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Prifysgol
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Synthesis of my expatriation
University of South Wales
United-Kingdom, Wales, Cardiff/Trefoest



Introduction and acknowledgments

I did my third year in expatriation in the University of South Wales in the United-Kingdom in Wales. The university is based just near the most important city of Wales: Cardiff. My first priority of my choice about my expatriation was my interest of the improvement of my English because it's unavoidable in our actual business environment. Moreover I wanted to discover a new culture and way of life during this year and given that the University of South Wales was one of the only university where we could come one entire year, I decided to choose this one. Finally, the reputation of the University (in the top ten of University in the United Kingdom and the most important University in Wales) was also an argument for my choice. I decide to study the BA Business and Management because it was the program which was near the courses of the IPAG Business School.

In this synthesis of my expatriation, I'm going to explain the host country and university, a description and an analysis about this year and finally the interest of this year for me about both aspect: professional and personal.

Before the writing of this synthesis, I want to thank the IPAG Business School and all people who work for the expatriation of students in third year and at the same time the University of South Wales for its welcoming and its integration and this wonderful year there.

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I/First part: Country, City and the host university

1) The Wales and the city of Cardiff and Treforest

A) Wales

The Wales is one of the four nations in the United Kingdom (with Scotland, Ireland and England). The official language in the Wales is the English but there are also a lot of people who speak Welsh particularly in the north of the country. The capital of the Wales is Cardiff which has 320 000 inhabitants. The country is situated on the West of the Great-Britain and the surface of the Wales is around 20 000 Km². The country has a large littoral with more than 1200Km of littoral. Most of the population live in the south of the country near Cardiff. It's there which there the dynamic of the country are and where the economy is running. However, the country is known for its mountainous landscapes but it's more in the north and the centre area.

Concerning the political aspect, since 1999, the Wales has a national assembly and a local government. Both of institutions have been created in the prevention of a dissolution of the United Kingdom.

B) Cardiff

Cardiff is the capital and bigger city in the Wales, it's situated in the south of the country. The city has an old and big history, indeed, the city was created by the Romans. At the end of the 18th century, the city was focus on the metals and allow to the city to develop itself. During the 20th century, the city used its harbour to develop its trade and business. The city is now really developed with a lot of infrastructure. In 1999, the city was the host of the rugby world cup and built the famous Millennium Stadium which used in the recent rugby world cup in 2015. The city has also the national assembly of the country since 1999. There are a lot of famous places in Cardiff as Cardiff bay, Cardiff castle and the country is really recent with a lot of commercial centre. To my mind, Cardiff is a little Paris, because when you are in the centre of Cardiff, you have the feeling of being in the centre of Paris in a smaller extent obviously.

C) Treforest

Treforest is a village in the south of the country just near Cardiff (15Km). Treforest is the city where the University of South Wales is based. There is a train station which is linked to all big cities in the south. The country has a grocery store (a little Tesco) and a lot of bars and restaurants. The city is focus on students because most of the population are students of the university.

2) The University of South Wales

The University of South Wales is the result of two university in 2013: the fusion of Glamorgan University and the Newport University. It's the biggest university in the country and the sixth in the entire United Kingdom with almost 35 000 students. It's an international university because there are most than 100 nationality in the university and lot of students are in an Erasmus program. There are lot of areas of study as engineers, sound, business, art... The business area is based in the campus of Treforest in the Faculty of Business and Society near Cardiff.

The campus of Treforest is really large with lot of infrastructure. There are buildings used for courses with letter (A to H), there are buildings for the administration and the management and there are also buildings for the student life with the Student Union (BDE in France): a grocery store, a bar, a coffee, a hairdresser and a nightclub ("eclipse"). There is also the university restaurant and a Starbuck Coffee manage by the university. In the top side of the campus, there are all the accommodation with the housing for students and different place for students as laundry, accommodation lodge, and game room. The campus is seems campus in United States with lot of infrastructure but the campus was built on hills and walk in this campus is more than a simple jogging.

3) Material conditions and Budget

First of all, even if the United Kingdom and then the Wales are member of the European Union they still have their unique currency: pound and 1 pound is approximately 1, 30 euro then obviously you will spend more than in France. Finally, you should contact your bank before your leaving to inform you about possible commissions for your purchases and withdrawals.

A) Housing

As I said before about the conversion between Euro and the pound is a problem concerning the money that you spend and particularly for the housing. For my housing, I had two options, the first one was to find a roommate in Cardiff which is cheaper but I had to take the train every day to go to the campus in Treforest. The second option was to take a housing directly on the campus. On the campus, there are different type of room (11 to 15 m²). I decided to take the biggest room (15m²) (Picture1) and the cost was around 7000 euros. With your room, you have your own bathroom but you share the kitchen with 5 others flatmates. The cost was really high but there is no price from being at only 200 meters to the university, more over you have different advantage for being on the campus as an accommodation lodge, a game room, different coffee and bar and also a laundry.



Picture 1 the room and the kitchen in the campus

B) Budget

I also had other expenses during the year which I am explaining below.

Firstly, about the mode of transport, living in Paris I decided to use the plane to make the journey between Paris and Cardiff, I used nearly five flight between Paris and Cardiff thanks to Flybe and Air France. I spent approximately 200 euros by journey then 1000 euros for the year. There are also a cost for the ticket between the university and the airport and I also took a taxi when I had too much luggage which cost 150 euros for the year. Moreover, I needed to buy train ticket there to go in Cardiff for party, visits, sport events; the ticket cost 7, 50 euros for the return-day, I spent approximately 150 euros for this.

Concerning the food, the price is as always in United Kingdom higher than in France. I decided to do my shopping at little Tesco of the city then directly order online and get delivered for more choice. I spent 70 euros per week for foods and drink (including purchases in grocery shop and also some meal at the university restaurant) then about 300 euros per month and 2100 euros for the year there.

Finally, I also had some expenses for activities and gift. I spent about 500 euros for bar, restaurant and party in Cardiff including the taxi and also 200 euros for gift for my family in Christmas and at the end of the academic year. This year has been very costly but I had the chance to have a financial help from the Erasmus program and thanks to the IPAG of 1800 euros.

Type	Cost
Housing	7000 €
Transport Paris to Cardiff	1150 €
Transport in Cardiff	150 €
Foods and Drink	2100 €
Activities and Gift	700 €
Total	11 800 €

Figure 1 Summary table of expenses

II/ Analysis of my academic year

1) Choice of modules and teaching methods

First of all, you must know that the method between the France and the United Kingdom is really important and it's not easy to get the British rhythm. Firstly, there are not works that we need to do before the lesson but we must read and understand the lesson to discuss, argue and debate during the lesson time. We have access to all information, results and courses through the blackboard (looks like Ipagora), it's the difference between the University of South Wales and the Ipag Business School because on the Blackboard there are all power point of courses while there are only the works that we need to do on the Ipagora site. The relationship between the teacher and student is less formal than in France, you can discuss with the teacher before, during and after the lesson, you can even call the teacher or make an appointment because all teachers have an office on the campus. However, there are things that have shocked me as the right of use the mobile phone during the lesson, the right to leave the lesson before the end or also to come when you want and not at the beginning of the lesson.

I was in the BA Business and Management, there was 6 different courses in this module, 4 obligatory and 2 options. Each courses was for 10 ECTS, the rhythm of the week is simpler than in France because there are only around 15 hours per week. All courses are marked between 0 and 100 and the average is 40 out of 100 (10/20 in France), marks are based on presentation, essay or written and oral exam. I think the marking is not more difficult than in France but in the university in United Kingdom, you must use references, you can't give your own opinion without the help of a known author and if you have a lack of references you can't get a good mark.

Description of my courses at the University of South Wales.

- Regional Development & Entrepreneurship

The Regional Development and Entrepreneurship is the only module with lectures and also tutorials. Every week, there is a tutorials where the teacher explain the main important things about the module and during the tutorial, we should reflect about different themes. However the module was only during the first semester. The module is really interesting, it look like an economical module at the IPAG Business School. In this module, we need to analyse and understand the economic context and the different reasons of the growth in the world. Why there are different Growth between different countries. In the same time, we need to understand the innovation and the link between innovation and Growth. (Topic 1-4) In the topic 5 to 8, it's more focus about the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship. We study, the family business, the female entrepreneurship and the small business. Understand what is important, what is right, what is wrong. (Topic 5-8)

The assignment is the most difficult assignment because we need to choose 4 topic and explain with the uses of references in 7000 words.

- Global Business

Global business is a module focus on the development of a fake company: Elecdyne. We need to take decisions to improve the business of this fake company. It was the module which was the most interesting for me because it's really focus on the practice and the decision making. In this module, we have lot of freedom about the decisions we take and it's why i loved this module. Moreover, the teacher is really interesting and know how to explain his module. There are 2 marks in this module, the first one is an essay and the second one a written exam at the end of the year.

- Leadership and Management

The leadership and Management is a module which is focus on the different type of leadership (servant, authority, transformational) and allow to us to understand in the workplace how manage and also the different of management between women/men. The module was the most difficult module and also the module which I didn't like because it's almost only focus on theory and there are absolutely no practice even if the teacher (Monica) was really interesting and we feel she love teach and explain. But at IPAG, there are lot of practice and it's that i need and i like but not in this module. There are 2 marks in this module, the first one is a poster that you need to do on a leader (I choose Martin Luther King) and the second one is a written exam.

- Strategy and change

Strategy is an interesting module at the University of South Wales in the BA Business. This module is focus on choices effectuated by companies, indeed, how companies can evolve, improve, ameliorate... The goal of a company is to adapt itself in the environment which is really changing nowadays. In this module, the goal is to analyse choice of companies with tool like swot, porter matrices and other tools. This module is directed by Louise Hung who are a really interesting teacher really involve by the module and courses she teach. There are two assignment in this module (2* 2500 words) and a presentation. It's a module in which there are lot of personal work because we need to set up a good presentation with 4 or 5 people. The module is on both semester but finish really soon because we must publish our assignment at the beginning of April.

- Employee Engagement

Firstly, a definition of Employee Engagement which are the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential. It's based on trust, integrity and values. The module is really interesting and the teacher try to make us understand different concept like emotions, attitude, behaviour, involvement. Moreover, the goal of the module is to analyse how companies can involve their employees and how employees take part into the organization. Finally the assignment is a case study about a company which choose and how this company involve and motivate their employees.

- New venture management and development

The new venture and management is a module which is focus on the entrepreneurship and the way to develop companies. What are the different way to develop, what could be the barriers about the creation of a company? It's really interesting and focus on more practice things. We have 2 hours per week in a tutorial session. The assignment is focus on different question about entrepreneurship, barriers, format etc. It was one of my favourite course because there are not lot of theory in this course and we can have debate with the teacher who is an entrepreneur himself.

All courses were interesting even if I expected more practice than theory.

2) Difficulties and results

My first goal for coming in the United Kingdom was to improve my English because it's not my strength then my first difficulty was to follow courses, teachers, the life always in English. Indeed, at the beginning it's not easy to follow all things because you have only two hours of English at IPAG and at the University of South Wales where ever you go it's in English. It's not only to understand the English which is difficult but also to understand the accent, expressions and the shortcut of some words. This difficulty was only in the beginning because with the time you understand better and you learn more than if you have only two hours in France.

Another difficulty during the year was the method of works, indeed, in France in Business School you have some works to do for tutorials but you know what you should do and it is focus on the practice. In the University of South Wales, you must read lot of books and understand that authors said and use this quote or the idea to explain your talking. You must go to the library and stay during lot of hours, it's more focus on the research and the theory than the practice and it was difficult for me who is a person who prefer the real and the practice. The teacher want us to focus on the critical analysis, I think now thanks this year I'm more confident about the critical analysis and the way how I can perceive things.

The last important difficulty was about exam which are really different than in France, indeed, in most of modules you have already the subject of the exam before the exam and then you must prepare your exam, learn your answer and write your answer the day of the exam. It's really strange because you have already the subject, however, this type of exam require more personal work and reflexion.

This year abroad was a good experience to see different way of works even if I prefer the IPAG Business School because you can work more about practice and case study.

III/ Reflexion on academic and personal contributions

1) Academic and language skills

This year was really important for me which give me more confident about academic knowledge and language skills. Indeed, the difference of methods of works was a good point for me because I develop my critical analysis, moreover I was more focus on the theory than on practice then I learned lot of things about the business, the way how to create and develop a company, the management and the leadership. I also develop my method of work because I was oblige to go to the library, read book, hold the most important in each book and use that the author said to give a sense to my writing. In France, it is more focus on the practice, for example, in Finance, we are focus on case study and we should find the answer on the case with our brain and not read lot of books to find the solution. It was interesting to compare different point of view and to compare with our mind to set up an analysis even if it's sometimes boring to focus only on the theory and not on the practice.

Concerning my improvement about English, I'm really more confident when I speak English and I can almost understand every people even if some people have a difficult accent. Concerning the writing and the understanding of the writing I also really better and this year was really important for me on this point. When you talk everyday English and you are oblige to read in English, learn in English, your level in English will progress really fast. I think living and studying during one semester or one year is the best way to learn another language and to really understand the intricacies of the language. I'm sure that this year will have a real impact on my professional future if I want to make my career abroad because I learned lot of about the English and the culture in the United Kingdom, indeed, the English language is in actual business world really primordial and a lack of skills about this language can be a real problem. However, I still need to learn more and more vocabulary and still train my oral for being really developed.

2) The link with the IPAG Business School

The BA Business and Management is focus on the business, the management, the growth, the creation of company and also the engagement of employees. Every courses give us some keys for our future and we also study the life of companies in our actual world. Courses are focus on international and we study different companies in the world and not only in the UK. I learned lot of and particularly in Strategy & Change and Leadership & Management. Strategy and change give us all tools for a company to develop the business, we saw some tools that we already have seen at IPAG in Marketing as Swot, Porter Matrices but we also learned new tools as methods of strategic growth (mergers, acquisitions, alliances) or also the pest table. In the course Leadership & Management, it was totally different because I never had a similar course at IPAG and I really learned lot of about the

management, the different way of leadership, and the difference between men and women at top job in the leadership.

There are also some courses which are really similar with courses that I had in second year at the IPAG Business School. Employee Engagement was similar to "Gestion des Ressources Humaines" even if it was more focus on the theory even if we had little case study. Global Business and Regional Development and Entrepreneurship had some similarity with "Microéconomie" but with another way to see the business and the economy, it was really interesting to compare the different way that university and teacher can instruct and the similarities and differences with IPAG. In second year, we had two modules in English at IPAG and I hope this idea of preparation of the expatriation will continue because it was really helpful to have a first idea about a full course in English. I come back from the University of South Wales with more knowledge about the business, the economy and different aspect of the professional work. I just regret that we had no finance courses which were my favourite subject at IPAG but it will be fine because I will in Finance in fourth year.

3) Personal achievements

This year was also really interesting on a personal point. Indeed, I had never lived alone before this year because I live with my parents just near my school. It was a real challenge for me and particularly at the beginning, it's not easy to leave the familial cocoon and to live alone overnight. At the beginning I had trouble spotted me and I adapted to a new environment, then over time I really managed myself to integrate me and I really grow up and I come back with more maturity. I also lost my little timidity because when you are there and you need something you must ask yourself and not wait the others.

I really proud of me about this year, I learned a lot about me and I am really more confident about myself. I think this type of experience allow to us to reflect about the life and the luck that we have to stay one year abroad. We develop our open-mindedness and discover some different point of cultures. This open-mindedness can be a real advantage in my future and in the business environment if I join an international company or if I make an international career. Once again, I want to say thanks to the IPAG Business School and the University of South Wales because this type of experience really can change us.

4) My surprises

There are different things that surprised me, the first one concern the academic year and the difference with my studies in France. There are many fewer hours of classes in the United Kingdom (10-15 hours per week) but it's always the same planning, in France some week I have only 10 hours and some week I have 25 hours then it's different, however there are more personal work, we need to go to the library, read every day. The notation is also different, it's more difficult to have a great mark but it's almost easy to have 40/100 which is mean 10/20 in France. Moreover considering that I was in the University, there are less control from the university, I mean you can come when you want in course while you must come in tutorials at IPAG Business School. Another thing which surprised me was the way to work, indeed, it's not like in IPAG where you make your TD and you use principally the lecture to answer to your questions, in the University you are oblige to read, read and read to understand different theory and explain each of them.

Concerning the University itself, I was really surprised when I arrived because it's immense, you have lot of infrastructure as: classroom, accommodation administration, restaurant, coffee, laundry, library, shop, sport centre. It is really different that I know at IPAG because we have only 2, 3 infrastructure but it is normal we are in Paris. The first feeling I had when I saw the campus was the idea I had of campus in United States with swimming pool, football field...

Concerning people and the cultural aspect, I think they are friendlier and welcoming than in France but it is known that the French are not kings of the welcome! Moreover Welsh are really focus on their traditions, sporting events and celebrations. Indeed, the leading cause of absence from work is due to sporting events. When there was Halloween, Christmas or Saint Patrick day, and people were really happy and they enjoy celebrations. People are also more open-minded concerning the dress code because a large part of the population have piercings and tattoos and they are lot of piercings, tattoos shops.

Conclusion

I keep only positive things of this year abroad which give me more confidence in myself and a better open-mindedness. I know this year in the United Kingdom was a real luck for me. I hope it will be a springboard for my future at IPAG in the professional world.

I also develop my English skill which was my first goal. My only regret about this year was the lack of financial subject in the University of South Wales.

If people want discover the United Kingdom and improve their English, I really advice this destination because it is unforgettable

Once again, thanks to the IPAG Business School and the University of South Wales for this exchange.