila. So, I know I work more here...I sometimes feel as though I am unlimited vacation, so I don't really take breaks, I really enjoy my job. The Americans can have very long workdays, one day an American can work very hard and

then the next day the boss will tell him to take a day off because he deserves it after such hard work. In France, it is three months of break.

Mhmm.

And so...it is possible that the American works harder, so he doesn't lose his job. While the French, is cooler, if he does his work well then, he has three months to vacation and relax, so there is more of a relaxation or coolness the French get, but that is not to say that some Americans aren't as relaxed. The French are less scared of losing their jobs, because if they lose it, they have time and they also have money from the government. The state gives them money.

Mhmm, yes.

While here, uh... you get your package and you leave. So, it is a package. So, uh...is that why the French may work a little less than Americans? I am not super sure because I do know a lot of French people that work very hard. And that have similar spirits, but that fear of losing your job is bigger here than in France.

16) Who do you think is the most professional? (Americans vs. French) Examples?

Mmm...I think that Americans, but um...especially when it comes to seminars and big presentations, Americans are super professional because they form little groups to do presentations. Things like that make me think that Americans are more professional. That's not saying that this doesn't happen in France, but it is not presented in a way as valorized as here in the United States. The work behind it might be the same, but American presentations are more professional.

Okay, thank you.

17) Last year I was in a class of "French Contemporary Culture "at my University and the class was very interesting because it expressed perceptions that the Americans have about the French and the book, we used for this class spoke of different things between the French and Americans. The book was "eye opening" to me because it talks about how the French are more reserved, how they have a small circle of trusted friends, how they think a lot before saying something, and how they have differences with time. What do you think of these? Would you say these are true?

I think that is all very true. The American will say everything, he will say everything rapidly and globally. The French are more reserved, they live to reflect, things like that. Etc. but globally the American will be more direct. Ummm...and the French they like to hold their thoughts for a long time. it is a question of personality and it has to do with being an extrovert or an introvert. So, Americans might be introverted but they are pushed to speak out in presentations and things like that, one can get the impression that Americans are very open and very extroverted but I think they are personalities that are forced, but globally I do agree with that.

18) I read that it has been said that the French do not like weakness that they do not like to be wrong, and that the French prefer to lie than to say they do not know anything. Do you think Americans have to accept those qualities and bring these qualities into their own professional work lives? Do you agree?

Do I think that Americans should accept that?

Yes.

No. No, absolutely not. The French do not like to be wrong, people in general don't like to be wrong, like an American. He wouldn't, right?

Right.

But the French, they like to negotiate, search for, argue, in order to convince the other person. It could be that. Americans are more pragmatic and more...More accepting of being wrong. It could be. Umm...they are less inclined to convince others - the Americans. It could be, globally, the whole world is not the same but globally yes.

Do you agree with that French mentality?

According to the wrongness?

Mhmm.

No. If I am wrong, I will say it. Especially if someone isn't in agreeance with me. I will explain why I think I am right, but if someone tells me I am wrong and explains why I am wrong, I am cool. I prefer to be challenged and I am a good loser, and I don't lie to lose but, in the end, if my friend explained why I am wrong then I will accept it. But that is also a personality question, it could be.

19) Do you have to show yourself in a different way here? Do you have to behave differently here and in France? How? Examples?

Yes, here I can more easily give compliments to people. Umm...in France, I also do it, but a lot of times I would hold back because I think they would've thought it wasn't true. Or they think I do it too much. Umm. Here, I can more easily say the things that are positive, and I can also...umm express myself more and take initiative. Umm. Yes. I think I feel freer here, than in France.

20) If you could go back to in time before you started working in the United States, what would you have liked to know about the American and their work culture before working

in the United States? What advice would you give to other native French business executives who want to work in the U.S?

I worked a lot with Americans when I was in France, so there were a lot of things I already knew. Umm...what did I miss? Anything that shocked me, I adapted fairly quickly.

Mhmm.

Um...hmm...they are, well not everyone, but most that place a lot of emphasis on titles. So, if one is not vice president or president then there are people that won't speak to them. So, if there are different levels, not the president, one will not talk to them, they will talk to the president. Umm...I know that when I moved up to director, that changed a lot of things. It was like wow, she got a promotion, she is now interesting, I got new friends. Because now you are on the same level as me so now you can talk to me. But before you were just a manager, but I felt the difference. For me the post was somewhat the same, but more responsibility but I am still the same person. There are people that won't speak, this is not always the case, but there are several people who place a very big emphasis on title, and that helps explain the company and people's reactions, I would tell my team to contact, me for example I am director so, to my team, contact the director, but they don't respond to me. They work in groups; they speak to their manager instead of me. There are people like that. This helps you understand people by how they put emphasis on titles. That probably happened in France too, but I felt it less there.

21) What advice would you give to other native French business executives who want to work in the U.S?

Come here. Come here. I would tell them that. um...that...um. I would share that, I would motivate them to come, because it is an extraordinary experience. Very comfortable, there is a home here, but even though it may be fake but yes, it is true, there is always a phenomenal home, overall in Texas, I find that that life is easy here, very easy. In France, the roads, life is comfortable professionally as well as personally. And I find that it is, one has more opportunities to do things, etc. I would really encourage them to come.

Thank you.

22) *How do you feel about the work culture in the United States in general? Examples?*

The culture, being French or what the culture means?

Oh, no. how do you feel about American work culture. The feeling.

