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The title of the thesis is:


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Cordelia M. Greer, School of Communication

“A comparative study between the Dominican Republic and the United States”

Paola Badia

Honors College Thesis

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Why understand “Culture”?

Different nations have particular ways of conducting businesses. At the root of most problems that arise during international negotiations, is a lack of cultural understanding. In a study conducted by Hofstede it was found that over 50% of differences in manager’s attitude was due to national culture; a portion that exceeded profession, race, and gender. Many intercultural misunderstandings are due to behaviors of a person from one culture being incorrectly perceived, interpreted and reacted to by a person from another culture. (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton & Wardrope, 2007). If the 47 million Latin Americans living in the United States were to be formed into a separate nation, it would be the second-largest speaking population in the world and the third largest economy in Latin America. (Becker, 2011 p.14). Now more than ever, Latin American’s have become visible in the global market. Having successful negotiations between nations is reflected in having optimal communication patterns. This is achieved through the understanding of culture. Moreover, culture reflects preferred leadership styles, that will define the way business is conducted. Flexible time perceptions, festive communication styles, decreased sense of territoriality, and its fatalistic nature, make Latin Americans a particular crowd. However, effects of colonialism, an uneducated workforce, and an abundance of family businesses have resulted in an unequal distribution of power. This comparative analysis seeks to identify cultural factors that play an important role in the way business is performed between the Dominican Republic, and The United States.
Back in Time: Colonialism

The Latin American culture and its unique way of conducting businesses has evolved over time and can be traced back to antecedents that have marked this region since colonialism. Contemporary scholars assert that Latin America remains in many ways hierarchical, authoritarian, catholic, elitist, corporatist and paternalist to its core (Wiarda, 1992). These characteristics can still be perceived today, despite of countries’ shift to democratization.

“Haciendas” was the system employed by the Spanish crown to regulate Native American behaviors, in which natives would work the land in exchange for catholic education, and the Spanish language. This method is considered feudalistic and paternalistic because of its autocratic and centralized management. Respect towards the landlords grew exponentially. Autocratic Latin American management practices, in which the power remains consolidated within the elite, is a phenomenon that can be clearly observed today.

Haciendas were considered feudal because of their antiquated methods and autocratic management. Feudal lords gave clear and defined obligations. However in the 19th century haciendas began to include elements of free enterprise and capitalism. “Enganche” system was a system of labor recruitment where cash advances were offered to attract workers (Knight, 1986). Most of the times, workers attracted family members and other workers based on proximity and close relationships. This system can be traced up to today’s prominence of Latin American family businesses. Moreover, in many Latin American nations, such as the Dominican Republic, the idea of nepotism is accepted and criticism of it is taken as an insult (Mitchell, 2000 p. 65).

Peasants were united with landlords through “a force of habit that resulted from ancient customs, ties of gratitude, displaying just and reverential respect toward the landlord” (Graham, 1990). This demonstrates the paternalistic evolution still practiced today in Latin America, in which personal connections are prioritized. This model explains the evolution of centralized decision making and inflexible organization structures, based on respecting and unquestioning authority figures. Spanish societies were stratified around nobility and social classes. Natives that the English colonists found on North America were more democratic societies, fragmented into small groups governed by consensus (Becker, 2011). Consequently, the United States today values a decentralized power and authority figures exhibit limited decision making.
A Corrupt Latin America:

To understand the business world in Latin America, especially in the Dominican Republic, one has to understand the role that corruption plays in the society. Latin American countries have amongst the lowest levels of trust in the judiciary, and many countries lack effective enforcement of the law (Transparency International, 2009). Corruption is directly related toward how business operates not only in the legal functions of the businesses, but because it is engrained in the culture. Dominicans, unlike the Americans, have a high tolerance for corruption. It happened that generation of Latin Americans grew up with the view that corruption was a natural condition of power and that it was normal for anyone in a position of authority to expect a payoff in return for bestowing favors (Becker, 2011). This believe has a strong effect in how power is distributed throughout the business world in which people who hold power remain unquestioned, despite of performing unethical actions within organizations. A comparative study of Mexican and U.S managers found a significant difference in the level of perceived corporate ethical values, suggesting that Mexican companies do not communicate the importance of ethics to their employees or make efforts to ensure that they are “seem to be doing right” (Marta, Heiss, & De Lurgio, 2008).

