



## Elements of Cross Cultural Influences in the Behavior of Brazilian Professionals in France

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### Introduction

Brazil was officially discovered in 1500 by the Portuguese whereas all seems to indicate that French as well as other Europeans simultaneously came to these new lands to look for a special kind of wood to sell. Some redish wood of high standard quality bright as a “flame”<sup>1</sup> which finally gave its name to the new country : “Brazil”. The Brazilian indians found by these first european explorers in their first trips have since then integrated the French’s realm of dreams as the image of the “Brazilians”, exotic inhabitants of this new world, an image which represented up to nowadays, a kind of trap in which a great part of french expatriates who leave for Brazil still continues to fall. For this sake, one can for instance mention Montaigne’s description in the essay entitled « Les Cannibales » *in Essais*, 1580 in which he details the Brazilian festivals in the city of Rouen. He (Montaigne) watches this *defilé* of Brazilian indians brought in the last ship expedition who look extremely scared finding themselves in the sixteenth century France, a country torn apart by religious wars and disappointed to realize that this messy and cruel reality does not correspond to the modern and civilized world they had been told about.

It is a pleasant task to wonder what would be the figure of the French in Brazilians’ realm of dreams. Those “yellow parrots” as Indians used to call them due to their blond hair and their willingness to chat will come and try to stay for good and establish a process of colonization at least twice. In doing so, they will contribute to the foundation of two important Brazilian cities. In 1555, Villegagnon, chief of the Antarctic France Colony founds the present Capital Rio de Janeiro. He and his colons become friends with Tupinambas Indians and remain *in loco* until 1567, when the Portuguese finally succeed to send them back to Europe. French explorators will return for a second attempt in the seventeenth century this time, in the north of the country. It’s the dream of an Equinoxial France. They will not stay long but enough to

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<sup>1</sup> « brasa » in Portuguese, « braise » in French.

found the city on the honor of their saint-king: Saint Louis (*São Luis*), present capital of the State of *Maranhão*.

After a definitive expulsion by the Portuguese, the French will have to wait until the eighteenth century to return not physically this time but as ideological representatives of the winds spread by the French Revolution: ideas and ideals that will come influence the intellectual leaders in charge of the famous insurrection against the portuguese crown, *Inconfidência Mineira* which took place in the State of *Minas Gerais*. Then again, one will have to wait until the nineteenth century to feel once more the influence of France in Brazil and consequently to have the image of the “French” to finally integrate the imaginary realm of of Brazilians in a permanent way that still corresponds to their image scattered all over the country until today.

As a consequence of the transference of the portuguese court to Brazil in 1808, the source of cultural inspiration officially moves towards countries and civilizations that corresponded to Portugal’s own source of inspiration: London and Paris. These two european capitals, together with Lisbon and Coimbra, were the main destinations of the majority of children of the portuguese aristocracy living in Brazil and became also those of the new born Brazilian aristocracy’s. The elite kept sending their children to these cities to get a good education: England represented technical and commercial progress and, on the other hand, France became a reference in terms of fashion, fine arts, literature, politics and ideologies. In 1855 Auguste Comte wrote «*L’Appel aux conservateurs*», keystone book of Positivism which will have great influence over generations of Brazilian intellectuals who attended polytechnical schools. Besides providing theoretical support to general studies of science, Positivism became the ideological support of the republican regime in 1889.

Nowadays, the main part of Brazilians still see France through a romantic prism as the country known for its culture - literature, arts, fashion, and good cuisine. Those who are a little bit more informed might associate France to European Union, to scientific researches, in medical and pharmaceutical fields but very fews Brazilians at first sight will relate France to commerce, to technicques, to mathematics. All Brazilians professionals interviewed in the present work declared having chosen to work in France also to enrich their general culture, learn about “occidental civilization”, particular cultural aspects, literature.

The French stereotype is not distinguished from the Parisian stereotype : It is a rude individual always in a hurry and in a bad mood, always complaining, who doesn’t like foreigners, specially English and Americans, who doesn’t like spending money nor washing himself. French women enherit the Rio de Janeiro’s nineteenth century’s prostitutes’ image: in the sixties, remained by Brigitte Bardot as the myth of a French woman sensual and easy to seduce.

French Anthropologist living in America, Raymonde Carroll explains that stereotypes are nothing but the judgement of others through our one’s culture : « *Stereotypes have a stiff life not because they are true but because they express and reflect the culture of those who make use of them* »<sup>2</sup>. Stereotypes have a functional role of identity defense whenever one faces a cultural shock. Their use is usually temporary and a while after a first contact, Brazilians living and working in France start questioning the stereotypes of the French and finally get to adjust their perceptions and change their opinions about them.

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<sup>2</sup> Free translation from the French by the Author : « *Les stéréotypes ont la vie dure, mais ce n’est pas parce qu’ils contiennent un grain de vérité, mais plutôt parce qu’ils expriment et reflètent la culture de ceux qui les énoncent* », in CARROLL, R, *Evidences Invisible, Américains et Français au quotidien*, Ed Seuil, 1989, Paris.

The present article presents a set of cultural shock situations experienced by Brazilian professionals living in France, working in a French company, surrounded by French colleagues, subordinates and French bosses. They will be displayed in sections that will allow a deeper reflection on the Brazilian social mechanisms. The testimonies have been organized in two complementary and interdependent sections. Firstly, the specific aspects of communication, corresponding to a kind of introduction to the second and longest section, entitled “management of relations”, subdivided in: interpersonal relations and authority relations. After doing so, I will go over the existing works on a Brazilian management style and I will finally finish this paper talking about the French process of integration for expatriates and for immigrants and making the analysis of the French-Brazilian intercultural dyad through the main intercultural communication theories.

### **Specific Aspects of the French-Brazilian Dyad Communication**

The way people communicate can tell a lot about the way they behave. The very first conclusion about differences in the French and Brazilian communication styles one could have after analysis of the testimonies would be that French have a higher context of communication compared to Brazilians. The concept of communication context has been developed by the American anthropologist Edward Hall. According to him the context in which a communication takes place is determined by the culture and plays an important role in the information interpreting process.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, culture protects our brains from the surpassing of our capacity of information treatment. In such situation an excess of information would then be received and judged important or irrelevant by the context. This would happen because the context would pre-determine which would be the fields of attention and the fields of ignorance for information perception. The surpassing of information would represent a breakdown of the system that is then unable to treat the huge volume of information to which it is submitted. It's not believed that French have a higher context of communication than Brazilians. One could say that both contexts are high, it is just a question of “difference of heights”. There are differences of what is considered a field of interest and what is considered a field of ignorance in one culture and another and consequently, a Brazilian cannot understand all “non-spoken words” of a French speech. This would correspond to the greatest part of them to the main difficulty in working with the French. It would give Brazilians a feeling of being a « fool » or « too naive », a sensation that the French take them for fools or think they are stupid. They seem to feel that French do not say all they have in mind hence that they hide information. This information retention has implications in the logic of implementation of a relation management as Brazilians perceive it.

*«At the beginning, I received e-mail messages that I read and I thought everything was ok and that people were happy with my work. One day, I decided to re-read some of the old messages and then, all of a sudden, surprise! I realized that those messages were not saying what I thought. They even meant the opposite sometimes! What I have taken as a message of approval was in fact a severe critic to my report. The guy was actually « destroying » me with fancy words !» (M, 28, two years of work in France).*

<sup>3</sup> HALL, E.T, *The Silent Language*, Anchor Press, Doubleday, N.Y., 1959.