It is what I have been saying, I was considered as the American in Paris, uhh...I love American culture there are not many like it, globally, I feel more steady working here than in France. Examples. About American culture? What I have already stated that they are nice, that I feel at ease here, all that. I think that the way and content are very important, the way to be, the way to present, the way to organize a meeting, the way to prepare the agenda, um...all the frame that they give our work or event, it is very important here. When I first arrived, I understood what worked well here, the reunions, the projects, things like that, things to eat, I would eat in the lab because the people like to talk so I am at ease. I have remarked a few things, here one can arrive in jeans which are very comfortable and if you give out food people will come to your meeting.

Mhmm.

Those are examples of things I saw clearly when I arrived, and I gave the recommendation of that to my French colleagues in order to have success. If you have breakfast everyone will come to your meeting. Because Americans like to eat and I feel like there are many that say oh no, I can't eat that I am on a diet, or I don't know what, but it's a reality that arriving in a sad working area, with food, will create a good aura even if they do not eat. Those are some examples of American culture, like they say meat for everyone. Back in France, if there wasn't meat, I would die of hunger. My American coworkers when they go to France, they are a bit lost because they like to snack all the time, a soda in the fridge.

Yes.

They drink a massive water, but everything is very little in France, like the cups. It is a convenience they do not have.

Yes. I agree.

23) What do you think about the importance of the government in working here? In France the government is all centralized but here it is a little decentralized because there are states laws, city laws, and federal law. Have you encountered challenges with work because of it?

No, the only time I really have been in contact with laws is when we transport products, and American law is a lot more penalizing and more strict than French law...um...I don't really confront the law, French law wants the person to stay there three months, and American law being Texan or whatever...I am telling you...I don't think that there is a particular influence in our business, the French government, the Texas government,

American government, I don't think there is a difference. There is a notable presence in our business.

24) What do you think about social culture, American culture outside of work?

Um...I gave you professional examples, and people aren't very different at home than they are at the bureau.

Mhmm.

So, I think one finds a certain thing in my kids' school, everyone is like oh its magnificent, lalala, things that surprise me even though I am the same way. Um, I find positive attitudes all the time, in France they are dramatic. Customer service! I'll speak about that since it is a struggle. Customer service in the united states is incredible, it is shitty, (I didn't say that)

Hahaha.

It is really shitty in France. Um...because, the reason is, for example servers at restaurants, they are not paid by their tips like here. In France, you don't give any tips, they are paid either way. So even if they aren't good, they still get a check at the end of the month. And here if you don't give them a tip, they aren't paid, so here they are better. Hello, my name is so and so, I will be your server today, what can I get you to drink, did you have a good day? In France, it is, here's your food, in France I amuse myself because a cashier, a server, it doesn't matter who- I say to them how are you today? And uh... they are surprised, how does she see me? Why is she asking me that?

Yes.

There is no one that smiles and say I am great, how are you today? I am good what about you?

Uhuh.

And uh...it's not customer service here it's more like relationship service. Relationship service is very good and very professional here. Uh...in France, one doesn't have one, I am exaggerating, you don't see these things everywhere, globally. It isn't very nice.

25) *What are some things you have learned in your life to "be American"?*

What is it that I learned to be very American?

Uhuh.

It was necessary to know what to do better. Hahahahaha.

Hahaha.

It was necessary for me to learn...Americans really know how to accessorize. Me I am always simple. I am dressed professionally because I work with engineers and I am in publicity, but yes like wow shoes...um...a lot of compliments. I think Americans learn very fast, they are fast to learn, my girls learned very fast, I have kids and they have girl friends and they're going to prom, and I learn. Ahhaahah.

Ah yes!

It is something I keep learning. I think I could continue to improve my level of English, oh, it is important that I watch TV to be an American, I don't have a TV. It is part of the American culture that I am not a part of. I think I wouldn't like it, it annoys me, um... but I think it is a big part of American culture.

Mhmm.

I just saw, I just realized that it is back to school time for my kids, and they took the bus for the first time, and for the first time she has a cellphone.

Awwwwee.

So, I keep seeing her messages, okay “waiting in the cafeteria now”. In French, I’m kidding, she isn’t speaking to me in French.

Do they speak French?

We always speak in French, we always speak French to each other, but I suppose since she just got a telephone, I have four kids, and she’s 10. Um...and they are very close, and I think when she will send me texts- they will always be in English.

It is the same thing for me. I speak Spanish...

Yes.

Not all the time, but all the time with my parents...I think it is very magnifique that you taught your kids French because the language is beautiful, but being in the United states, being bilingual is very important. Yes. It is not like Europe where everyone knows four languages and things like that. It is magnifique. We don’t have that many people that speak French.

Do you only speak Spanish to your parents?

Yes.

Yes. Okay.

Yes. And I just started to learn Russian this summer.

Russian?

Yes, Russian.

Wow. Why do you want to learn Russian?

Um... because... after studying French for 7 years, I thought it would be interesting to learn another language, but I want to be good at French, I am not perfect, but yes, I think

languages are very beautiful and I think that it is a way to communicate with several people. And that is important for everything. It is important for business, for like I think.

Mhmm. I think it is very enriching to know a different language and culture, because it allows you to be more flexible, it is very enriching. That's one of the things I like a lot about my job, I work with all kinds of people. On my team I have a Chinese person, a Filipino person, I have plenty...all the people are not on my direct team, but I have several projects teams so...

Mhmm.

There is always a diversity... yes between men and women, but also with country of origin, and with different departments, businesspeople, tech people, there is a general diversity that is superb. It is good. Very, very important, it is one of the reasons that I think I...

Mhmm...

Understanding French culture has helped me enormously with my American coworkers here. When they get bad information that they got from France, oh they don't understand and they don't give them what they need because they don't see the Americans and so I will send them a quick message like can you send me the report tomorrow and they'll do it fast. It could be because they're afraid of strangers because Americans are very open. Not just the language, the food. It is my brother who always says, me, I would like to know all the languages, I would go to countries to learn them. Math. Because there's not a country of math. And so, one with languages has the chance to learn human contact easily. I think it is superb to learn languages, it is very enriching.