In a culture such as the Dominican Republic, in which knowing the right person is more important than your individual skills, making sure that the bonds between your connections remain strong is essential. Since authority figures hold all the power and decision making is centralized, whistle blowing behaviors are considered to be inappropriate. However, since the Dominican society is relationship driven, maintaining a good reputation is of particular importance. Husted argues that in this context, sanctions for corrupt behavior will be more effective if they are “shame based” and emphasize corruption as a violation of group based ideals for behavior.

Across Latin American countries, economic activity has remained consolidated in a small number of business families who control a disproportionate share of the region’s wealth. (Andrade, Barra, Elstrodt, 2001). Not only the Dominican society is dominated by the elite, so is its economy. The most influential businesses are family owned companies that have emerged and grown to dominate the market, so it is of particular importance to maintain strong personal connections with these families. Sometimes, Dominicans do not question their authority; instead, they comply.
Corrupt actions are tolerated and people’s belief in law enforcement is low. The apparent disregard for the law stems from perceptions that laws are unrealistic or not well connected to society’s norms or people’s needs (Ratliff, 2006). Consequently, there is a predominant belief that justice can be achieved through strong connections with powerful people, who tend to be the elitist business owners. “Justice” is slow and dependent upon personal contacts and financial capacity and that charges against the elite are seldom prosecuted (Ratliff, 2006). Therefore, in the cases in which corrupt actions are being performed, authority figures remain unquestioned, and tolerance for fraudulent decisions is more accepted and blamed on forces outside their control. In a comparative study of collectivistic versus individualistic cultures between the United States and Ecuador, it was found that managers in highly collectivistic cultures are more likely to blame corruption on the external environment and less likely to discipline those to accept bribes (Walter and Sanchez, 2005).

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) measures the perceived level of public sector corruption in the 178 countries around the World (Transparency International, 2010). In a scale of one to ten the country’s transparency is measured through a series of expert assessments and opinion surveys. By looking at the map of the Western Hemisphere is noticeable that Latin America perceives a much higher level of corruption, with most countries ranking three at most. The United States, when compared to most nations, is an outlier accounting for about seven in transparency.

The following table represents the United States and Latin American countries and their rankings and scores on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI); 10 being the desired score, representing transparency. Similarly, by observing the map of the Western Hemisphere, there is an obvious and marked difference in corruption levels between North America, and the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank (Out of 178)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>CPI (Out of 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values extracted from transparency.org
Education:

An important determinant of the unequal distribution of power among Latin American firms is education. Latin Americans receive an average of 6 years of schooling, compared to almost 10 years in OECD countries (Worldfund, 2009). The Dominican Republic illiteracy rates accounts for as much as 12% of the population, in which the most educated, are the rich and the powerful: the white (Worldbank, 2010). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States only accounts for a 1% illiteracy rate. In the Dominican society, nearly imperceptible differences in skin coloration are the central determinant of one’s position within the social hierarchy. The converse applies to the United States, where Africans were an unalloyed minority and possessing a single drop of African blood was sufficient to taint one’s social status (Becker, 2011 p. 14). Among the mulatos (mix of Indian, Spanish, African) population of the Dominican Republic, the whitest are usually the elite. Consequently, they are the most educated and typically the most prominent business owners.

Education is factor feeding the unequal distribution of power among Latin American firms, in which power authorities remain unchallenged not only because of respect, but because of the lack of information the uneducated workforce holds. The United States, with only 1% of illiterate citizens, counts with the people’s abilities and disposition to think critically. When empowered, North Americans have the educational background and the tools to analyze problems factually. Organizational theories explicitly consider the unique challenges of knowledge creation, management, and transfer in firms with a low-skilled and uneducated workforce (Nixon, Davila, Garcia & Pesquera, 2011). such as the workforce in Latin America.