«Brazilians share information, French hide information. They only give information when they are asked. Information in France is expensive.» (O, 31 , eight months of work in France)

«Brazilians think they are so clever, so smart, and actually, they are so naive. I do think it is sheer naïveté. French on the other hand, are not naive at all, but we only figure this out after a while.»

(U, 42, twelve years of work in France).

«French are so subtle that they would not say: "You have a lot of orthography mistakes in your report". They are more likely to say: "Don't you have an orthography correcting function in your computer? They will not say: "Are you sure you don't have a problem at work?" but instead: "Are you sure you love your job?"(C, 47, twenty years of work in France)

«French have a special ability to inverse the logic of speech in order to always make us believe they are right, even when it is not true. This is not a problem of language, it is a matter of reasoning.»

(P, 33, 10 months of work in France)

«Their language is full of ambiguity. Words are measured, they weigh, they cannot be used randomly. At the beginning, my colleagues often told me which word to use in each situation. I believe that in certain ways, they have a difficult job in choosing the proper words, they even become afraid of speaking.»(U, 42 , twelve years of work in France).

Meditation and comments on context, use and meaning of words have been presented by Brazilians having experienced more than five years of professional activity in France. The relation a Brazilian keeps with his language is undoubtedly smoother than the one a French does. If asked about what language he speaks a Brazilian will not hesitate to answer: "I speak portuguese". Nevertheless, most of Brazilians cannot conjugate verbs corresponding to the second personal pronoms of singular and plural («tu» and «vos») or to grant the appropriate direct or indirect pronom to the correct person in his speech. The Portuguese seem horrified when they listen to Brazilians speaking. They say we make huge mistakes. For some, this would be due to the fact that the idiom portuguese has always been incorrectly spoken in Brazil, and always characterized by a confusion of verbs, personal and indirect and direct pronoms accordance («te», «lhe», «a», «o»). Some of the interviewees see it as a reflection of a lack of indentity of the Brazilian that becomes expressive in the use of the language. Others think this represents only a lack of compromise with a heavy tradition of letters and literature as it exists in France.

Regardless of all those remarks, one thing is for sure: even when they express themselves in their native language, Brazilians usually do not seem "to count", choose or measure words. They even show a tendency to exaggerate. According to the testimonies, French "measure" words, on one hand because they retain information and on the other hand, because they want to avoid taking the responsibility of having "said" or "meant" something. This is due to the fact that a mistake is an unforgiven, a true disaster in France, it often means the end of a brilliant career. Opposite from what could happen in pragmatic environment as in the american society, in France the society does not easily grant professionals a second chance, so people are very careful

whenever they have important decisions to make, whenever they say something that might engage their responsibility.

French language follows a ritual of synthesis. As words are then measured, they do not speak much, just what it takes to convey the message. This attitude seems to be the source of frustration for Brazilians who need to “*speak a lot and also to hear a lot*” as well as a source of admiration for this capacity French have to rationalize their speech. This synthesizing skill make French be characterized by a direct, dry, impersonal and antipathic speech most of times. Such attitude would not allow the implementation of a process of “familiarization” or intimacy creation that Brazilians need to do in order to manage their relations. Professional meetings in France are not superior in number than in Brazil as suspected at first, but they seem to be against all odds, felt as more productive. All interviewees confirmed having attended meetings. According to them, French love debating and discussing and sometimes remain hours discussing topics that could be easily solved in a few minutes. Those meetings are seen as productive though, high standard and in some companies they are also the only way to directly communicate with colleagues or to see the boss. Everyone seems to have the right to express his or her opinions and this has been cited as a very positive point. Being well informed would correspond to a way to “save his face” to a French. The more people come to ask you for information the more important you are in the organization.

As latin languages, both French and Portuguese have words that have the same semantic root but sometimes different meanings, or same meaning with different degrees of implication. The word “*merde*” for example mentioned every two minutes by a French is not so easily employed in Brazil as the word “*véxé*” in French seems to have a more serious connotation than “*vexado*” in Portuguese.<sup>4</sup> Different ways of expression enlarge the list of misunderstandings. Used to saying “*I want a cup o coffee please*” in portuguese language Brazilians in a French *café* could be badly interpreted by a waiter who would expect them to say “*I would like*” or “*Could you please*”, this is due to the fact that in France, only king Louis the 14th was allowed to say “*I want*”, and this dates back to the seventeenth century.

Finally, Brazilians say French whisper a lot and that when doing so, they are talking of them. Does this feeling correspond to a lack of self confidence due to a non-achieved process of identity construction of Brazilians? Would it be just a inferiority complex they experience facing these foreigners from the first world? The present enquiry could not tell. Anyway, Brazilians say that when French start “talking of them” not “about them”, this cannot be interpreted as a good sign.

## **Management of Relations**

### **Interpersonal Relations**

The present verification allows us to notice some institutional aspects of both societies and their influences in the professional behavior of Brazilian professionals in France.

French society seems to be further more individualistic in what concerns personal relations or relations between identified individuals whereas collectivist in impersonal relations or relations concerning non-identified or anonymous individuals, society as a whole.

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<sup>4</sup> *Véxé* in French means « highly offended » as *vexado* in Portuguese means « embarrassed or ashamed. »

Opposite from this, the Brazilian society seems to be very collectivist in what concerns personal relations, the ones between identified individuals and at the same time, very individualistic and even worse, selfish, in what concerns global aspects of the society as a whole, as a set of non-identified individuals.

The fact that the Brazilian society is collectivist at the personal sphere level and selfish at the collective sphere level has several implications in the lives of people and the way they manage their personal and professional relations. These interiorized behaviors come along with Brazilians when they move to France and appear in their daily work routine. Nevertheless, the responses they can receive from the French do not correspond to their unconscious expectations. Brazilian professionals are then in contact with another symbolic set of references that works differently hence, the emergence of a cultural shock. In order to guarantee their survival in a society based in the quantity and quality of interpersonal relations, Brazilians seem to need to create a climate of intimacy to feel comfortable. The more the situation is impersonal, unpredictable or uncomfortable, the more this need will urge. In 1937, Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda tried to understand the reasons of this behavior. According to him, this « cordial man » wants to escape from the rites of *politesse*, a way of self-defense for other cultures, including the French one, which allows people to hide their emotions.

The Brazilians would have found in the external forms of cordiality (which do not necessarily need to be honest to be expressed) the “face” that allows them to keep control over the social environment. The fact of establishing an intimate link with someone would enable Brazilians to better create and manage their relations to protect their feelings and to live publicly in society. “*The formal and respectful terms do exist*”, says Buarque de Hollanda, even more if one considers that Brazilian society is still characterized by a vertical hierarchy and great social differences. Nevertheless, all sorts of protocol cannot be tolerated if they do not bring within a slight promise of close rupture characterized by a « personalization » of the relation: “*Our behavior admits forms of respect and even in a pleasant way, but only if they do not entirely exclude the possibility to have a more familiar relation. The normal demonstration of respect in other cultures can be found in ours as a desire to establish a certain kind of intimacy with the Other. This seems to be a specific Brazilian characteristic, if we consider that the Portuguese of whom we are so close in a lot of ways, feel so attached to titles and signs of consideration.*”<sup>5</sup>

As a consequence, it is not odd in Brazil to see people in front of a public office counter trying to start a familiar conversation with the public agent behind the counter, mentioning his or her hair style, talking about soap operas and soccer games hence trying desperately to “break the ice” and who knows? Maybe within less time, obtain the document they have come for. This leads us to the conclusion that the impersonal bureaucracy as Max Weber has described it is impracticable in Brazil. According to Brazilian anthropologist Roberto da Matta, Brazil is characterized by a dual society, composed by « individuals » (impersonal citizens who face the laws and the institutions) and by « persons » (the « person » with his/her individual characteristics that make him/her unique). In such society, all people, most of the time, would try to use this « cordiality » to transform the “individual” (the subject lost in the collectivity) into the “person”. This would be possible by creating a certain kind of intimacy with the Other, and would have as a goal, on one hand to consolidate and enlarge his/her relation network in order to feel “secure” and “protected” and on the other hand, to obtain a personalized treatment and some prerogatives in situations

<sup>5</sup> Free translation from the French edition.