Yes. Thank you.

26) *Do you think it's easier to make friends in the United States or France?*

Uh... it is a question of personality, I think, one can make friends all over the world. I think that if one is interested um...it can be very difficult in countries where there isn't a habit of having strangers, um...but honestly I am in an enterprise France so already, there are Americans that tell themselves I will not work for the US Navy, but they are okay working for an enterprise that is international and is of French origin. So, there is a kind of open spirit from the people that come to work here, even if it is for American business. Um... making friends at work, is something that is possible, after, I am friends with people like my neighbors, I find people. I will see some people, I won't see others, it is a bit. One can make friends anywhere in the world if you have some commonalities in life, so I don't think... I think it is difficult to scratch past the surface with Americans, I have American friends. If I am open, if I speak about my problems or things that touch me a lot, that move me enormously, ah move? It is important I speak well because you are recording this.

Ahhaahah.

But yes, the things that touch me, profoundly, and I speak about these with Americans and they'll speak to me about theirs, that is past the surface and not fake with Americans. There are some people that do this and some people that don't. when one wants to open up to others, there are others that will open up to them.

Okay.

But if I were to do that in France...sharing about things that touch me??

Oh non.

Oh no, not emotions! Ooh. Hahaha.

Hahahah.

It is certainly bad. Americans are more accepting of their emotions than the French. The French are very negative, it is true. And the French are elevated. One says, one does not show sadness in France or being mad. One should not show sadness or anger in France. Here, I have the impression that at school, with my kids, at school they say its okay to be mad, explain. Explain why you are mad. You have the right to feel angry about a certain thing, a certain thing. Here one has a break room, that I have not heard of in France, you can say you are angry or sad. It's okay. I'll grab some Kleenex and you'll tell me, tell me. In France, no, no, no, stop crying. The difference is very... there is acceptance here of all emotions, generally, that one does not have in French culture. That is something very important that I have noted.

And uh... my last question...

27) What do you think about the difference in food here and in France?

Of what?

Food.

Oh food! OHHHH food. The favor lies with the French. Um...what I often say is the quality and diversity of food is a lot better in France. The quality and diversity of food is a lot better in France and um...there are several different regions, it is a lot healthier, here one puts sugar in everything. I am shocked, and I mean very shocked, when my kids and I returned from France this summer, we weren't drinking soda. I compared...when we left for home from vacation.

Mhmm...

Saint Pellegrino Orange, citrus. I say of that's cool it is water, with a flavor, an odor, no, a taste! Yes, an orange and citrus taste. Okay. It was super, more than soda or a beer, it was good. Now when I was in Costco, I saw it and I bought some, a huge package of it in my fridge.

Okay.

I later grabbed one and I drank from it and (spit noise Blahhhh). 27 grams of sugar, that is not water! It is a can of sugar.

Yes.

In France, the same can, the same packaging, only 7 grams of sugar.

Oh, wow.

Really! One can really compare with kids, the sugar in the United States is dramatic so people are addicted to sugar. One adds sugar, and then salt, and then more sugar to balance it, it is dramatic! I saw a report, I don't know what it called, um Mr. 911 maybe? The film 9/11 I think it was a film named that. It was about 9/11.

Mhmm...

That, he eats McDonald's a super long time, it doesn't matter, ah yes, the sugar industry is dramatic in the United States. Dramatic, dramatic, terrible, terrible. The other day while in a supermarket, there is a table that is a campaign for diabetics, buy and drink a coke to help. Drinking a coke to help a diabetic? I don't get it. Ah it is cool it is fresh! That is a bit catastrophic I think because it is not good.

Mhmm.

And it is not good for taste, or for your health, really. And all the sugar industry, the medicine industry, they profit. It is sad. French food is good, it is healthy, cheese from several different areas.

Yes.

But yes, there is a lot less sugar in France, and so it is a lot healthier. And the kids feel better. As a mom, I know that French food is a lot better for my body, even though my mouth prefers American food.

Ahahah.

The processed food is dramatic.

Yeah. No definitely. So those are all my questions. So, for this, the thesis I will be writing in English. And then what I'm going to do with this is basically I'm going to transcribe it but it's all private it's not going anywhere. The only place that my thesis will be published is in UTA's Honors College. It's not going to be publicly published, so only honor students at UTA that are looking to do this would be able to read it. Would you like me to change your name in it?

Use the one you want. If you want to use something different, use something different, but I don't mind at all.

And then do you know if FIRM Y would be okay with being put in there, or we can omit the name, put like company X or company Y.

I will not ask, because they will be like yes, no, I don't know, so just put company X. that would be easier, and please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions or if you want to compare. Anything I'd be happy to help.

Thank you so much. No most of...most of our conversations were pretty, it was pretty similar to the other interview I conducted. The main difference was, well I can tell you have more of like an American spirit, the other French guy he was, he was pretty young, I think late 20's but he'd worked in several, several different branches of his company, so he Canada and I think he was planning on going to Mexico. He'd worked in France and like different places, so for him he had a slightly different view due to that. And then definitely, I mean, ummm...it's also different being established with a family and a place. Especially this, you'd already been working with Americans.

Yeah you need to embrace it. Definitely.

Exactly. Which is awesome. I applaud you, that is incredible. It is cool.

It is very cool. I had the chance to work in Germany and Austria also, and I know more German cultures... ummm, which are also quite different. And which I like, also a lot. I like. I think there are always some good and bad things everywhere. But yeah it is very interesting to, to discover and I wanted since I was a child to live abroad...

