

**Knowing the Family Stories of Others:
Past Orientation as a Cultural Dimension in Business Negotiations**

RUNNING HEAD: Past Orientation and Negotiations

Abstract:

While organizational studies have highlighted the influence of the past on behavior, surprisingly, international management literature remains silent about history-related components of societal cultures. We challenge this omission through a case including four qualitative studies to describe the French negotiation culture both from an insider (i.e. French) and outsider (i.e. Latino-American) perspective. This cross-analysis of two Latin yet with diverging historical contexts (Old world vs. New World) negotiation cultures reveals history-related biases in intercultural negotiations. Therefore, we introduce a new dimension of culture: past orientation—with its three sub-dimensions of level of conventions, pride toward history legacy, and conflict-related tradition.

Key words: French culture, intercultural management, negotiation.

Societies and economies are becoming increasingly globalized. This rising internationalization of trade activities push organizations to take more and more into account cultural differences both inside and outside their borders. Specifically, these new socio-cultural contexts affect the process and the outcome of negotiations both *in* and *between* organizations (cf. Aycan & Gelfand, 2012; Gelfand & Brett, 2004; Strauss, 1978).

Therefore, a growing stream of studies has applied a cross-cultural perspective to the negotiation phenomenon, hence developing its field of study and its theoretical underpinnings (e.g., Cohen, 1997; Faure, 2002; Kremenyuk, 1991). This stream of investigation has provided evidence of the influence of several culture-related phenomena on the negotiation process, including motivation factors on consensus building (Liu, Friedman, Barry, Gelfand, & Zhang, 2012), team processes (Gelfand et al., 2013), affects (Kumar, 1997, 2004), conflict resolution tactics (Tinsley, 1998, 2004) and ethics-related differences (Morris & Gelfand, 2004).

While these studies have contributed to expand the limits of the negotiation theory, little is known about perceptions biases related to a local culture (Gelfand & Brett, 2004). In plain words, available theory and research does not fully explain why some intercultural negotiations are successful while others, in contrast, do fail. Therefore, the present paper answers recent calls to identify factors that affect the process and outcomes of intercultural negotiations (cf. Aycan & Gelfand, 2012, p. 133).

To answer this significant gap for theory and practice, we complement existing theories on cultural differences (e.g., Hofstede, 2003; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) with a new and important cultural dimension: *orientation toward past*. To do so, we compare two negotiating cultures that belong to the same cultural group (Latin Cultures) but diverge significantly with respect to the nature and magnitude of the legacy of history (one culture is European, the other Latin American). We suggest that important aspects of the target (French) culture misunderstood by Latin American negotiators— even equipped with a wide experience in negotiating with French managers and with a good

cultural level (e.g., with a master or a doctoral level)– are due to *historical* idiosyncrasies of the French culture. Hence, this paper aims to make an important contribution to the negotiation theory by showing that major interpretation biases in intercultural negotiations are caused by the ignorance of the historic context of the target culture.

To do so, and given the above-mentioned lack of theoretical elements in this research area, this paper adopts an inductive and interdisciplinary approach aiming at developing available theory. Hence, this research project is rooted in the interpretative paradigm (cf. Gioia & Pitre, 1990) – well appropriate to analyze contextual (and especially symbolic) factors of negotiation. Specifically, for the sake of comparing etic and emic cultural perspectives, we triangulate external perspectives (that is, how Latin American negotiators consider the French negotiation culture) and internal perspectives (that is, how French negotiators describe their own negotiation culture). Further, we compare these findings drawing on individual interviews with an historical analysis of the French culture. Also, we adopt the case study approach (Yin, 2009) to present the data collected in four qualitative studies. Studies 1, 2 and 3 draw on interview and open questionnaires data to analyze the behavior of French negotiators in a context of multicultural negotiations. Study 4 uses sources and methods from the history discipline to describe the past-related components of the French negotiating culture.

The first section of the article introduces the theoretical foundations of orientation toward past (or past orientation). The second section describes the process of data collection and analysis of those four qualitative studies. The third section makes sense of the data collected to describe the concept of orientation toward past and its three sub-dimensions: level of conventions, pride toward history legacy, and conflict-related tradition. The last section of the paper (discussion) identifies its theoretical contributions, describes its practical relevance, mentions its limitations and proposes directions for future research.

Mapping Past Orientation

Like space, time represents a fundamental dimension of perceptions and our interpretation of surrounding events. For instance, any theorization effort requires to specify when organizational events do actually happen (cf. Mitchell & James, 2001). Hence, main theories describing societal cultures have integrated some perceptual and behavioral differences related to time. For example, Hofstede has contrasted *short term* and *long term* orientations, which respectively refer to *emphasis on present*, and, by contrast, to *perseverance* in pursuing objectives (2003). Later on, the project GLOBE has recycled this concept of long-term orientation through the label of *future orientation* (House et al., 2004). In brief, the available body of research describing cultural differences between societies captures the time dimension into a prospective (rather than retrospective) manner.

Existing Approaches to Past Orientation

While the above mentioned concept of future orientation is useful to understand time-related differences between cultures, it does not cover an aspect of the organizational reality that has been extensively described by an important stream

of research in organizational studies: past orientation. In this section, we review the main vectors of the influence of past on individual and collective behaviors.

Confirmation bias. With respect to the individual and cognitive aspects, various studies have shown that people interpret new information with a propensity of reinforcing existing opinions and beliefs. Labeled “confirmation bias” (cf. Bazerman & Moore, 2012; Tversky & Kahneman, 1977), this tendency biases decision-making as it orients it toward the blind perpetuation of schemata inherited from the past.

Inertia. With respect to the collective and behavioral perspective, numerous studies have shown that organizations tend to follow a trajectory initiated some time ago (« path dependency »). The weight of habits (at the individual level), norms (at the group level), routines (at the organizational level), traditions (at the societal level) contribute to reproduce individual and collective behaviors.

In sum, many studies outside the narrow field of theories of culture suggest that past —through confirmation biases and inertia effects— significantly affects individual and group behavior in organizations. Building on this observation, we complement existing theories on cultural differences with a component related to the cultural influence of past on perceptions and behaviors. To do so, we compare two cultures that are similar along their fundamental characteristics (both Latin) but differ significantly under a key element: the respective weight of their history. By history, we refer to the formal body (i.e., written)—that describes the past of a given society. Concretely, one culture pertains to the Old World (the French culture) and the other one to the New World (the Latino-American culture).

A Multisource Project

To develop available theory on cultural differences (and in particular about past orientation), we use an inductive and qualitative approach within the methodological framework of case study (Yin, 2009). This multimethod and multisource case includes three studies using primary data—88 interviews and narratives with French and Latin-American managers about the French negotiating culture (studies 1 to 3)— and a fourth study analyzing archival data on the same topic (study 4).

Studies 1, 2 and 3

Perspectives. The *first three studies* present the results of 88 interviews and narratives describing concrete experiences of negotiation with French people (for an example of an interview guide used in the project, see the annex). Three Latin American researchers (Colombian nationality) were in charge of these three studies; the lead researcher —professor of organizational behavior (with a PhD in management) with an extensive experience in research and teaching of negotiation and cross-cultural management—supervised the work of two research assistants (graduate students). These three studies present the interpretative analysis of both oral interviews and narratives (i.e., written answers to open questionnaires)

describing negotiations experiences with French people, either from an outsider perspective (Latin American negotiators) or from an insider perspective (French negotiators). The three researchers have collected and analyzed data independently. Tables 1 and 2 summarize a description of the 88 informants (French vs. Latin American and their occupation) and the type of data collected (interviews vs. narratives).

 Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Data collection. The purpose of interviews and narratives was to obtain the informant’s view on the French negotiation style. Interviews and collection of narratives were conducted using semi-open questions. Applying the rule of theoretical saturation of categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), each of the three researchers collected data up to the point where collecting additional data no longer provided any conceptual refinement. Hence, the lead author directly conducted 4 interviews in addition to the supervision of the global project; the first research assistant did a content analysis of 33 narratives and the second research assistant led 51 interviews. This approach resulted in a grand total of 88 interviews and narratives (cf. Tables 1 and 2).