BUARQUE DE HOLLANDA, S, « Racines du Brésil » (Raizes do Brasil), Ed Gallimard, 1998, p.234, 235.

7

where the Law and the formal institutions normally should grant an impersonal treatment. This would be the basis of impunity. Consequently, the meaning of the word « citizen » for a French and for a Brazilian is not the same at all.

What for a French would mean the victory of republican ideals in a society where everyone knows his/her rights and duties and where the common well being must be guaranteed by the State, in Brazil unconsciously reminds the “poor guy” lost in the crowd that does not have any personal relation to “protect him”, the famous: “Jack Nobody” (*João Ninguém*).

This behavior that consists on the creation of some kind of intimacy to personalize the relations has several important implications. It can evolve towards a negative side that relates it to the origins of corruption and impunity.

As matter of fact, it would intrinsically be bound to the mechanism of the «*jeitinho*» (a solution or an arrangement), it would also explain the exchange of services (*troca de favores*) and the mentality of the 50-50 where everyone wins, expressed in the popular saying: «*Uma mão lava a outra*» (one hand washes the other) and that would also have as ominous result the implementation of a sort of “mediocrity pact” illustrated by the sentence: «*fica por isso mesmo*», in several occasions. It would be intimately linked to a mix of private and professional spheres and responsible for an intrusion of private life that would end up in a restriction of personal freedom for the individuals within a group and would create an affective and professional confusion in the minds of employees in what concerns their relations with their bosses. Brazilians try to protect their universe of personal relations by adopting an avoiding conflict attitude as well as adopting an attitude of never denying nor refusing anything, specially if the person who is asking is from a higher social level or a higher hierarchical level than their own.

So, instead of simply telling a French partner that he no longer wishes to work with him/her, a Brazilian export agent can simply disappear overnight. He prefers to vanish than to provide any kind of excuse or explanation that could eventually end up in a conflict. Another effect of this fear of destabilization of relations at the personal level is that a Brazilian will have the tendency to not assume nor take a decision that will certainly displease his peers or provoke negative reactions in his professional environment. If so, it is never « my fault ». It is the government’s fault, the weather’s, the traffic jam’s, the globalisation’s fault. Within a company, it is the marketing department’s fault, or the sales department’s fault, or the direction’s. It is systematically someone else’s fault. This attitude positively gives Brazilians a certain courage to take responsibilities and to take risks compared to the French for whom a mistake means “end of your career”. Mistakes in Brazil are not such a “career death condemnation” as mistakes in France. People usually are granted a second chance.

A French, on the other hand, would be excessively worried about his implication in something, he would hesitate to take responsibilities because he knows that if there is a problem it will be his fault, he was the responsible and a mistake or a professional fault related to the person’s competences as a professional in France as said before is a irreversible situation. The French preserves his face in avoiding risk taking in situations that rely under his responsibility. These differences provide interesting professional effects as the punishment of employees who have committed a professional fault or have arrived late to work that I will treat in the topic of authority relations.

Humour also changes from one culture to another. Brazilians interviewees complained that French colleagues are always making remarks about and to them that far from making them laugh provoke a very unpleasant sensation. This could be due to the fact that maybe snide jokes as the French are used to exchanging in groups

would be interpreted as a threat to this Brazilian universe of personal relations. Therefore, exchanging snide jokes is considered normal by French within a group. One could then say that these jokes or remarks correspond to William Labov's (1978) ritual offenses, reminded by Jacques Girin : within a determined framework, a group of colleagues send each other some "ritual offenses" that confirm their status as group members. These offenses are then, harmless. Actually what the French unconsciously mean by making snide remarks to a Brazilian is: "*You have been accepted as part of our group and you must now take part in our rituals*". However, feeling as aliens and as excluded, Brazilians are likely to interpret these "ritual offenses" as real, on one hand because their context of communication does not allow them to understand these offenses as the rites of interaction they really are, on the other hand, because most of times this could reinforce the perception they have of the opposite: a French attitude of reminding them that they are foreigners and do not belong to the the group. The French way of making compliments fits in this reflection. Used to making and getting a lot of compliments, Brazilians complain about a lack of compliments by the French. Because they are rare, french compliments whenever they come as acknowledges for a good job are highly appreciated, though the problem seems to emerge when these compliments are made as the jokes or snide remarks mentioned above, for instance as if in order to say one loves your shirt or your tie, one had to make fun of you or just make a mean comment to compensate or justify the positive side of the remark. To make matters worse, Brazilians are used to a very personal and intimate universe and take all remarks and critics very personally, which in certain cases might cause a real problem of interaction with the person that made the remark.

Hence, the demonstration of the natural and unconscious reactions of Brazilian professionals in France just described, most of times, become source of several cultural shocks.

### **Effects of the Interpersonal Relations Management : « Face Saving », « Exchange of Favors » and the Equitable Arrangement Between Two Equal Subjects As An Application of the "*Jeitinho*"**

The «*jeitinho*» is one of the most interesting consequences of the relation's creation and maintenance system. Within a society structured as a network of interpersonal relations, it corresponds to a mechanism developed to obtain something from someone else on the basis of one's personal characteristics, implying that the service one obtains will certainly be payed back (not necessarily by the one who has benefited from it but by someone else belonging to the whole). Brazilian anthropologist Livia Barbosa is the author of an excellent book on the "*jeitinho*", which she describes as the "*The Art of Being More Equal Than the Others*". In Brazil, people live in a hierarchical society where institutions preach equal treatment for all, but the fact is that this equality does not correspond to Brazilian reality. Hence, this democratic illusion vanishes as soon as the "individual" (impersonal relation) finds himself in a difficult situation where he is bound to use a mechanism to get himself personalized to become the "person" and turn the initial impersonal relation into a personal one. This can be done through two ways : first, through the authoritarian mechanism of the "*você sabe com quem esta falando?* (*Do you have any idea whom you are talking to?*), elucidated by Roberto da Matta, which is a characteristic Brazilians do not like to acknowledge and would prefer to ignore, for it shows the true unequal hierarchical skeleton of Brazilian society.

Through the "*você sabe...*", the "individual" becomes the "person", as he/she reveals his/her status as member of a higher and more powerful social layer assuming



that differences between social classes are a strong value in the society and reminding the others that the equalitarian treatment reserved by the laws are not applicable for all. Therefore the use of this mechanism that requires power and social prestige is not available for all, reason why the “*jeitinho*” exists as a ritual based on equality, that erases all social differences and depends only on the personal characteristics of the users. Hence, opposite to the “*você sabe...*”, the “*jeitinho*” employs negotiation and argumentation, the identity of its users does not need to be revealed (it can as well be employed by the humble house maid as by the powerful politician).