Mhmm...

And to really live the experience. I mean travelling of course, but also, live like anybody else, I was very happy and very pleased my boss told me that the American team wants my support and needs my help, but I won't be able to offer you an expat contract. And I said I want that. I want to feel free to stay.

Yeah.

If you want me to stay over there. If you have another position back in France or something, I'll be happy to join but um... but if I want to stay- I will. I don't want you to

tell me in 5 years, that I have to come back in a weird position that will be very uncomfortable for me because you don't know where to put me really.

Yeah.

You have to jump on opportunities.

No, I think that's awesome, yeah, I mean ideally - I would love to work in France one day. But that's a while away. Because I did study abroad in Canada, in Quebec.

Mhmm.

Which was weird. It was really cool, and I really liked it but it was European like because it has that French influence but then it was American like, because its right there. It was a good mix of both. So, I actually get to go to Paris and Italy, spring break of this coming year. I finally after like 7 years of dreaming it.

That's great. You're going to enjoy it. It's beautiful. Its, I love being a tourist in Paris, I hated to work there.

Yeah.

Because its crowdy, I used to say its gray on the floor, its gray on the wall, its gray on the sky, its gray on the faces of the people.

Oh.

When you work there.

Uhuh.

But, as a tourist, even if you the sky is a little bit gray this day, it's a really beautiful city. I was, I was there a couple of weeks ago, and it's just beautiful. All the buildings and the beautiful food and uh its gorgeous. It's uh...it's uh really nice. You're going to enjoy that. There is so many places you will want to see, and Italy is the same, even better.

Yeah.

Because it's even more, its charming. You know? Here it's like big buildings, it's clean its straight, it's comfortable, it's easy to deal with, with the people, to find the spot and stuff like that. You will struggle when you will be in France.

Mhmm.

Umm or in Italy but everything is so charming and um and if you ask, I mean, they will, I mean with the cute accent, yeah that's good.

(I laugh uncomfortably)

I mean you are making the effort, some will just be afraid because you are a stranger, like here is the same. What is this weird accent? I don't understand what you're saying. But some will be just pleased to help you.

No, definitely. That's what I'm afraid of. I haven't practiced French in a while and I could hear myself like, putting like more Spanish into my French, and that's what happens if I like stop practicing French so I have to like focus on that, because it is hard. I mean my worst fear is, once I heard the expression "you speak French like a Spanish cow" and now I'm like so terrified of that, I'm like oh no.

No that is true, Spanish people. I think, I had the chance to work with, it's a worldwide company, so I have some Thai colleagues that are very difficult to understand. Um and maybe, I'm just talking about those critical one, Thai was very difficult, but I think the worst one was Spanish French. My Spanish colleagues.

Uhuh.

Very difficult. Even Spanish, Spanish and French is very close.

Yes.

But when they were talking in English.

It was really hard to understand them.

Oh yeah. And that's why we say this expression, talking like a Spanish cow because I don't know exactly where its coming from, but definitely, yeah, among all the people that I know, talking in English, Spanish people but from Spain. Not talking Mexican people.

Yeah.

Really from Spain.

Yeah. Spanish from Spain, like Spaniard Spanish is completely different than Mexican Spanish.

Where does your name come from?

Um Yahaira, so its origins are Hebrew, but it's used predominately in Hispanic families.

But like in Spanish its pronounced "Yahaira" versus "Yahaira".

That's nice. That's great.

Thank you. I mean it's been kind of had finding French people. Like specifically here in the DFW area because I didn't want to expand it, because this is more centralized, more localized because I mean working here is completely different than working in New York City. It's completely different, so I wanted to try to find matching...

I think it's pretty, I guess it's very different. Any big city. That's true that's a good point.

I am comparing people working in Paris and people working not in the main city and you know. Dallas is still a big city but- but its way smaller than New York, Chicago or San Francisco or Los Angeles.

Exactly.

That's also a major difference, that we weren't, that wasn't taken into account. Yeah, we have more space, and everything is relaxed, but here we have I mean, today. This morning was pouring but most of the time I just go out and it's like yeah. Light gray in the top, yellow on the floor, a little bit of green and blue skies everywhere. So, that environment, you just feel more relaxed, I guess. I don't know or just positive.

Thank you so much for everything.

You're welcome.

This is so exciting, I'm like so happy.

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT Z ENGLISH INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Questions

1) Hello. From what part of France are you from?

I am from Paris. A little south of Paris.

2) Did you start working for (FIRM Z) in France?

No, No, me I began to work for um...for American companies, here in the United States.

I began to work for these companies, umm do you know [REDACTED]?

Mhmm, Yes.

I worked for [REDACTED], I worked for [REDACTED], it's our [REDACTED], and I worked for [REDACTED].

I wanted to conduct an interview on someone from [REDACTED], but it was different because it was a [REDACTED] company.

Yes.

And I must find executive professionals.

Is it necessary for them to French? Or no?

Yes.

Yes. The problem with [REDACTED] is that in the last 5 years, they have eliminated expatriates, so there are many less French in [REDACTED] at this moment. So, I think it is a good idea, in the metroplex, via [REDACTED], [REDACTED], there are no French I think at [REDACTED], here, when I worked there. There may have been some French out of that location, but I am not exactly sure.

Mhmm. You are my last interviewee.

Okay.

Because I was in need of 3.

How many do you have now?

I have 3, you are the third.

So, do you need anymore?

No.

That's good.

So, thank you, thanks a lot.

Mhmm.

3) How many years have you lived and worked for (FIRM Z) in France?

3 years.

How long have you lived in the US?