In the United States, managers are seen as problem solvers. In Latin America, managers are seen as experts (Becker, 2011). The low skilled labor force complies with managers to a great extent. Empowerment within Latin American managers is symbolic, rather than delegated with expectations and discretionary authority.
An excess of Family Businesses:

Despite of being welcoming and energetic, Dominicans are very traditional when conducting business practices. Changing the way a Dominican makes a decision can be very challenging, since there is always conservatism to past procedures and decisions. To understand why power within Latin American business remains traditional and centralized, it is important to highlight the influence family businesses have. In Latin America, family owned and operated businesses are the primary types of businesses in almost all industrial sectors. Their emergence has prevailed among Latin societies because these collectivist cultures rely on a consolidated group. Dominicans are well adapted to survive a rigid society that trusts only in-group members.

A small group of family businesses predominantly control the business environment in the island: Armenteros (machine, textile), Brugal (rhum), Corripio (distribution, media), Moya (construction), Leon (tobacco, agroindustry) among others. This small group of elite families, usually descendents of the Spanish settlers, owns the most prominent companies that shape the business culture guided by personal relationships that exists in the Dominican Republic. Dominicans constantly feed their family and friends relationships to an arguably noticeable extent, which is why building relationships is the primordial and most important step in conducting business with them. Having family businesses control most industrial sectors in the Dominican society certainly has advantages. Nonetheless, it is important to denote how power is transmitted within an organization and the strong influence this has on the way Latin Americans do business.

Managers in family businesses usually know their business upside down, since ownership and control remain in the same hands. In the United States however, managers of publicly held firms move from company to company as opportunities occur. These families remain well respected by the Dominican society, and set the basis for major economic activity in the island. Yet, one of the most common challenges that Dominican businesses face is stepping beyond the traditional way of conducting business, and looking for emerging ways to diffuse power. Having a family operated business makes this challenge harder to overcome, and makes effective decision-making tough. The organizational structure evolves in traditional family more indicative of power positions and interests of the individual family members that it is to the firm’s key functions or competences (Bello, Van Der Linde, 2001). In a study of “Family
Business Enterprise” conducted in the Dominican Republic by the PUCMM University (Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra) it was found that 22% of Latin American employees agreed that members of the family have the right to offer schemes of understanding with conditions different from other employees, while only 18% disagreed. Moreover, decision making can be intuitive and emotional. This demonstrates how the absolute power that the family has over making any type of decision is tolerated by the employees. Similarly, it shows how family members are respected and remain unquestioned.

Latin America faces a double sided challenge when breaking these traditional bonds, and being more accepting of empowering and sharing decision making because of both, employers and employees. In the study by the PUCMM, as much as 174 of the employees strongly agreed in conserving the direction of the company in the hands of family members, while only 28 disagreed. Similarly, this same study revealed that 65.5% of the employees believed that the founder should always play a formal role in the business.
The Autocratic Leader:

One of the challenges to effective leadership is borne of the fact that managers develop their understanding of good leadership based on how it is defined in their native cultures (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton & Warddrope, 2007). With globalization and an increased interconnectedness between businesses throughout the world, understanding cross cultural leadership styles is imperative.

Autocratic leaders are predominant throughout Latin America. The Dominican Republic, being high power in distance, collectivism, masculine and uncertainty avoidance, consists of a workforce with a high regard for hierarchy. Members in these societies are reluctant to bypass the chain of command (Muczyk, Holt, 2008). The influence of autocratic leaders in the Dominican Republic is predominantly seen in the culture. Authoritarian beliefs are ingrained in Dominicans’ minds as a result of over 100 years of caudillismo, or being ruled by fearless leaders. From 1831 to 1844, the Dominican history was tainted by fear and nepotism, especially under the influence of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, the bloodiest dictator known in the country’s history. Despite having moved to a complete democracy, limited and centralized decision making have stemmed and dominated the business landscape still today, in which autocratic leaders are seen as the most effective.

There is relationship between today’s autocratic leaders and managers, who still control through rhetoric, just as authoritarian caudillos ruled during the colonial history of the region (Dealy, 1992). A study comparing Mexico, Argentina, Dominican Republic, and the United States in managerial conflict resolution tactics, revealed that the autocratic method was perceived as fairer than any other by the Dominicans. The United States, in contrast, evaluated the advising method more favorably than all the other methods (Copranzano, Agunis, Schminke & Denham, 1999).