The user of the “*jeitinho*” assumes that people are all equal human beings and, “*if today, I am the one who gets a benefit, tomorrow it might be your turn*” after all, “*we are all God’s children*”. This symmetric and egalitarian aspect of the “*jeitinho*” has shown up in the interviews, in the description of different behaviors : First, in “*face saving*” behavior, then secondly through a reciprocal rationale of “*today it is him, maybe tomorrow it will be me, who knows?*” When saving the other’s face, Brazilians protect themselves and the group by offering to the ones who made a fault, at the moment of the fault’s recrimination, the excuse that will allow them to make it up to the group. It also works in a logic of maintenance of relation stability, through conflict avoidance. The second consequence of this behavior is of course characterized by a symmetric and personalized aspect in a certain “*exchange of favors*” which could be expressed as the following: “*I will do something for you today so that I can get something from you tomorrow, consequently you owe me a service, one hand washes the other*”. This would lead in certain situations, to arrangements, that would confirm an unpleasant reality of frequent practical acts of nepotism within Brazilian organizations, underlining the fact that performance is still not the most important criterium for success achieving nor for promotions. The family background, the personal relations an employee has would still be more important than his/her performance. According to cross cultural consultants Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner<sup>6</sup> both Brazilian and French cultures ascribe value to titles, diplomas and social status. Nevertheless Brazilians seem to work mostly in a logic of “*making someone a favor*” (*fazer um favor*) as French would be more likely to work within a rationale of “*doing or rendering someone a service*” (*rendre service*). The Brazilian “*exchange of favors*” collects a very bad reaction from the French, who, according to French sociologist Philippe D’Iribarne, do not accept to be compliant, and encounter some difficulties in making someone a favor or even in rendering services under some circumstances.

According to the D’Iribarne’s logic of honor<sup>7</sup> which dates back to the Old Regime and still present in their subconsciousness, French would only accept to “*serve*” those they consider legitimately superior, “*more noble*” than they consider themselves to be. Brazilians, as well as Americans, in general definitely seem not to fulfill their criteria of superiority nor nobility to deserve a special, personalized or gentle treatment. Besides, French are still likely to consider their products: wine, perfume, for instance as competitive advantages. Customer Relationship Management is still not totally implemented in their mentalities. Their competitiveness still relies on the quality of their products not on the quality of their service.

<sup>6</sup> TROMPENAARS, F and HAMPDEN-TURNER, C, *Riding the Waves of Culture, Understanding Diversity in Global Business*, second edition, Mc Grall Hill, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> In his book, “*La Logique de l’Honneur*”, Philippe D’IRIBARNE reminds MONTESQUIEU for whom, in the French Ancient Regime, monarchy would not turn into depotism because of the power of a society’s managing mentality that he named the “*Logic of Honor*”. Honor here to be understood as a “*pre conception of each person and each position, its rights and duties*”. D’IRIBARNE also reminds French historian TOCQUEVILLE, for whom, social hierarchy in France has never been a synonym of financial success. It is more about those who are considered noble and those who are considered vile, regardless of their financial situation.

It is important to notice that Brazilian interviewees seem to feel their work is more valued in France compared to Brazil regardless of the quality of their relations with other colleagues or within a team, which leads us to conclude, according to Trompenaars' seven dimensions, that French culture is more neutral than the Brazilian one. It is also important to notice that against all odds, even if they are used to live in a collectivist way characterized by the interpersonal relations networks in all levels of their society, Brazilians tend to be very suspicious towards the others in a business or formal environment where he is not yet or totally identified as a "person" but as an "individual". Used to living in a system where selfishness and interpersonal networks are stronger than the feeling of being publicly and politically involved citizen caring for the community as a whole, a society where "everyone is alone and God looks after each one" (*Cada um por si e Deus por todos*), Brazilians are collectivist because they must consolidate and entertain their networks of personal relations to survive whereas at the same time, they have also to protect themselves from the members of their group. That is a difficult task once one shares so many personal information with the group. Consequently, "you are my friend, but I keep my eye on you, because I know a lot about you as you know a lot about me. If you do not harm me telling what you know about me, I will also preserve your privacy in return."

*«Brazilians get by, they always find a solution or an arrangement, a «jeitinho» to solve problems, they are more flexible than the French..» (E, 26 three years of work in France)*

*«In France, there is no last time arrangement no «jeitinho». Everything must be previewed, appointments must be made in advance, sometimes six months ahead of time.» (K, 29, three years of work in France)*

*«French and Europeans in general often stop when they face an obstacle. Brazilians always find a way to go over all obstacles. If French law asks me to pay taxes to import stones, I will import my stones in Germany where law is smoother. A French would never do this, he would never think about this possibility! I am sure he would give up at the first obstacle he would not even try to check the import laws in the other European countries. I think chaotic Brazilian economic situation is the reason why we are so proactive, we always find a way to get by, to solve a problem to do what we want to do.» (T, 49, four months of work in France)*

*«We must suspect the others, we must keep our eyes wide open, in Brazil one can only count on himself in a business environment. Your colleague is maybe nice, but he wants your job. It is a very competitive environment.» (P, 33, ten months of work in France)*

*«At the beginning I thought we were working in a fifty-fifty arrangement, equality, we wash our hands together, but the guys would not see things like this. It is a hard competition in here. It is not very different in Brazil but you cannot make arrangements or compromises to protect yourself.» (M, 28 ans, three years of work in France)*

*«I believe French are always in a bad mood because there is nothing, not a personal aspect that motivates them to come to work. In Brazil, we are always in a good mood, even if my job is boring, people are happy to go to work because their colleagues are nice and they get along.» (O, 31, eight months of work in France)*

*«Brazilians are not used to competition as the French are. They are not used to this. A Brazilian wants to win with you not against you, everyone must be a winner in a negotiation. It is a perpetual arrangement.» (U, 42 , twelve years of work in France)*

*«Unfortunately, in Brazil the fact of having studied, of being competent and skilled is not a guarantee of professional success. Sometimes you work hard for years in order to get a promotion and it is Mr. One's nephew that will get it. Sometimes you are lucky and it works you have to give your «jeitinho» to get it, if you do it well, you have a chance to succeed.» (R, 30, two years and a half of work in France)*

*«In Brazil, you can work hard, be highly skilled, if you are not nice, your work is not recognized or valued. I believe in France, when you do a good job, they acknowledge it. I feel my work and my technical skills are more valued in France. (G, 37, two years and a half of work in France)*

*«In Brazil, the company is like a great family, everyone is like a cousin. Everyone saves everyone's face permanently. Today it is my turn, maybe tomorrow it will be yours. I save your face, I reprimand you and simultaneously I offer you an excuse, for instance, suppose the guy arrives late at work. His colleague or his boss will say : « you are late, pal, it is due to the traffic jams isn't it?» By doing so, they offer you an excuse for your delay, an acceptable explanation. Isn't that a nice system? In France, this smooth way to settle things do not exist. The French will tell you straight way you are late and this shall not happen twice. On the other hand, in Brazil, you'd better not have a serious argument because if you provoke me, I will say all I know about you and you can be sure I know a lot because you have told me all about you.» (C, 47, twenty years of work in France.)*

### **Authority Relations Management**

The effects of interpersonal relation management mechanisms also influence authority relations. Besides the “*você sabe...*” (*Do you have any idea who you are talking to?*)<sup>8</sup>, which seems to be the best characteristic of an explicite hierarchical demonstration of a boss who never gets to be contested nor give any explanations or justify an order he gives to this subordinates, the relations between boss and employees are also characterized by this subtle mixture of personal and professional spheres at work. Hence in Brazil, one can feel free to ask his boss about his family without being offensive nor intrusive. This relation would be characterized by an authoritarian and simultaneously affective behavior, which confuses the employees who no longer knows if he/she is talking to a friend or to a boss.

This confusion has been seized by Brazilian researcher Alexandre Borges de Freitas in his analysis of the characteristics of Brazilian culture within organizations. According to him, the patriarchal portuguese family from the colonial times provided an almost untouchable moral model that governed the relations between those who governed and those who were governed, and established until today the rules of domination through affective relations based on the need of protection:

<sup>8</sup> « *Você sabe com quem esta falando ?* » (*Do you have any idea whom you are talking to ?*), is a social mechanism elucidated by the brazilian anthropologist Roberto da Matta who describes a hierarchical authoritarian and antipathetic relation where the one who uses it reveals his position and his social prestige to impose his authority and obtain what he/she wants.

employees must be loyal to the boss, who in return will “protect” them as a father. In addition to this, one can also perceive in this behavior the conflict avoidance practice. If we consider the Brazilian historian Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda’s patriarchal Portuguese family description, this particular trait becomes even more evident. According to him, this model of family is characterized by a great land farmer who gathers at this farm and under his authority: legitimate and illegitimate children, nephews, cousins, single brothers and sisters, godchildren and others (poor white people, free black people and mulattoes) who are considered as part of the family. These people must obey and respect their master in exchange of his protection in a world where the portuguese crown’s laws are not valuable. The more people the landlord gathers around him, the more prestigious he will be.

This has as main consequences : (1) the employee’s total submission, in order to prove his loyalty to the boss, (2) a big confusion due to the boss’s attitudes that are simultaneously affective and authoritarian and will lead to a capability of the boss to better control the situation and benefit from this submission: *“In the dominating colonial relations the master is not only the holder of the physical work. He is also owner of his slaves’ physical and moral existence, he has a moral responsibility towards them. Several aspects of this Portuguese patriarchal structure still resist within a professional environment of our days. There is a mixture of a pure economical relation and personal friendship links. The “boss” governs his employees’ work force by offering a job, but he also governs his employees’ claims and yearnings, he penetrates, by these means, in the moral sphere of this relation (Da Matta, 1986). By establishing a relation based on trust, the boss protects his employee as if he/she were his child and by doing so, keeps control over him/her. On the other hand, the employee feels protected and grateful and in order to demonstrate his gratitude, remains loyal to the boss. The employee gets confused and the boss is then enabled to have a double control over the situation.»*<sup>9</sup> If the employee makes a mistake, then it is with the greatest care that the boss must impose his authority. If it is a great mistake, the boss must do it in such a way the employee feels he has done something wrong and failed the trust the boss had on him. If it is just a small fault, as arriving late at work for instance, the boss will talk to him in private, making him/her understand that by doing so, he/she risks to become an undesirable or a badly seen element within the group. In France, the reprimand would be done publicly, in a stiff objective and even aggressive way, in front of the rest of the group, in order to demonstrate one’s authority. Used to the mechanism of the “save facing”, and to the relations preserving careful attitudes and concerned about what they consider a private aspect of this particular situation, Brazilians tend to feel very bad after being reprimanded in public in a French way.

Hence, Brazilians usually expect their bosses to behave like a father: giving commands, providing guidance, approval and affection. Several interviewees complained about a lack of feedback and orientation from their boss about their job and performance. They also feel as always kept distant and treated with indifference and they complain that they cannot easily contact their bosses. Here again, the French boss’ distance keeping attitude reminds what says D’Iribarne in his above mentioned book: in a French company, the boss is not the father but the prince. He also inspires loyalty to employees, who are like subjects to this prince. Nevertheless if one can approach his/her father when he/she feels like, on the other hand, a prince cannot be approached so easily by his subjects.

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<sup>9</sup> BORGES DE FREITAS, A, «Traços Brasileiros para Uma Análise Organizacional», in *Cultura Organizacional e Cultura Brasileira*, Coord. Par PRESTES MOTTA, F et CALDAS, M, Ed Atlas, 1997.

Moreover, French seem to be more autonomous, more independent in their job performing. They do not need anyone to explain them what they must do nor how. Any kind of job control might be very badly perceived. The respect towards the others is shown in the acknowledging of each person's professional competences who must well know his/her job and well perform his/her tasks, from the moment he/she is recognized as a competent professional a French employee does not feel obliged to provide feedback on his/her work, not even to his/her direct boss. Being "capable of" (*capable de*) is crucial for a French professional, the very representation of this "face". It is then well seen to work late, this means one really cares for his/her job, and one really is compromised with the company's objectives, even if one does not actually work and instead checks his/her mail, even if it is just a masquerade. Being considered unskilled or incompetent when people first had you for a skilled person is a very heavy fault, not forgivable, which explain French's hesitation to take responsibilities of to put his/her signature on a piece of paper.

Another relevant aspect is the division among professional categories within a French company. According to the logic of honor there are "noble" and "not noble" jobs, which places people in a social hierarchy pyramid according to their profession and their education: the number of years they have studied and the school they have attended. Hence, engineers only talk to technicians about projects, they simply cannot have another kind of conversation because they do not belong to the same professional level, consequently, they do not belong to the same social layer. As noblemen did not mingle with ordinary men in the Ancient Regime, doctors do not eat at the same table as nurses and paramedical personnel at the hospital cafeteria, professors seldom have a cup of coffee with students and so on. On the other side of this intercultural dyad, Brazilians, live in an even more hierarchical society whose delicate balance depends on the art of cordiality at all social levels. Doctors and nurses do not have the same number of years of education in Brazil which is not so different from the way it is in France and most of times they do not belong to the same social class; nevertheless, Brazilians do seem to need to create a relaxed and intimate atmosphere at work as in everywhere else which requires everyone to talk to each other, to chat (not necessarily about work) and to get along, so that the system as a whole can function. The invisible line that establishes the social and physical separation of French « noble » and « not noble » jobs seems rather extreme and is often interpreted as arrogance or foolish pride.

French are considered to be better educated, to be more autonomous and to have a professional culture, a characteristic that is not very common among Brazilians. As an interviewee explained : « *A French pilot and a Brazilian pilot can both ride their planes but the difference is that the French knows also everything about it : its economical value, its history, the fact that he transports human lives* ». This is a type of deep « professional conscience » Brazilians seldom own. Brazilian professionals have a great part of their professional skills acquired on the field and they learn a little bit more gradually as difficulties come up. A great number of Brazilians schools and universities only provide a basic guide, a slight clue of what a profession is in real life. French schools and universities on the other hand, seem to provide a deep amount of theoretical and technical information that must cover all difficulties a professional might or not one day face in his life.

Taught on field, Brazilians are usually not given deep explanation about the values nor the historical background of their professions which somehow makes it difficult for them to create and share a professional culture. Moreover, a french professional feels he/she no longer needs to keep studying when he/she gets his/her diploma. On the other hand, a Brazilian professional is conscious about the lacks of

his/her basic education and will automatically seek for a complementary course, a post-graduation or a MBA even if he/she already has a job and a diploma.

An aspect that seems to be highly appreciated by Brazilians in France is the fact that French are not so « workaholic ». People in France work to live whereas in Brazil as well as in America, people live to work. This workaholic behavior in Brazilian's opinion could be due to the fact that they are afraid of losing their jobs. We could also think that it is maybe because they do not want to displease their bosses. One thing is for sure : Brazilians work much more and much harder than French, even excessively, without complaining nor thinking about going on a strike.