In the US, 10 years, and in Dallas it will be 5 years. I moved around some before, I was in Idaho before then Dallas.

You've worked here for 10 years.

Yes.

4) What do you think is the difference between the work structure and the work hierarchy in France and in the United States?

That is a difficult question.

Yes.

Uh... it is true that, I have noticed in France in French companies, there isn't, one sees the spirit of corporate America less, if one goes to corporate America, it is...um...a certain... there's less...there's more respect in the hierarchy. In France, my experience with FIRM Z is different because they are a smaller company in a global context. It isn't like [REDACTED], so me today, in today's society, I talk to the president on the phone every day, while

before in the more American society, it is really a thing that - there is less communication between different levels. Like that. It is a little complex because I work with a French company right now and it is a little job, while I worked for massive American companies. Those are aspects that change things, being American or French, and being big or small. Is the question about hierarchy specifically?

Mhmm. The hierarchy and the structure.

reflects

There are several other questions if you would like to think about it some.

Okay let's continue while I think and we can come back, let's move on to the next question.

Okay.

5) When you arrived, what is it that you found to be the most shocking/surprising of the company in the United States?

When I arrived and started working for FIRM Z? Not when I started working at [REDACTED] at first?

Uhh...That's better. At the beginning with [REDACTED]. When you first arrived in the US.

What shocked me the most?

Mhmm.

Hmm.

About work, not people.

About my work? So not people but work?

Mhmm.

I has a vision that in the US, people worked very, very long hours, and I found out that the French work longer and harder, the French expatriates who work in the US work longer. Usually all the expatriates I have met work longer, when I was in [REDACTED], they would arrive at 7am and not leave until 6pm or 7pm. While the Americans in the company, they would arrive around 8am and finish around 4pm. I noted that the French worked a lot longer and on harder things. When you're an expatriate you're on a mission, for 2 or 3 years, you're doing a job for a certain amount of time. That is different, a chance was given to an expatriate to come to the US, so the person knows that and works very hard for the person.

I agree.

6) What do you find that are the most important differences in working in the United States?

About work in the US? In comparison to work in France, for example.

Mhmm.

Ummm...The most important difference...mmmm.

To be good at your job.

Um...I think that Americans have a capacity to be good sellers, they know how to speak on the telephone and to people very well than the French. They are more well trained on doing public speaking than the French. And there are more, there is more respect for the rules of the business. There is more respect for corporate business rules in corporate America. Emails. In emails there are never things that would be seen as inappropriate are wrong, they are informational and that's it. There is never really your point of view or humor, emails are only factual, while in France, one often sees, people who joke around

with each other a bit. And one sees that less in the US. Because there is that aspect of corporate America, emails are a way of passing written information, one remains factual and one does not see risks, things that could be interpreted incorrectly.

7) What structure do you prefer? The structure of France or the structure here?

Um...Hmmm...I am well accustomed to the structure here, so I would say the structure here. But it is complicated in my situation, because I have an American like structure here and I work with some French structure, so it is complicated. Here we are accustomed to when we are communicating with a client, we respect deadlines.

Mhmm.

And it is difficult to make some French comprehend that where there is more flexibility in discussion. Here everything is contractual, it is stricter at work. And that also happens in France but the French, they wait for a company to be overperforming. There are more risks here, when one messes up, there are more risks when someone makes a mistake on something, there are more repercussions in business in an American model than a French model.

Mhmm.

8) If you can bring something from the French structure to the American structure, what would you bring?

reflects That is hard.

(I laugh because him taking this long to answer is one of my future questions)

I'm thinking.

Yes.

reflects more A type of flexibility today, I find that there is a more flexible culture than in the US, especially when there are deadlines announced, a decision is set, and it cannot be modified. While in France, one works more with a client's demand and one adapts themselves to fit the situation. In the US, sometimes they do not have that flexibility, it is more rigid.

Yes.

The structure, corporate America's structure is more rigid, so certain fabrication delays and we find a way to help the client a little better.

9) What do you think is the most shocking difference between your co-workers?

Between French coworkers?

French coworkers and American coworkers.

Hmmm. *reflects* The first difference I found was between the level of French and English in American business. Because all the French that were based in France, do not have the same level of English, one can see that, but in attitudes, the attitudes of people, when it comes to things that are written like emails, the French care a bit more, they joke around a bit more than Americans, we are more cold and stay factual in their communications and mmmm...and who do not include personal feelings. I don't know if that is a good response or?

Mhmm.

laughs

I'll tell you at the end.

Yes? *laughs*

10) Is there anything else?

Another thing I noted in the relationship between coworkers?

Yes, between coworkers.

Hmmm. *reflects* here we work with American clients, Canadian clients, Mexican clients, in America, and we work a lot with “the mother France”. It is the way of talking to a client, here we are with the client on telephone or by skype a lot. But with the distance of the “mother company”, the French structure one is farther geographically, and they don’t exactly understand the importance of things like dates, for example. And umm... and that is hard because in situations like this where you have a subsidiary here and the headquarters in France, it would be good for the workers in France to spend 6 years here to see the difficulties and the clients and see how clients expect rapid responses, like 1 or 2 weeks. And the delays are longer there, a month or month in a half. Things must get done faster.

Mhmm.

11) What do you think is the difference between the relationship with your boss?

The difference.

You have a French boss here, right?

Yes.

But your boss in [REDACTED], he is American right?

Mhmm. And there were French ones as well, in [REDACTED] he was French as well based in the US, and at [REDACTED] he was American.

Okay.

Ummm. *reflects* My American boss at [REDACTED], he tried to... he only talked about work, only work. There weren’t conversations outside of work. They were kept at a minimum.