Another important component in understanding leadership preferences is followership. Leadership and followership are words that represent opposite ideas, however they are interrelated and one does not exist without the other. A study comparing leadership and followership similarities of Dominicans living in New York City and Dominicans living on the home country showed that there was a discrepancy between the delegation levels on behalf of the boss, compared to the preferred level of delegation perceived by the employee. Furthermore, the followers would prefer more delegation on authority than what they enjoy (Montesino, 2003).
This same study seeks to explain reasons for followership in the Dominicans by asking “When you do what your immediate supervisor tells you to do on the job, why do you do it?” to the employees. It was found that the main reason for compliance from the employees was the legitimacy of position power: that strict hierarchy is needed for the organization to operate properly (Montesino, 2003).

Latin American cultures exhibit high resistance towards confronting managers. In Latin America, criticism is often viewed as a personal attack rather than an observation intended to improve efficiency. (Miller & Kilpatrick, 1987). Likewise, Dominican subordinates are less free to disagree with a superior. Managers too, have to be particular about how they give feedback to their employees, by paying attention to important situational cues. In some cases, constructive criticism might not be communicated effectively, and taken as an insult instead.
High Context vs. Low Context:

To maintain successful communication across cross cultural borders, managers have to consider the cultural differences that drive communication processes. Cross cultural researchers distinguish predominant differences by categorizing between explicit (low context) and implicit (high context) styles of communication. Understanding context is important because it influences the “rule of the games” and the way businesses function (Bruton, Ashlston, & Puki, 2009).

In high context cultures, like the Dominican Republic and other Latin American nations, information and rules are implicit. Communication in these cultures is indirect and dependent upon the silent language of subtle signals, which is drawn upon intuition for interpretation (Becker, 2011).

Low context cultures like the United States focus more on transmitting the meaning and context of a message through words. In other words, Americans say what they mean and mean what they say (Becker, 2011). In the Dominican Republic, cultural messages are read between lines and a Dominican manager will pay more attention to the way something is said, rather than focusing plainly on what is said. For instance, a Dominican manager that is suspicious about settling an important agreement, might say “Maybe we’ll do business in the future”, as a polite “no”. However, an American manager may interpret the meaning literally and believe that business will happen in the future. In Latin America, social goals are as important, or more so, than financial goals (Nixon, Davila, Garcia & Pesquera, 2011). This is why Dominicans place so much emphasis on making sure that not only their words and phrases, but that their body language defines the intended interaction.

U.S. visitors should attempt to become aware of the relative and common uses of colloquialisms that are deeply embedded into the language. Another common example of a Latin American phrase that could be easily misinterpreted by Americans is “un momentito”. When asking for any question that entails an answer involving time, “un momentito” translated as “just wait one moment”. However, Latin Americans, having a polychronic sense of time, assign a complete different meaning to this phrase; meaning anything from one minute to never.

These different perspectives can collide very easily, and can be bewildering to U.S executives who believe in building ideas logically, and not intuitively. Some questions that a Latin might ask himself before proceeding to commit to a business deal would be: “Do we have
the potential of building a strong, long term relationship? In contrast, an American believes that it is irrelevant to think about the relationship before thinking about the business deal itself and the profitability that could be obtained from it.

Furthermore, Basil Bernstein proposed two types of codes, elaborated and restricted, which exemplify differences in communication between high context and low context cultures. Elaborated codes are explicit and direct. They follow a linear logic allowing people to expand on their interpretations of their messages. Cultures like the United States, in which individual achievement is considered a value, appreciate elaborated codes since they are more empowering and provide opportunities for individuals to think critically. Restricted codes are more appropriate in the Dominican culture because these are oriented toward social groups in which everyone knows who people are and how they should behave (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, & Warddrope, 2007).