Researchers classified and analyzed data through various software specialized in qualitative data analysis (cf. Miles & Huberman, 1994) - including NVivo (cf. Bazeley, 2007). Specifically, researchers classified these raw data along themes in order to obtain a theoretically meaningful description of the focal negotiation culture. These include: the customs, reasoning, expectations and behaviors in which different interests or conflicts exist – and are common and shared among members of the same culture (the French negotiation culture). In sum, 20 analytical categories emerged from the analysis of data, whose comparison between the three researchers suggests a quite strong consensus (cf. Table 3).

 Insert Table 3 about here

Study 4 (archival data)

While *studies 1, 2 and 3* have been led sequentially —though independently— *study 4* builds on the previous studies (1, 2 and 3) and aims to confirm and/qualify their findings through a triangulation approach (cf. Lewis & Grimes, 1999). Study 4 was conducted by a French professor of Organizational Behavior (with a PhD in Management) hence providing a dominant inside perspective on the focal culture of negotiation. Study 4 used not only French sources (academic publications) but also outside sources (e.g., Cogan, 2003; Paxton, 2001).

Findings: The Dimension of Past Orientation

The comparative analyses conducted in the four studies between Old (i.e., French) and New (i.e., Latin American) approaches to negotiation suggest an important cultural difference with respect to the level of *past orientation*, that we define as the extent to which the legacy of history influences attitudes and behaviors of the focal culture. Along our

analyses, the dimension of past orientation includes three main facets: level of conventions, pride toward history legacy, and conflict-related tradition. This section describes each of these three sub-dimensions of past orientation.

Level of Conventions

Numerous studies at the intersection of history and economy have provided evidence of how individual and collective rules regulate behavior (e.g., North, 1990). In this regard, both our primary and secondary data reveal that French negotiating culture is highly institutionalized

Context (study 4): Descartes' country. Philosopher André Glucksman has entitled one of his essays “Descartes, c’ est la France” (1987). Actually, Descartes’ statement “Cogito ergo sum” (“*I think thus I am*”) (Descartes, 1637) has contributed to strengthening the influence of the rationale and deductive approach in the French culture (cf. Glucksmann, 1987). History of French thought reveals the importance in the French culture of using principles and argumentation (Cogan, 2003). “*Dissserter*”, that is, formally organize and discuss ideas, is an exercise practiced in universities since the Middle-Age (Le Goff, 1992). French people learn to handle the principles of argumentation as early as in high schools along a model thesis, antithesis, and synthesis (Azéma, 1976; Ozouf, 1984). For instance, French managers are trained to implement a deductive way of thinking (from the general to the particular). However, this principle-oriented approach involves little flexibility. Specifically, such an emphasis on principles can decrease decision-making and communication during the negotiation process as informational cues may be neglected or creativity impeded.

Principled based negotiation (Studies 1 to 3). As for our primary data, both Latino-American and French informants converge on the importance of observing principles in negotiations with French. On the one hand, according to Latin-American people, French negotiators clearly define from the start the objectives they want to reach during the negotiation. Hence, the framework for negotiation in this culture is like that of a debate, in which each side seeks to reach its objectives quickly, easily and efficiently using logical arguments and solid structures to gain an advantage over the other side.

“French people are very square, they are square in the sense that they have a predetermined idea and in order to convince them of something, you have to prove it, in other words, they are very Cartesian.” (LA-220)

“Prepare well, have clear objectives, in your first three sentences say what you want, be clear and transparent, make sure your sentences are well-formed and well thought-out, very organized.” (LA-201)

According to negotiation scholars (e.g., Fisher & Ury, 1991), good negotiators build on shared interests to reach a mutually benefiting agreement. Instead, Latin American report the predominance of rules-driven behaviors of French negotiators:

“Small conflicts here (in Colombia) are negotiable because you face the person. There, (in France) they aren’t because you face a rule.” (LA-231)

This perception is consistent with the point of view of French people—who acknowledge that the central role of principles in their approach to negotiations:

“We think that our systems are the best, which gives us a feeling of superiority.” (FR-237)

“French culture is a rational one, it’s not about concrete facts...they organize the world rationally, try to understand it, to take advantage of their knowledge.” (FR-252).