95% of all conversations were about work. And in the morning, it was the morning, there was rarely a “good morning”, we didn’t talk to each other a lot in the morning, there was no interaction, while in France there is a lot of interaction, asking how you are, your life, your family, thinks like that. More social based interactions and more proximity relationship wise. Because in the morning. In France in the morning, in France we shake hands in the morning, if not you are considered impolite. One grabs a coffee, at [REDACTED] there were a lot of French expatriates, so we met at 7am in the morning, interacted and talked a bit then, then after we started our work. That was our thing. At [REDACTED], which was more American, the American boss was very detached, everyone got their coffee on their own, no extra discussion, the only discussion that was had was work related.

Mhmm.

That is a very big difference.

12) Between French business workers and American business workers, who do you think is the friendliest?

Friendly. Uh...

Hahaha.

Hahaha. I think that at work Americans are more friendly...um...but it isn’t sincere, less sincere than French workers. French workers, if there is something they don’t like- they’ll say it. But when they do say it, it is good, it is true.

Mhmm.

It is a true reaction from a person. In the US, there is always a mask placed, and one must act as if everything were okay, even if it isn’t. And when the person leaves, after they talk about the person, “stab the person in the back”, like that. I find that here there is a lot of

acting. While in France, things, people are very true in their communication and their expression of problems and feelings. They'll say no I do not agree because of this this and this. Or I don't like that.

Yes.

13) Have you found that to be true with all Americans?

Non, there are always exceptions, but I would say the 80/20 rule. 80% of the people here have fake feelings and 20% say what they actually feel. And in France it's the opposite.

Yes. It's true.

14) Who do you think works the hardest? Why? (Americans vs. French) Examples?

Working here or working in France?

Mhmm.

Mmmm...*reflects* Ehhhhh...*reflects more* I think that in the US, it is, not harder or less hard, it is more interesting and easier if one is a hard worker, the work is very interesting. In the US, if one is a hard worker, in France one can be a hard worker but you won't have the same feedback from bosses and not the same evolution in the business. It is a huge difference, a huge difference. The evolutions in a firm. Here in the US, if the person is very strong and does their work very well, the person will rise. In France, if you don't have a diploma here and a diploma over there, you won't rise. It's all about diplomas.

15) Who do you think is the most professional? (Americans vs. French) Examples?

Hmm...*reflects* I don't understand what you mean by more professional?

It's hard...

According to work?

Yes! According to their work. Their image or... uhhh... or the way they behave themselves.

It is hard because, I...I have a counter example. I have a friend who says less about my work, people, here in Dallas, uh...uh...if there is a team of men...ummm...how to say it? They make fun of her because she is the only girl in the group. And that is something I wouldn't say. You don't see that that much in France. You see more respect, less things to be misinterpreted. Ummm...Before that experience, I thought that there was more respect in the US than in France, but I have found that like you say, in business, my friends that work at the firm, they are a little mean to people and that shocks me. I am shocked to see that in the US.

Mhmm.

When I was with [REDACTED], in the elevators, if there was a woman alone in the elevator, a man shouldn't go into the elevator. There should be more than two people in an elevator.

Oh wow.

Yeah. Because they don't want any sexual harassment problems or if nothing even happens, that the woman say something happened. Because of that, those problems, they say there should be one instead of two.

Mhmm.

In France, you don't see that often in France. Yeah, you see that less with people. With respect, I think that there are more rules in the US than in France. More rules in the US.

16) Last year I was in a class of "French Contemporary Culture "at my University and the class was very interesting because it expressed perceptions that the Americans have about the French and the book, we used for this class spoke of different things between

the French and Americans. The book was "eye opening" to me because it talks about how the French are more reserved, how they have a small circle of trusted friends, how they think a lot before saying something,

Like you!

Hahahaha.

That's why I laughed earlier!

Hahahaaha!

and how they have differences with time. What do you think of these? Would you say these are true?

Can you? To remember, can you start from the beginning?

The French are more reserved.

More reserved. Yes, it's true.

They have small circles.

Yes, okay.

Of friends.

Mhmm.

They think a lot before saying something.

Mhmm...yes, wait...Reserved...small circles...*writes them down in his journal*

Thinking and reflecting a lot.

Yeah.

Umm, and that they have differences with time.

Differences with time?

Like, they say how Americans are harder with time, they are always on time, or always...

Mhmm.

I forgot how to say early...

Uh “en avance”

Yes ! “en avance”

Mhmm.

Early and ummm...while the French are always late.

Mhmm...mhmm.

And that they work later.

Okay. Reserved. The French are more reserved, one of the points you first brought up.

And one says that...uh...yes, the French are more reserved and...uhh..emmm...less, less likely to smile while public speaking.

Mhmm

They are more reserved and more comfortable with one-on-one discussions than face-to-face with multiple people.

Mhmm.

They don't like, they don't like speaking to a dozen people, they are more reserved and... like less people. Small circles? Yes, the French want to have a small circle of friends at work, um...But that is the general attitude. Here in the US, people want lots of friends. In France, one sees that less. You have 1, 2, or maybe, maybe 3 close friends. But it is very it's a real feeling of people, while here you know many people but it's more of a drinking buddy.

Mhmm. Yes.

Not, he's my friend, he's the guy who drink with you on Friday.

Uh huh. Ahahahh.

That's his name, not a friend, a drinking bad. Yes, so that is a little circle.

Mhmm.

And people think more haha.

Ahhaah.

They think more, yes...*reflects*, I think French people want to give a good quality answer.

Mhmm.

They want to respond to a question precisely. Like a sales manager...uh...*reflects more*

Hahaha.