Edward T. Hall, one of the most influential cross-cultural researchers, describes the process practiced by traditional Latins:

“*They talk around the point. They think intelligent human beings should be able to discover the point of discourse from the context, which they are careful to provide....The United States, having its roots in the European culture which dates back to Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle, has built into its culture assumptions that the only natural and effective way to present ideas is by means of a Greek invention called ‘logic’.***"
Perceptions regarding time:

Understanding the differences in perceptions of time, when conducting business, is crucial and serves as a powerful basis for effective communication. In the case of the Dominican Republic and the United States it is imperative to understand their different perceptions, since both exhibit an antithesis of time orientations: monochronic and polychronic. North Americans display a monochronic (linear) use of time, characterized by systematic checklists, punctuality, strong deadlines and schedules. Similar to other Latin American nations, the Dominican Republic has a polychronic sense of time. The Dominicans have a cyclical and flexible view of time, and are more likely to be involved in more than one task at once. The Latins’ agenda is filled with multiple and conflicting activities, a jumbled program that preordains (and thus excuses) schedules that cannot be kept, meetings that are interrupted, and personal business priorities that are constantly reshuffled (Becker, 2011 p.164). US firms can be resistant to understand the nature of a Latin firm taking longer to complete a process, which could sacrifice a good business opportunity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to import (days)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71 Venezuela, 33 Paraguay,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29 Nicaragua, Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents to Import</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 Guatemala, Honduras,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Uruguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting a business</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>141 Venezuela, 120 Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65 Uruguay, 64 Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcing contracts</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,459 Guatemala, 1,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Colombia, 900 Honduras, 852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values Extracted from Doing Business in the New Latin America (Becker, 2011)

Time is perceived tangible in the United States. People talk of time as if it were money, as something that could be “spent”, “saved”, and “lost” (Hall & Hall, 1990 p. 13). It is commonly used as a system involved in day to day interactions, in which time is the predictor of anything that could be accomplished during the day. In contrast, polychronicity in Latin America, places a higher premium on flexibility, a missed deadline means a second opportunity.
for achievement, rather than a lost one. Similarly, Latins favor long deliberations before reaching decision-making during a business meeting (Smidt, 2007 pg. 196) due to both their relationship-driven culture and their polychronic perception of time.

- Tolerance for lateness in the US: 5 to 10 minutes
- Tolerance for lateness in the Dominican Republic: up to 30 minutes

It is erroneous to make the assumption that Anglos’ place a higher priority on time than Latin Americans. It is better to understand that both nations both value time, however they prioritize it differently. A Latin prioritizes time spent in determining whether a business colleague may be trusted while the American translates this time as money. Many Common Business expressions used in North America delineate how time and money are embedded into the American language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two cents’ worth</td>
<td>I will tell you what I think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is money</td>
<td>Get it done fast for a better profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny for your thoughts</td>
<td>Say what you think; give an opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut to the chase</td>
<td>Don’t waste time and get to the point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power-lunch</td>
<td>Simultaneous lunch and business meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some values extracted (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, Wardrope, 2007)
A Fatalistic Latin America:

A common subconscious force that drives the Latin American culture, especially in the business world is fatalism. Fatalism is used to refer to an attitude of resignation in the face of some future events which are thought to be inevitable and outside of one’s control (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2010). Evidence among Latin American nations suggests that one’s fate lies in the hands of destiny. However, Americans believe in the power of an individual to control his/her own destiny as well as the destiny of society at large. The implications that arise from this cultural difference not only affects each individual but they also affect the way business is conducted (MCKinnis, Natella, 1994).

An American manager may experience difficulties when working with a Dominican because U.S. business people feel it is their duty to make sure than schedules are made within a specific deadline. A Dominican however will justify delays in project completion, and attribute it to destiny. A common phrase used by the Dominicans and other Latin American nations to give explanation for underachieving is “No estaba para nosotros” meaning “It was not meant for us”. Similarly, Americans working in a Hispanic environment commented that Latins are more likely to chalk up upsets in schedule by expressing an attitude which says in effect, “Well we tried our best but we couldn’t meet the deadline. It just wasn’t in the cards” (McKinniss, Natella, 1994).