*« In France, no one teaches you how to work. You cannot count on your boss to solve all your problems, he simply does not have time to. I would like to have his appreciation, just letting me know if I am doing the right thing, if I am doing a good job.» (A, 33, a year and a half of work in France)*

*«French never admit having made a mistake. Take the example of the French roads : there is never a detour, or a “way back”. When you do something wrong at work, your career is over, you are not given a second chance.» (O, 31, eight months of work in France)*

*«In Brazil, if you often arrive late, at a first moment, your boss will call you in private to tell you : «You see, you must make an effort to be on time, it is not for me or anything, I do not mean to be rude or authoritarian, it is for your colleagues' sake. They are starting to make bad comments about you.» (D, 45, four years of work in France)*

*«If you do a good job, it is normal to have it valued, but you have done nothing but your obligation. The worst thing is when you do something wrong. They will strike you like a lightning, in front of all, with no mercy.» (G, 37, two years and a half of work in France)*

*«Here no one is afraid of telling you things directly. The other day, my boss was not happy with my job, he started to shout out loud, in the middle of the corridor for everyone to hear. It was awful, terribly embarrassing, but I felt like laughing, I thought he was ridiculous.» (R, 30, two years and a half of work in France)*

*«For French, the skills, being capable of, (être capable de), is very important. There is nothing worse for a Frenchman than hear that he was not capable of doing something. We do not feel this culpability, but we can feel their aggressivity when something turns bad. Brazilians are not used to aggressivity at all, we have this kind of balm, this balsam that makes slip all of our relationships so well.» (C, 47, twenty years of work in France)*

*«Last meeting, my subordinate presented a report that had a serious mistake. As a good brazilian that I am, I waited until the end of the meeting, when the others have left to talk to her in private. Later on, my boss, who was in the meeting, came to see me. He asked me why I had not told her during the meeting, so I told him I did not want to embarrass her in front of the team because her mistake was very serious. Then he told me that next time I should speak in front of everyone, to show my authority.» (E, 26, three years of work in France)*

*«Brazilians take all critics very personally. If a French makes a remark to his work, he will immediately think : « he does not like me », when as a matter of fact, it is nothing but a technical remark.» (K, 29 , three years of work in France)*

*«At college, there was this professor who said he was not going to teach us because we would one day leave school and become his competitors. Most of the students did not complain, because the professor promised them that they would have a good grade at the end of the course. They were more concerned about having a diploma with honors and fake a knowledge they didn't have than learning how to do their jobs. Those who revolted and wanted to tell the professor off were excluded from the group. That is the reason why there are so many unskilled professionals in Brazil. That's the reason why we leave university and we haven't learned a lot, and we must do a post-graduation or a MBA, or something else to try to learn more and become a better professional.» (U, 42, twelve years of work in France)*

*«I regret not having learned how to write well. I am very bad at grammar and Portuguese, it is due to school to the fact that my mother was always trying to protect me. Brazilians are always trying to act as the « father of all » always trying to protect, and consequently, our basic education is full of gaps. I do not think my education was good enough and I attended one of the best private schools in town.» (R, 30 two years and a half of work in France)*

*«French are not worried about talking a MBA or a post-graduation after they have found a job. Brazilians know they must keep studying to improve and to become and stay competitive. We are always trying to look for night courses, masters, etc. I believe the French professional considers his diploma BAC+3 or BAC+4 enough and that he no longer needs to keep studying once he has found a job. It is a totally different mentality.» (O, 31, eight months of work in France)*

### **Brazilian Traits Having A Great Influence Within Organizations: Confirmed Traits of Borges de Freitas' Analysis**

In his article, Alexandre Borges de Freitas tries to link the different approaches on Brazilian culture to the studies on corporate culture. First, he integrates Gilberto Freyre's and Caio Prado Jr.'s ethnological and historical views, to Roberto da Matta's approach, which is a structural analysis of contemporary aspects of Brazilian culture. Then, he establishes the link between national culture and corporate culture, following the trace of Schein's work (1987), who states that national cultures and sub-cultures are composed by ground principles and other symbolical sets he calls "values". Actors would be pre-conscious about ground principles and conscious about values. Within an organization, values would contribute to create parameters such as : think, act, etc. Borges de Freitas then refers to Canadian researcher Omar Aktouf's work (1993) for whom culture is a set of mental images that compose a collective complex. The organization itself would be this material and imaterial collective complex.

The material aspect of the organization would be represented by the economical, technical structures as well as by the institutions, infra and super structures. The imaterial aspect, by the mental images. The corporate culture would be the fruit of the dialectical and interdependant interaction of these two aspects and national culture would have a huge influence in the social structures as well as in the mental images, which would lead us to conclude that it would have an important role

to play in the construction of the corporate culture. By these means, Borges gets to establish a set of traits of the national culture, that he considers to be very strong within Brazilian organizations. The present research has confirmed some of these traits.

The first of Borges' trait is hierarchy. He characterizes it as a tendency to power centralization within social groups, a tendency of distance keeping attitude in the relations between these different groups, as well as a tendency to submission and acceptance of the situation by inferior groups. The present study has shown that the power concentration is confirmed by the generalized expression used by the interviewees to explain that Brazil functions in a kind of rationale of "power", whereas France functions in a rationale of "having the right to". For what concerns the distance between different social groups, one must note that cordiality does not erase social distances and that employees do feel confused because they are involved in a dual relation of authority and affection with the boss. Finally, submission to which he refers is explained by the fact that individuals are selfish on a collectivity level characterized by impersonal relations and that people are afraid of entering a conflictuous relation and jeopardize their personal relations. Moreover, this first trait of hierarchy is corroborated by the practice of the already mentioned social mechanism of "você sabe..." elucidated by Roberto da Matta.

The second of Borges' traits is personalism. He associates a society based on social relations, proximity and affection to paternalism, a moral and economical kind of domination. This trait is confirmed by the characteristics of interpersonal relations, the need to create a link of intimacy to preserve and protect one's true emotions and the fact that the boss corresponds to the father, of whom one awaits authority and affection.

The «malandragem», that I shall here translate as roguery, is the quality of the «malandro» a sort of opportunistic loafer, national archetype despised and at the same time oddly admired by Brazilians, because he always gets by and benefits from all circumstances.

This trait is characterized by flexibility and adaptability and by the «jeitinho». The present work confirms the use of the «jeitinho» as an arrangement, an exchange of favors or a tool of creative solutions.

Sensualism, the third trait is a taste for all that is sensual and exotic in the interpersonal relations management. We could associate this trait to the fascination and curiosity Brazilians feel about foreigners. This trait could also be characterized by an emotional, esoteric and romantic character of Brazilians in opposition to the French rational cartesianism.

At last, Borges's last trait is the « Adventurer ». For him, Brazilians are dreamers, which could justify a certain lack of discipline, and they would hate manual or methodical work. Although the already mentioned Gilberto Freyre and Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda's approaches of the colonial Portuguese past offer a fine explanation to the repugnance of the manual work associated with slaves and lower social classes, this "dreamer" trait has not been confirmed by the present research. Borges' article offers us a deep sensitive analysis that nevertheless remains incomplete, for he does not mention the links between these traits and the concrete organizational consequences that they could lead to.

### **The Immigrant and the Expatriate: Analysis of the French Way of Social Integration**

Integration is here understood as the process of acceptance and acknowledgement of the other in his/her difference, which is opposite to assimilation, process in where



specific cultural characteristics of the individual are completely erased by the new culture. In order to represent a stable dynamic balance in the preservation and evolution of one's identity, the successful process of integration is composed by temporary results that can be described as a permanent identity negotiation. As my sample was composed by twelve Brazilians: seven expatriates and five immigrants, I thought it would be interesting to understand a little bit more of the dynamic process of integration for each one of the different status.

In his text "*Etre cadre à l'étranger*"<sup>10</sup>, Canadian researcher Allain Joly refers to american anthropologist Ralph Linton's studies to state that the experience of working abroad implies a total restructuration of one's personality. The expatriate, as the immigrant, would go through a process composed of four stages. First stage would be characterized by a state of enchantment Brazilians feel about France and the French, a kind of dream come true image that they carry from school : the country of human rights, the Louvre museum, the literature, the french civilization, the French *cuisine* and the fact that it is a developed European country.

The second stage is opposite to the first. Characterized by a disappointment that is a consequence of the verification that the real situation does not correspond to the image they had of the country and its inhabitants, this period implies a depressive behavior, a stress and an incessant comparison between the two cultures, the inconveniences of the country of origin are then minimized or totally forgotten. The third stage corresponds to choice of adopting a "keep a distance" behavior or total integration. The individual is offered the option to choose between total assimilation or to become an eternal marginal or refugee. When the individual chooses the way of assimilation, he enters the actual process of integration. Hence, integration is the intermediary situation between the status of observer and the status of native.

Finally, the fourth stage, which does not concern immigrants but only expatriates corresponds to the return shock and to the reintegration in one's own culture. The main effects of these four stages in the international human resource management, besides their implications in daily interaction situations at work could be the fact that expatriates usually benefit from special contracts and conditions of work that they will no longer have when they go back home and the lack of a return coaching program in the company to follow and enable their reintegration, and also the lack of an available job that would take into consideration all skills obtained abroad. This human resource management dysfunctions give the professionals the feeling that they are going backwards and not improving. This feeling goes stronger in this particular situation of Brazilian expatriates for they are leaving an European developed country, France to go back to a developing country, Brazil. The immigrant does not take the risk of the return shock, for he does not even consider this option. The fear of remaining in France also exists. It corresponds in both cases to a professional stagnation due to the fact of being foreigners.

In an essay on the general situation of foreigners' integration in France, french anthropologist Bernard Lorreyte<sup>11</sup> describes the historical process of immigrants' integration in this country, through the elucidation of what is true and what is a myth about the french melting pot. There is a general consensus stating that the massive muslim immigration from North Africa specially Argelians during the sixties, would have been the cause French became so unfriendly and foreigners face currently so many integration problems. Lorreyte says this is nothing but a myth. He reminds us that other immigrants, who were not Muslims, like the Italians and the Portuguese, at

<sup>10</sup> JOLY, A, « Etre Cadre à l'Étranger », in CHANLAT, J-F, *L'Individu Dans l'Organisation*, Ed Eska, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> p. 247, in CAMILLERI, C et COHEN-EMERIQUE, M, *Chocs de Cultures: Concepts et Enjeux Pratiques de l'interculturel*, Ed. L'Harmattan, 1989.

their time, have also experienced a difficulty in integrating the French society. Relations between French and immigrants have never been idyllic and this would have nothing to do to the fact they are Muslims or not.

He gives as examples the slaughter of Italian immigrants at the south of France at the end of the nineteenth century, French xenophobic paper articles in the thirties and the expulsion of millions of immigrants from Poland at the years 1934 and 1935. According to him, the fact these immigrants belonged to the catholic faith has made it easier for them to be accepted just as much as it has also in many cases been taken as a factor of segregation. (for instance, Italians in the south before World War I). The fact these immigrants were catholic could also have been the source of a comunitarian isolating attitude and the cause of a resistance to the assimilation process.

In general a process of integration would be diachronic and depend on historical and social events however, some stereotypes about the Foreigner in the French universe could be easily seized for they have not changed for ages and are still present in people's unconscious mentalities nowadays. Lorreyte reminds us that if the nationalities of the immigrants change with time (in the past, Italians, at the present, Argelians and people from sub-saharian Africa), the "fears" remain the same. Following this rationale, in the process of interaction with the Other, three classical stereotypes can be distinguished:

- (1) The Other is often characterized by an immoderated sexuality, also considered abnormal, bestial aggressive. This matches in our days the generalized French image of the sub-Saharan African immigrants, for example.
- (2) The Other is often not clean and has on him/her all diseases and illnesses which are a consequence of his/her immoderated sexuality. (In the past Syphilis, nowadays, AIDS). Lorreyte also states that French unconsciously make use of a notion of « tolerance stake » : the French society would then be associated to a pure and homogenous body infected by a kind of virus or microbe: the immigrants.
- (3) The Other is a potential delinquent, a potential threat to goods and people, a implied revolutionary.

Relations between French and Brazilian have never been characterized by conflictuous situations due to a massive immigration as it is for the the Argelians. However, if we compare these general stereotypes to the general image French have of Brazilians, we can find some interesting correspondances. Brazilians are usually perceived as having a very immoderate and wild sexuality, and are most of times related to homosexual practices, which could match the first stereotype mentioned above. Moreover, Brazilians are perceived as little or non disciplined, lazy workers, not serious, idle and loafers, which match the third stereotype of the potential delinquent. At last, in the conclusion of his article, Lorreyte states that immigrants play a role of "skip goat" role in a French society that has changed and no longer recognizes its face on the mirror. France would then be facing an identity crisis. It is obvious that relations Brazilians have with Foreigners are different from the relations the French have. Unfortunetely, this interesting aspect of my research (that counts for ten more pages) will not be treated in the present paper.

### **Application of Different Intercultural Communication Theories in the Case of the Dyad French-Brazilians**

According to Barnett and Kincaid's (1983) cultural convergence theory, Brazilians and French negotiate their symbolic universe through their daily interactions at work. Equity in this particular case would not be possible, for

Brazilians were a minority and hence in the position of “culturally dominated”. They would then have to choose the way of assimilation after a while.

Ellingsworth (1983) preconizes a mutual adjustment, but it would have a price to pay, a kind of “adaptation burden” that imposes the sacrifice of part of one’s symbolic universe. This adaptation burden matches Allain Joly’s description of the individual personality’s restructuration and also Hofstede’s cultural mental re-programming process. In the case of the dyad French-Brazilians, this burden can differently show up when one is an expatriate or an immigrant. The immigrant consciously claims his burden is the eternal marginalization : « *I am no longer totally Brazilian and I will never totally become a French.* » The expatriate on the other hand undertakes his burden in the return shock, in a less conscious way, and his frustration is often associated to external conditions such as a bad political and economical situation of the country or of the company.

According to the Identity Negotiation Theory of Cupach and Imahori (1993), French and Brazilians re-negotiate their identities through their interactions. As they are ignorant about their own deep cultures and of the cultures of one another, they would try to protect their “faces” by the means of stereotypes. This could be noticed during the interviews as comments like the following : “*What did you expect? They are French after all.*” or “*I am not surprised my boss is French. He is such a fool.*”

According to Smith (1999), cultural negotiation strategies can be identified within social structures. For what concerns Brazilians, it is clear that the success of these strategies depends on the personalization of relations at the individual’s level. The identities negotiation would evolve afterwards to a mutual adjustment phase characterized by the construction of an interactional identity that would make integration possible. Most of Brazilians say they have « changed » although they cannot really explain what has changed in their behavior. Usually, those who get to express themselves about this, say they have become less extroverted, more suspicious, less sensitive, less naïve or more discreet..