Hahaha. And um...there are people who are very good on the phone, they speak a lot on the phone, a lot, a lot, a lot. With clients they speak a lot, but when a client has a technical question, because we do technical sales, we're not talking about like a car - like wow yes what a beautiful car. But with a technical question, like technical speed, data, more specific. And when a client has a precise question, the person knows it's not about talking a lot, but about quality and not too many verbal elements in people's questions. So um, if you want, I think it is a person that thinks that...less about the client's question but that stops, reflects, listens carefully, thinks like you said and then the person gives a technical response.

Mhmm.

I think that's what happens. The difference in time. Yes, it's true that here, here it is true but, in both ways, there are people here that are on time, and leave at 6:30. People here

leave right at 6:30, when its 6:30 they just go. They grab their bag and they go. While in France, when the workers may arrive a little late...

Mhmm.

But they won't leave at 5 or 6 or at an exact hour. They will finish what they must before leaving. So here in the US, there's more respect for time and in France there's more respect towards the goal of your work.

Perfect.

17) I read that it has been said that the French do not like weakness that they do not like to be wrong, and that the French prefer to lie than to say they do not know anything...

That is very true. Very, very true...

Do you think Americans have to accept those qualities and bring these qualities into their own professional work lives? Do you agree?

No, I think that the French attitude is very bad...

Mhmm.

When a French person does the work, he cannot be wrong. So, when there is a problem, even with clients, like a relationship with a client, I see the French's attitude with their work like engineers that work for us, at times they are at fault, they are wrong, and they won't admit it. It's always "yes, but...yes, but he told me that, yes, but one didn't tell me that, yes, but I didn't know, yes, but, yes, but, yes, but..." it is, it is, they don't want to take the hit.

Yeah.

And that is something that people in the US, they know to say "I know, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that." They know how to say, they know how to accept. In France,

no one will do that. Like in a restaurant, and you say something, and a server messes up the order, he will never admit...yes, I was wrong.

Mhmm.

They will always, oh you told me this, thing like that. In the US if you go to a restaurant, and you say oh you made a mistake with this, "oh I'm so sorry! I'll change it right away!" It's like that. It is the same thing while at work, the French do not excuse themselves. It is, it is a little negative, no?

Yes.

I say, stop. Stop always having to be right, you are not right, and you should admit it.

"Okay, I'm wrong."

That's good.

18) Do you have to show yourself in a different way here? Do you have to behave differently here and in France? How? Examples?

Like how ?

Umm. Do you have to behave differently here than in France?

Oh, behave differently here?

Yes.

Than here...Uh...hmm. In what...uhhh, like with people?

With people, with your coworkers, with your boss, like in general.

Um yes, yes. I think that there is more...a relationship with respect towards the hierarchy here. I think there is more respect towards the hierarchy. That means that, I...I have heard that in the US, for example when I worked with [REDACTED], I had to listen more, and respect

the...the boss more, more that here with the more French structure. It's more laidback here in the French style.

19) If you could go back to in time before you started working in the United States, what would you have liked to know about the American and their work culture before working in the United States? What advice would you give to other native French business executives who want to work in the U.S?

Hmmm. *reflects* I think that there are several weaknesses for the French. Public speaking.

Mhmm.

It's public speaking and it is...English, the accents in English, all of that. Umm.

And you. You don't have much of an accent. (in English)

A little bit yes, but I've been here for a good while, 10 years, but yes. Thank you.

Hahaha.

I was like, HUH? He speaks French?

Hahaha. You're kind.

Hahaha.

Hahaha. Yes, their public speaking is not very good, ummm....*reflects*. Those who speak on the phone, need good phrases, a good structure, things you learn like at college here in the US people learn how to speak in public, speak with others, and the French don't know how to very well. They are not very good at that. I think that here, most of the time, I tried to do more of that.

20) How do you feel about the work culture in the United States in general? Examples? DO you like it a lot? Do you like it a little?

Hmm...

Do you hate it?

No, I like it, I've had lots of work here and I've liked it. Uh... I like that its, that's it's a work culture, based on merit. On results.

Mhmm.

I really like that. Like I said before, if you are a hard worker, you will rise. It is, that is super good.

21) What do you think about the importance of the government in working here? In

France the government is all centralized but here it is a little decentralized because there are states laws, city laws, and federal law. Have you encountered challenges with work because of it?

Yes, it is complicated, uh, it is complicated with things like imports. It's complicated, uhh...Like declarations of imports, for all that is...umm. Assurance between different states because we are based here but we work with like all states...

Mhmm...

So, we must discuss, it complicates to assure people to the left and to the right. Um...but also, from a governmental point of view- it is complicated regarding importation taxes. That is a huge factor for us. Like if Trump one day, taxes our machines more than today, that will greatly impact us. Uh...it is also complicated in what concerns VISAS. People who have technical knowledge about our machines, who one can't find in the US, like with work visas, it is a complicated process. So yes, yes. The government has a role and impact that is very, very consequential in our activities.

Mhmm.

If tomorrow, Trump wants to, the American president wants to raise taxes on our machines of 50%, that would be bad for the company and there is not much we could do to be competitive with local companies. Yes. That is important for us.

22) What do you think about social culture, American culture outside of work?

It is very centralized on...um...*reflects* on the culture...the bar is a social place here. In France, that does not exist, there is no bar, there are bars, but it isn't a common social place. You don't tell people, let's go grab a glass at the bar tonight. It isn't, it isn't normal. Uh, the culture here is very used to drinking, because people want to work hard during the week, and they want to drink a lot on the weekend.

Mhmm.

It's like that. In France, there isn't that drinking culture, it's not the same. *reflects* The extra activities outside of work are like camping, hiking, doing thing, or inviting someone to your house, things like that.

Mhmm.