In sum, we observe in our data a convergence between outsiders (Latin-American) and insiders (French) about the importance of principles in negotiations with French people.

Formalism (Studies 1 to 3). Consistent with the above-mentioned importance of principles in negotiations, our data suggest important differences with respect to formalism between the two cultures.

According to Latin American negotiators:

“French asked us for a list of predefined topics which cannot be handled without their explicit consent” (LA-202).

The latter observation from a Latino-American source converges with the French perspective. The French negotiation style is based on a legal system, written contracts and formal rules that guarantee compliance with agreements. These agreements are supported by the legal system or are formalized officially so that contracts cover all aspects of the negotiation and do not leave out anything.

“ [French negotiators] stress the importance of the form, of the meaning of acts and facts, of written communication, of words and concepts. ” (FR-229)

“We check that things are written and specified in a detailed manner before signing contracts.” (FR-355)

“ [Latino-American] people do not refer to the law as much as French do.” (FR-245)

“That means that there is a contract and that we should stick to it, I will not change it, I will not change the rules on one or on another side.” (FR-226)

Pride Toward History Legacy

While the previously described sub-dimension (level of conventions) focuses on cognitive aspects, our analyses also suggest a second sub-dimension focusing on emotional related components: pride toward history legacy.

Context (Study 4). From a French perspective, French culture conveys a universal message (Michelet, 1995). Firstly, this universal ambition traces back to the use of the Roman law during the Roman Empire’s “Gaul” occupation. Eighteen centuries later, Napoleon systematically implemented these legal practices in his European Empire (including the metric system). Secondly, this universal ambition even reaches religious realms: due to King Clovis’ conversion (ca. Christmas 498) to Catholic Christianity, France has often been described - since the 19th century - as “the older daughter of the Catholic Church” (Rémond, 1992: 541). Thirdly, and in relation to the two above-mentioned points, since the end of the 18th century, the French Revolution has been presented as a universal symbol of this French ambition. Aspiring to be an ambassador of reason, democracy and freedom, French people believe that they should spread these universal values of the Enlightenment throughout the world (Roche, 2000). This pretention has culminated in a period of civil war and persecution (*Terror*) of thousands of French citizens who were reluctant to follow the new “Goddess of Reason” cult (Furet, 1978). Fourth, the subsequent colonial expansion was also the opportunity of diffusion of French values far away (Rémond, 1992:

541). Widely systematized by the Third Republic (1870-1940), this occupation of large portions of African and Asian territories was in part based on the country's ideological ambition to propagate its values for civilization (Girardet, 2005; Marseille, 2005). In sum, the French culture conveys the assumption that French national values should be imposed to other values; while largely inherited from the past, this belief tend to be perceived by outsiders as an irrational attitude of superiority including in interpersonal encounters such as negotiations.

Politeness and honor principle. (Study 4 and 1-3) A closely related finding in the study is the importance of “*politesse*” (i.e. politeness) in a negotiation relationship. The origin of this mix of courtesy, diplomacy, eloquence, charm and elegance can also be traced back to this “*Ancien Regime*” court culture (Revel, 1997). Correlatively, commitment represents an important value of the French culture. For instance, concluding an in-depth comparative ethnological study of European plants, a French researcher has even argued that French business culture builds on what he calls the “honor principle”: a social role transmitted by tradition (D'Iribarne, 1994; D'Iribarne, 1989). An implication of this “honor principle” to the negotiation field is that members of any “aristocratic caste” (like graduates of some *Grande Ecoles*) hardly deal with lower status counterparts. From a broader perspective, this French “honor principle” and the Asian/Confucian concept of maintaining social status and “saving face” share many similarities: some researchers view French executives as the “*Asiatiques de l'Ouest*” (Barsoux & Lawrence, 1991:177). This concern for preserving and developing a positive image is expected to influence the way French behave during negotiations.

Latin American negotiators observe:

“French people are generally well-mannered and more respectful of standards. ” (LA-354)

“First, use all formalities, hello, *bonjour monsieur, ça va?* [In French in the text].” (LA-215)

A good command of the French language is part of this formalism:

“It often happens that someone repeats you several time what you are saying as if he could not understand, but actually he repeats to show you the correct pronunciation in French of what you have just said.” (LA-221).

As French negotiations say about their own style of negotiation:

“We have this tradition; we count on ”*politesse*” [which means politeness]” (FR-236)

Logically, such a concern for good manners translates into food socially related behavior:

“Offer a good dinner at an expensive place, the form - if you will - is more important than the content. You should respect the way they do things... I am not so much interested in creating an atmosphere of trust, but I want you to think that I am treating you well.”(FR-237)

Arrogance (Study 4 and 1-3) Latin American negotiators perceive the pride of French negotiators as excessive. While previous historic studies had described such feelings of superiority as part of the negotiation culture of the “Grande Nation” (Cogan, 2003:1), the above quotes represent first-hand evidences of this phenomenon.

“I think that the French need to feel more powerful than others in order to feel good.” (LA-212)

“Arrogance. They are arrogant. What does it mean? They feel and think that they own the absolute truth, they have a huge ego and be confronted to these egos is not easy. Moreover, they represent a powerful company... They feel that

they have privileges because they are part of it.” (LA-202)

“Do not be intimidated by the French arrogance.” (LA-349)

Conflict-related Tradition

Culture of conflicts (Study 4). An overview of the collective beliefs characterizing the French culture illuminates this tendency of French negotiators to enter in spirals of conflicts. Universal ambitions described above are not much compatible with the flexibility required in negotiations. The study of the history of France illustrates this tendency of going into conflicts. Generally, revolution is often preferred to negotiation in resolving conflicts in the French culture (Zeldin, 1979) and most political changes have been triggered by sudden strife (Hampden-Turner et al., 1993). For instance, French people still remember the May 1968 general movement, with hundreds of thousands of people expressing themselves in the street (cf. Sirinelli, 2008). For example, some historians of Annals’ Structuralism School applied this conflict-focused framework to identify several inherent features of French identity (Deyon, Fridenson, Hirsch, Jouhaud, & Julliard, 2000). As noted by French sociologist Henri Mendras (2003), more than 8,000 rebellions were recorded between the reign of Louis XIV (1643) and the outburst of the French Revolution (1789). In sum, an underlying trait of French culture is a tendency to live in conflict.

At the international level, the three major conflicts, which occurred with an increasing magnitude in Europe (and even worldwide) in the 19th and the 20th centuries, pitted France against its German neighbor (cf. Girard, 2007). Clearly, these bloody wars were a result of escalating and unresolved conflicts (Girard, 2007). Specifically, one million three hundred French soldiers lost their lives during World War I (Becker, 1999) and later World War II (1939-45) resulted in a “strange defeat” (Bloch, 1999), followed by the bloody and humiliating occupation period—which included the persecution of Jews, remain as painful memories (Aron, 1955; Paxton, 2001). Latter, the decolonization period was characterized by two other wars: Indochina (1946-1954) and Algeria (1958-1962) (Droz, 2009). In sum, the French national identity has been affected by conflicts with its neighbors or former colonies whose outcomes were often negative. This legacy suggests that when the French are confronted by other cultures, they try to take revenge for these past recent failures.

Conflict as life style (Studies 1 to 3). Latin American negotiators perceive that conflict- even in its violent forms and at the expense of its own interests- is a routine situation for French people.

“[French] coexist with conflict gracefully. They just don’t care.” (LA-201)

“I do think the French are more violent...Violent in the way they confront people...they use a stronger vocabulary.” (LA-231)

“In my opinion, the French have a culture that makes them live excessively in the present, they rarely think about the benefits of long-term relationships, they are overly individualistic, and they seek victory in every conflict. They have a need to feel like winners, and therefore, they deal with conflict quite directly, like battles, instead of looking for mutual benefits.” (LA-363)

By contrast, data collected through interviews with French people do not suggest any specific issue about conflicts

propensity. This point confirms our attribution of this conflictive tendency to the national context —as described in the previous section— and suggests its non-conscious characteristic for French native negotiators.

Discussion

This article combines interview data (studies 1 to 3) and historical analyses (Study 4) to describe the French negotiating culture both from the perspective of insiders (French executives) and outsiders (Latin-American). For the sake of understanding the differences in terms of perceptions and behaviors between these two Latin cultures, we have introduced a new dimension of culture: past orientation —with its three sub-dimensions of level of conventions, pride toward history legacy, and conflict-related tradition.

Theoretical Contributions

This article makes two major contributions to the theories of cross-cultural management and of negotiations. First, this paper suggests that important characteristics of a given negotiation culture are related to the national history, both with respect to the importance of the past for the collective memory and to the content of this collective memory. We label this influence of historical factors of the national culture on the individual and group behaviors “past orientation” and suggest that it represents an important dimension of culture in addition to the dimensions previously identified in the literature (cf. Hofstede, 2003; House et al., 2004) such as the level of collectivism, the power distance or the uncertainty avoidance. Specifically, the new dimension of “past orientation” offers a useful complement to the dimension mentioned in the GLOBE project of “the extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors- such as delaying gratification, planning and investing in the future” (House et al., 2004: 30).

Second, the findings of this article both confirm and extend the results of the very few past studies on the French negotiation culture. While previous studies had advanced of our understanding of the French business culture, they had either used an anecdotal perspective building on secondary data (e.g., Cogan, 2003; Gordon, 1996; Hall & Hall, 1990; Newson-Balle, 1996) or focused on a specific aspects such as leadership (e.g., Castel, Deneire, Kurc, Lacassagne, & Leeds, 2007). To the best of our knowledge, the present article represents the first systematic attempt to describe one of the main cultures of negotiation in the world with data collected from executives. Specifically, our results confirm past studies on the French culture with respect to the high level of uncertainty avoidance (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004:193), the emphasis given on the form and on the honor (Castel et al., 2007: 577), the high level of the power distance (Crozier, Jenkins, & Page, 2004; Hofstede, 2003). However, we extend those findings by showing through various sources and methods that the French culture of negotiation builds on deductive and abstract approaches, asymmetric and conflictive relationship, and the reliance on the use of written communication.

Relevance for Practice

This article presents important implications for managers. First, by revealing the importance of knowing the historic context of the culture of the other party in a negotiation context, this paper invites negotiators to improve their knowledge of other cultures and specifically of problematic or painful past events. This recommendation echoes the recent efforts of business schools to develop the general and international culture of their students through specific modules. Second, in analyzing and summarizing the results of 88 interviews and communications with insiders and outsiders negotiators about the full cycle of negotiation with French people, this paper describes in a methodical way the negotiation culture in one of the main world economies. Specifically, several important pieces of advice for managers negotiating with French people emerge from our studies: understand French culture, be patient, do not be intimidated, do not take things personally or feel you are being attacked, master the French language, be flexible in understanding French culture and – last but not least– be polite. Hence, the findings of this paper should facilitate negotiations with people who are either directly (through nationality) or indirectly (through the organization to which they pertain) members of this culture.

Limitations and Future Directions for Research

The conclusions of this article convey several additional exciting research projects. First, researchers may attempt to extend some findings of this study with the help of other inductive methods. One of the strengths of this paper from a methodological perspective relates to its interdisciplinary use of multiple sources and perspectives (both internal and external); by doing so, it combines an inter-individual level of analysis (through individual interviews about negotiation experiences) and a macro level of analysis (through the use of nation-level historical sources). One promising direction for future research would confront these two levels of analysis through other inductive methods, for instance by interviewing cross-national focus groups about the link between this new cultural dimension of “past orientation” and past experiences of negotiation. Although this alternative would raise important practical issues, it would offer an interesting extension of the present research.

Second, replicating this study in another culture would help to evaluate the extent to which our findings can be generalized to other cross-cultural contexts. The French culture is usually considered as an highly contextual culture (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993)–putting more emphasis on people than on the message (Hall, 1966). Hence, future studies may examine a culture of negotiation with a more instrumental focus (e.g., the Anglo-Saxon culture) and observe whether this dimension of “past orientation” has the same content, meaning and influence on the actors of negotiators than observed in the in the present article. Third, using a different paradigm is likely to open promising perspectives as well. While the present article builds on the interpretative paradigm through the use of inductive and qualitative methods, other approaches may draw from the positivist paradigm (cf. Hofstede, 2003; House et al., 2004) and

measure this dimension of “past orientation” through the administration of quantitative oriented questionnaires. This perspective would open exciting areas with respect, for instance, to a comparative approach to cultures.

Conclusion

The metaphor of marriage is often used to describe successful negotiations. We suggest in this paper that international negotiators will do well learning the basics of the other party’s national history (the importance and content of its “past orientation”), and more specifically the painful components that may harm the self-esteem of the other party. Such an effort would increase their chances to successfully close the negotiation. Hence, our conclusion illustrates the words of French novelist Honoré de Balzac: “There are two histories: official history, lying, and then secret history, where you find the real causes of events.” (Balzac, 1875:306).

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TABLE 1
Description of Cultural Origins of Informants and of the Type of Data

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------|
| French informants | 43% | |
| | <i>Interview</i> | 29.5% |
| | <i>Narrative</i> | 13.6% |
| Latin-American informants | 57% | |
| | <i>Interview</i> | 33.0% |
| | <i>Narrative</i> | 23.9% |
| | Total | 100% |

N=88 informants

TABLE 2
Description of Informants' Occupation

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Diplomat | 2.3% |
| Executive | 61.4% |
| Grad. student | 13.6% |
| Others | 12.5% |
| Professor of University | 10.2% |
| Total | 100% |

N=88 informants

TABLE 3
Description of 20 analytical categories describing the Negotiation Process:
Comparison of Results across Researchers

| | Themes | Author 1 : MOR (1997) | Research Assistant 1: MIR (2004) | Research Assistant 2: MAR (2004) |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Negotiation philosophy | Debate, confrontation | Argue, counter argue, quickness, ease | Traditional system. Bargain as the process develops. |
| 2 | Other side's perception | Opposition | Someone to be faced, convinced. | Neutral or friend in corporate negotiations, based on common interests. Adversary in personal conflict of interest. |
| 3 | Time perspective | Median | Long-term | Long-term in corporate negotiations based on common interests. Short-term, no future in personal conflicts of interest. |
| 4 | Basis for trust | Slow, based on facts | Roles, slow, implicit regulations | Distrusting. |
| 5 | Risk-taking | Conservative | Calculated risks, cautious, aversion | Conservative |
| 6 | Who negotiates | Boss alone | Senior rank, alone | Management level or capable personnel |
| 7 | Decision-making | Individual, centralized | Group discussion based on consensus or individual discussion | The same who negotiates |
| 8 | Formality | Good manners | Great formality, hierarchical, good treatment | Carefully follow protocol |
| 9 | Informal negotiations | Not common | Frequent, formal contact | Limited to parties' closeness or closing process |
| 10 | Pre-negotiations | Not common | Unusual, methodical preparation | Temporary |
| 11 | Opening demands | High with arguments | High/medium, based on objective criteria | Extreme, by position |
| 12 | Arguing | Rhetorical, discussion | Structured discussion, convince | Debate |
| 13 | Emotionality | High, convince | Rational, contained, manipulate | Temperamental |
| 14 | Power tactics | Open replies | Threaten, confrontation, theatricals | Pressure on the other side |
| 15 | Level of discussion | Precise, not concrete | Numbers based on principles, not concrete | Not concrete |
| 16 | Negotiation time | Punctual, segmented | Monochronic, punctual, ideally quickly | Advance point-by-point on the agenda |
| 17 | Type of agreement | Written, detailed | Written, not formal legally | Written in formal agreements |
| 18 | Compliance and commitment | | Comply, rigorous | Strict and committed, but not comply |
| 19 | Flexibility | | Closed, inflexible, based on principles | Associated with their own interests and during the process |
| 20 | Ways to express themselves | | Direct, frank, calculated | Easy communication, but not clear. Beat around the bush with information. |