In order to really study the identity renegotiation process of these people in a French professional and social environment, it would be necessary to make a deep analysis of each sub-system they belong, such as the corporate culture, the immigrant’s associations, the group of friends, the workteams, this broad analysis was totally impossible to be done in the present research. Nevertheless, changes in the behavior mentioned right above maybe, in several ways, linked to the consequences of their intercultural experience with the French.

As for what concerns the reactions of the French to the Brazilians’ infractions of cultural rules according to Mc Guire and Mc Dermott’s (1988) work on the « neglectful communication », stereotypes apart, Brazilians are perceived as hypocrite, superficial, “boot-lickers”, and intrusive, in their desperate search to establish an intimate link as also as too compliant in their authority relations.

Finally, for what concerns the main differences of the intercultural process of professional integration for an immigrant and for an expatriate, we must notice that:

- The expatriate benefits from special conditions and usually takes an intercultural preparation as well as his family before departure, as on the other hand the immigrant most of times comes accidentally to the new country as an adventurer, most of times alone, to look for a new world or sometimes for a “father” (an identity) in the Brazilian case, a national reference in Contardo Calligaris’ approach<sup>12</sup>. Once in the company, he will not have a special contract nor prerogatives due to

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<sup>12</sup> CALLIGARIS, C, *Hello Brasil : Notas de um psicanalista europeu viajando ao Brasil*, Ed Escuta, 1994.

his condition. Expatriates can also be sent abroad against their will (this was not the case of the Brazilians expatriates I interviewed who have chosen to come to France) as on the other hand a Brazilian immigrant comes because he wants to, there are no company's pressure behind his decision to live and work abroad. The cultural shock is the same for both, but the expatriate seems to have more difficulties to face it, for he keeps deep inside him, the possibility to go back home.

- The expatriate fears the return shock and the re-integration. As he knows he must go back, he does not really feel open or available to discover a new culture, he is specially worried about his career's evolution, about making money, about living an international experience. The immigrant does not fear the return because he does not even consider this option. He comes to the new culture totally open, which makes his cultural shock maybe less intense of the expatriate's, who is not so available.
- About the way they are seen in the company when they arrive, the French colleagues know the expatriate will go back to his country, that he is there temporarily and does not represent a threat, opposite to an immigrant who comes for good. This leads to the fact that the expatriate's acceptance by the French is often easier and goes faster than the immigrant's.

Hence, all of these have been expressed or felt by the interviewees in their statements. Moreover I must add that most of the expatriates and immigrants who participated to this research had been to France before their long term experience for little touristic or professional trips of two or more days. These trips have preceded and in some cases influenced their later decision to stay to work for a longer period.

### **Summary and Final Considerations**

This research was meant to treat some specific aspects of the symbolic universe of a French and Brazilian intercultural experience in a professional environment.

The present work was inspired by the implications of intercultural aspects of international mergers-acquisitions, specially French acquisitions in Brazil. At a first stage of a larger project, a research on the influences of culture in the professional integration of twelve Brazilian professionals in France, working within French companies was done. It made it possible to identify elements of cross cultural influences in the French-Brazilian dyad professional behavior.

In order to do this work, a qualitative methodological approach preconized by the School of Chicago was adopted: the "life story". the statements of twelve professionals were then registered and analyzed, five immigrants and seven expatriates, which made it possible to corroborate some social and cultural mechanisms and specific behaviors that had been introduced by the works of the main Brazilian sociologists and anthropologists such as Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, Gilberto Freyre, Livia Barbosa and Roberto da Matta. The present work made it possible to extend their approaches and reveal some behaviors in the specific case of a French Brazilian intercultural dyad.

The research also lead to a parallel between the main results and the existing works on a Brazilian management style, specially Alexandre Borges de Freitas' work. The main conclusion is that cultural differences between French and Brazilians implicate communication aspects and interpersonal and authority relation management aspects, which might have considerable and often underestimated

impacts on the professional performance of people of these two cultures working together everyday within a company.

Then the researcher treated the process of integration in France for immigrants and for expatriates and tried to analyze the issue through Anglo Saxon and French theories. The researcher hopes that the double deontological promise of this work has been respected and that the present work was able to start a serious academic study on the cross cultural and intercultural aspects of a process of professional integration of Brazilian professionals within French companies. However the present work is far from being complete and has several limits:

- First, the diachronical and subjective aspect of the data collection which makes it incomplete. A second research with the same number of interviewees, undertaken by another researcher in a similar situation would be interesting for its validation after some years.
- Some questions such as the relations to the Other : inter-racial and inter-gender relations, the influence other cultural sub-systems such as the corporate culture or the industry culture or the professional culture have not been approached, by lack of time and means. It would be interesting to interview the French who work with the Brazilians, to see their impressions on their relations. The Brazilians' testimonies are one-sided : the French point of view has not been taken into account.
- The interviewees were mainly from the southeast and the south of Brazil, most of them from the state and the city of São Paulo. If we consider the cultural diversity of Brazil, it would be interesting to consider a deep analysis to verify if the same impressions show up the same way, interviewees being native from other regions of the country. I must add that the two interviewees from the state of Rio Grande do Norte have strongly confirmed in their testimonies the aspects mentioned by the others, which leads me to corroborate Livia Barbosa's statement that there is a certain cultural Brazilian unity despite of all regional diversity, this unity would concern specific social and interactional mechanisms such as the "*jeitinho*" for instance.
- Aspects such as company's size, number of employees, have not been treated. A future study taking these aspects into account would provide a richer analysis and a more complete environmental approach which would allow a better comprehension of the context in which the subjects are such as the industry culture that could provide more precise results, if we consider a *lato sensu* intercultural management approach.
- It would be interesting to see in a more concrete way the effective impact of these interactional aspects within a organization and over the employees' performance, which could not be done in the present research.
- At last, in what concerns the theoretical aspect, the works about intercultural dyads being very limited, the lack of time and means have limited the reflections to some comments about the application of some intercultural communication theories to the specific case of the dyad French-Brazilian. It would be interesting for instance, to undertake a study of the Brazilian cultural traits specifically under the logic of Barnett & Kincaid's Cultural Convergence Theory or under the logic of Mc Guire and Mc Dermott's Neglectful Communication Theory.

As the research journal is reread, the researcher realizes that at the beginning there were very few ideas about the subjects' behavior that were not confirmed by the ground research. However, new disclosures were encountered, through which one

could surprisingly realize the implication of certain unconscious behaviors in our society. This revelation has not always been a pleasant experience, as for example, the verification of the fact that the « *jeitinho* » can be used for bribery and corruption, at several levels, that we are still very dependant on a sort of foreigners' fascination, maybe because our national identity is not yet totally developed.

Finally, it was also possible to see the fact the racism in Brazil is most of times disguised under the cordiality, and that there is a process of «whitening» of people that goes along with the social mobility mechanism as it has also been verified that the conflict avoidance behavior may lead to dishonest or cowardly attitudes, not always very nice to admit.

However, the present research has largely confirmed the Brazilian's ability to solve problems, their art to transform the work environment in a relaxing and agreeable place as well as a great adaptability and flexibility which make Brazilian professionals pro-active individuals and an asset to any French or international company.

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