One has, if you have good relations with someone, you'll say on Sunday morning, let's eat, I am inviting you. That is good. That is an example from France. In the US, if you have good relations with someone, hey let's go get a drink on Friday night.

Yeah. That's true.

Ha. That's it.

23) What are some things you have learned in your life to "be American"?

The things I have learned...to be American?

Mhmm.

Things I have learned to be American. One must know, and I don't know, one must know sports.

Yes.

Ahhaha. One must know, understand football, understand the teams, understand the roles of the players, know their names, know who won what and where, the score, and me, I don't watch TV a lot so I don't watch a lot of football and I know that that hurts me.

Even in my professional life.

Yes.

Because, at times, clients, at times they'll say "hey. Did you watch the game this weekend? What did you think about it? Did you see how amazing, what this one guy did?" and me, I can't say that because football doesn't interest me.

Mhmm.

I watch European soccer.

Me too.

That interests me more, but American football, I'm not interested in it.

Haahah.

Ahahah. I don't see the ball, where is it? Ahhaha.

Ahhahaa.

It's everywhere.

Uhuh.

When the ball is over there, uhhh everything stops, so that is a trick, American football- the general sport. Basketball, I like watching basketball, but I don't know the names of

the players, not all the players or the teams, the scores. And people in the US are very, very interested in sports.

Mhmm.

Sport. Sports watching, not playing.

Yeah.

Not practicing but watching. That is very, very, very cultural. And that exists less in France.

Mhmm.

Soccer is the principal sport, but it is less, it is less...here it is a religion.

Yeah.

American football is a religion. And there is also food culture, drinking culture, food, uh...snacking, it is...yeah.

24) Do you think it's easier to make friends in the United States or France?

Hmmm. That is a good question. I think it is easy to make friends in the US, easier here in the US, but in the end, they aren't true friends. Ahahahah.

Yes, ahahahaah.

Hahah.

Everyone has said that.

It is easy to make acquaintances in the US, even though you may call them a friend. For me it is easier to make friends in the US than in France but for example, when you have a friend to France, uh...it's for a longer time.

25) What do you think about the difference in food here and in France?

Um... there is a big problem, in the US, people don't cook.

Yes.

They buy food or go eat at a restaurant and in restaurants there are...the majority of people that work in these restaurants or the kitchen are often from, they're people from Hispanic immigration, from central or south America. And in their culture, Hispanic country culture, food is based with oil.

Mhmm, yes.

And I think that for that reason, Americans, when they eat at restaurants or to go food, not snacks, not fast food. Fast food is bad, but when one goes to a restaurant or purchases to go, pick up or delivery, it is, the food is based with oil, based with processed things, and it's that, that's not good. In France, there are more and more people that don't frequent restaurants. Me, when I was in France, I never really went to restaurants. Never, I would go to a restaurant one time a year for a birthday with my friends and that was very rare. Here, I never eat at my house.

Hahaah.

Ahhaaha, it's the opposite. I never make food at home. I know how to make things on my own, simple things, and I think that here people don't know how to eat simply. It must be complicated, with sauces, a mixture of sorts. It is easy to make lentils or beans or rice, and to have fish and that's it. No need to put in bacon crumble or cheese. There's no need to add extra things. Simple things, those make a big difference. In France, people make simple things.

Mhmm.

They make a steak and duck. But uh, things that are basic. So that is a huge difference, the fast food here. People eat fast food a lot here. That is a big difference.

And wine?

Wine. Wine today can have it. One can buy it if, if, if, if you have unlimited money and you want really good French wine, you can find it here. but the price here is a lot more expensive. And the problem is that in France in restaurants, wine is a lot more expensive than in stores, they multiply the price by 2 or 3, but here in the US, its 4 or 5 times the price in restaurants. Wine in restaurants are crazy. There are times that wine, the glass is more expensive than the price of the bottle. Here, buying wine in a restaurant, is crazy. One should drink water and then at home drink the wine you bought.

Mhmm.

It is like cheese. Cheese, you go to central market, you go to trader joes, you go to whole foods, and there is very good French cheese. But it's expensive. A little slice is 20 dollars.

Uhuh.

While in France, a piece like that is 4-5 euros.

Mhmm.

Okay that was my last question.

Okay.

What is your title?

Uh... General Manager for FIRM Z America, which is a branch of FIRM Z France.

Mhmm.

That's a lot of writing.

Yeah. And then I have to translate it...

Yeah translate your hieroglyphics. hahahaah.

Yeah, it's so messy. Whenever I do this, I have notes in English, and then French and then it turns to Spanish. Everything.

Look at my writing, it's pretty disgusting too. Ahahah.

How do you know [REDACTED]?

She's friends with a group of French people that we know here that I know here, friends of like a friend...

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Yahaira Arneros graduated a semester early from The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) with an Honors Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business with French. She was involved in several organizations throughout her years at UTA with leadership roles in many of those organizations; the organizations she actively participated in were UTA's French Club, Pi Delta Phi (The National French Honors Society), Phi Sigma Iota (The National Foreign Languages Society), UTA's Russian Culture Society, UTA's Circle K International (the college counterpart of the Kiwanis Family), UTA's Honor College Council, UTA's Honors College Advocates, and the Texas-Oklahoma Circle K International District.

Her studies focused on international business with an emphasis on French. She thoroughly studied French language, French culture and history, and how these affect international business. In her free time, she studied how learning multiple languages affect the brain and her fourth language, Russian.

Yahaira's future plans are unknown at the moment; she is choosing whether to pursue a degree in international corporate law, pursue a Master's degree in Business Administration, or enter the work force in something related to her degree whether that be through public relations, translation, marketing, or management.