Another example of fatalism in Latin American Organizations is the phrase “Si Dios quiere”, better known as “God willing” among North Americans, which is frequently appended to plans for business meetings and goals. (Oslan, De Franco, 2007). While conducting business with a Latin American manager, in many cases they will use this common phrase after agreeing to execute a business deal. The fatalistic Latin America is changing as a result of globalism and the interconnectedness of business partners throughout the world. A sample of 240 outstanding Central American senior managers reported very high levels of internal control (Oslan, 1993), denoting how these traditional patterns are transforming.
“Rule of Law” or “Rule of Men”?

The common practice of making personal exceptions in Latin America can play havoc with bureaucratic rules in organizations, as well as government industry regulations (Osland, De Franco, Osland, 2007). Universalism vs. Particularism is a theory proposed by Fons Trompenaara, an important author in cross cultural communications, and indicates how a society applies rules of morals and ethics. In universalist societies, the predominant belief is that the same set of standards should be applied uniformly to everyone. On the other hand, particularist societies, rules apply depending on of the person and situation.

Latin American particularism can be traced back to an old-age characteristic of human behavior in Spain (Becker, 2011). Dominicans, being a relationship driven culture, in which personal connections vital, it is logical to first analyze who is involved in the situation, then analyze what the situation is, and lastly decide what is right. Particularism is based on logic of the heart and human friendship. US businessmen prioritize contracts while engaging in business to define the terms of agreement between parties before proceeding to close a deal. In the Dominican Republic, as circumstances change, so does the agreement, so a contract will most likely be left toward the end.

A recent study in which Latin American and North American managers were asked to evaluate a situation and apply ethical decisions to it, 78% of US managers rejected friendship, while only 45% of Latin American managers would have placed rule of law before personal loyalties (Becker, 2011). In Dominican Republic, “the rule of men” is more important than the “Rule of Law”.

Personal Space: Territoriality

North Americans and Latin Americans have different perceptions about what is considered personal space. Space communicates power (Hall, Hall, 1990). North Americans, being individualists, have a higher sense for territoriality and commonly establish places that they label “mine”. The Latin on the other hand, pertaining to a collectivist culture, enjoys gathering together in a compressed group at a distance that any American could consider invasive.

It is important to understand these differences especially in the business world because different perceptions may impede effective communication. While speaking during a business meeting, Anglos’ value an organized exchange of thoughts. Dominicans, being high context people, reject auditory screening and thrive on being open to interruptions and in tune with what goes on (Hall, Hall, 1990). Such dissimilarities can be threatening to both parties. Similarly, a Latin that gets too close to an American could be seen as disrespectful and invasive, while the Latin may sense unsociability and too much separation from the American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Personal Space Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>24 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>8 inches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A particular way of Communicating

It is not surprising that today many Latin’s are gregarious and move naturally and effortlessly along a spectrum of roles: at one moment bargaining aggressively, at another displaying an infectious sense of humor, and at yet another serving as gracious host. Anglos who have not been exposed to the same freewheeling marketplace atmosphere may be at first disconcerted as their Latin opposite shifts fluidly between parts seemingly scripted for different business and social situations. (Becker, 2011 p.14).

Only 10% of the message understood by an audience is the actual content, 30 percent is due to the pitch or tenor, and 60 to other forms of nonverbal from body language to facial expressions to hand gestures (Mitchell, 2000 pg. 71). “The way people communicate is the way they live. It is their culture” was once said by Alfred. G Smith. With the increased interconnectedness between organizations from different parts of the world it is essential to understand that cultural insensitivity and ethnocentrism can have a great impact on any business transaction. Intercultural communication is a must in today’s business world, because now more than ever, we are interacting with people from different cultures, people perceived as “different from us”.

There are some common barriers to effective intercultural communication such as prejudice, discrimination, and ethnocentrism. Latin America has been a region of the world, just like most others, that has strived through the years for the independence of greater potencies. History of civil unrest and political instability has tainted Latin American societies. The prevalence of African slaves brought by the Spanish crown has made significant racial differences during the years, specially depicted in levels of social classes. The white, tend to be the richer. This makes it imperative to avoid speaking of racial distinctions when conducting business with a Dominican, and evade prejudice when classifying Dominicans social statuses.
Works Cited:


