Cultural Diversity in International Business

The Spanish-Moroccan Business Context

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*W*ithin ONA Group, we consider that a corporate social responsibility should not be just a claim served by a relevant communication strategy. It should on the contrary reflect on the ground some strong beliefs such as:

- ❖ *A sharing spirit is necessary to a strong social cohesion*
- ❖ *Human intelligence is the main asset of a firm*
- ❖ *Cultural differences are a real wealth which should benefit to all*
- ❖ *An understanding attitude is more fruitful than a value judgement*

That's why we initiated a Think Tank on the Management of Cultural Diversity; which gave us the opportunity to bring in our own ideas... learn more about other's as far as diversity is concerned...and at the same time listening and speaking our mind, till the present book became a reality! A book which reflects the way a mutually beneficial cooperation might be implemented beyond cultural differences! That's our own perception of mutual understanding!

Mouatassim Belghazi
President ONA Foundation
& Chairman ONA Group

The Think Tank on Cultural Diversity was inaugurated in Casablanca in December 2005 by the ONA Foundation of Morocco and the Instituto de Empresa Foundation of Spain, with the collaboration of the Averroes Committee. With the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Think Tank moved into an operational dimension, launching a research study in 2007-08, the results of which will enable the identification of practical policies that will improve trade and general relations between Spain and Morocco.

The study aims to gain a better understanding of the cultural diversity of both societies, which could serve as a source of competitive advantages, improving corporate strategies of inclusion and adaptation, and helping build a stronger bridge between the two countries. This in turn will foster a more solid base for Moroccan companies who are considering doing business in Spain, and vice versa. More specifically the study is designed to identify the cultural parameters that can help improve human resource management aimed at achieving competitive advantages and greater efficiency.

This book is designed to provide useful advice to Moroccan companies in Spain and Spanish companies in Morocco, and to encourage members of the business community on both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar to engage in joint business projects.

Rafael Puyol
President of the IE University

C O N T E N T S

Part Three

Prologue : Cultural diversity in the Spanish-Moroccan business context

One of the oldest definitions of culture describes it as *"... a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other skills and customs acquired by man as a member of society.[1]"* Seen from this perspective, culture is a dynamic and practical process rather than a static concept. In addition to reflecting a series of beliefs, culture provides guidelines for meeting future challenges, for living and resolving day-to-day problems, and also a unified interpretation of the collective concepts of time and space.

For many years business management was perceived as a "culture-free science". The earliest management theories believed that the key to the success of a company was the universal application of a series of rational and scientific models that were perfectly applicable to any business context, without the need for any specific adaptations; however, these models were far less efficient when applied in the context of different cultures. This led management theorists to conclude that culture was important in the business world and convinced them, for example, that the things that motivate a worker in the United States, are not necessarily be the same things that motivate a worker in Venezuela.

Therefore, today it is a common belief that one of the key factors for business success is a correct understanding of cultural differences. Nevertheless, cultural perception is often largely ignored when developing a commercial strategy.

In their search for a better cultural understanding that will help Spanish and Moroccan businessmen make more effective use of their joint potential, the ONA Foundation and the IE Foundation jointly created the Think Tank on Cultural Diversity: a critical reflection and research initiative designed to identify and disseminate a series of practical recommendations that could be useful as a guide to academics and businessmen.

A better cultural understanding of the Spanish-Moroccan context will enable a more solid union between both regions. In the future, this will make it easier to introduce Spanish business into the African environment and vice versa. Furthermore, a comprehensive management model for the Spanish-Moroccan context can help build a better cultural understanding that will play a key role in business management, and perhaps this model can later be extended to other cultural contexts.

The Think Tank was conceived as an open process, bringing together different viewpoints on the same issues in order to reach different conclusions. Experts were selected from different areas including academia, the business world, politics and the media. Geographical diversity was also a key factor in selecting participants; therefore, the Think Tank comprised experts from Spain, Morocco, Canada, Hungary and the U.S.

Think Tank participants met once a year and the results of their discussions helped guide a yearly research project conducted by researchers at the ONA Foundation and the IE Foundation, which in turn led to renewed discussions at the following Think Tank meeting. The process led to an innovative cultural perception model that we believe can enhance the understanding of diversity among different cultural contexts.

This document summarizes the Think Tank's three years of work on cultural diversity, and it is divided into three main sections:

❖ **Part One: Transculturality**
   The first section includes an academic background regarding transculturality from a macro and a micro perspective as well as some case studies and examples.

❖ **Part Two: Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management: Minutes of discussions**
   The debates of the three sessions are summarized to highlight some of the main themes and discussions of each session.

❖ **Part Three: Practical recommendations for managers**
The sessions of the Think Tank lead to the development of a model for cultural perception designed to help raise cultural awareness amongst international business managers. This model comprises five practical phases for raising cultural awareness in business.

The publication also includes a list of the different participants of the Think Tank, a brief profile of their professional backgrounds, and finally an extended bibliography for cultural diversity in the Spanish-Moroccan context.

We believe that this report closes three years of reflection and research and opens a new period in which action will take precedence. The findings of the Think Tank's three years worth of work will be the basis for a series of activities focused on disseminating knowledge in the academic community, as well as in the media and in public policy.

The work presented in this publication has been made possible by many individuals and organizations, and we would like to take this opportunity to express our most sincere appreciation:

*We would first like to express our gratitude to all members of the Think Tank, who are all extremely busy and sought-after professionals that have always done their best to participate and contribute to the success of each session.

*We would like to thank the Spanish Government, in particular its Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), as well as the Averroes Committee, for believing in the project and giving us the necessary resources and support.

*Lastly, this work has been made possible thanks to the full support of the ONA Foundation and the IE Foundation, in particular to the work of professionals from both institutions; we want to express our special gratitude to Nezha Khalil and Irene Durán, who in addition to their professional skills also brought their enthusiasm to all facets of the project.

The ONA and IE professionals who worked jointly on this project provided a practical illustration of how different cultural backgrounds can bring a far richer and more interesting approach to any given project, thus confirming that cultural diversity can in fact be a competitive advantage for success.

Celia De Anca & Noureddine El Hachami

Transculturality

A- Transculturality from a macro-economic perspective[1]

Our environment is both the framework and the source of symbols which enrich our collective imagination and contribute not only to our social learning, but also to the evolution of our set of values: whether it is our esthetical reference, our perception of everyday life, or even our relationships with others.

Family, school, travel, media, music, design, live shows, visual arts, gastronomy, literature, fashion…in a nut shell, everything that speaks to our sensitivity or that expresses it, reflects our "cultural being", which in turn must successfully negotiate its juxtaposition with different cultural models throughout its life. It is only by analyzing this process that we will be able to comprehend the interpret "otherness" as a process of exchange and not as a situation of mutual rejection based on opposition.

However, cultural representations, the visibility of these phenomena as well as the values attached to them, have in the last few years evolved substantially and in many different ways within democratic societies, according to their different contexts and particularly their history.

We therefore assume that transculturality entails first an interrogation, a process leading to a transformation in the perception of individuals, which is followed by a taking of control over one's cultural "reflexes"[2] in professional and everyday communication with foreign interlocutors. To do this, we must understand the components that come into play in any social interaction. What really does happen when two individuals with different cultures face one another and must seek a common ground? In their exchanges they bring into play several heritages reflecting different types of belonging[3]: cultural belonging and social belonging[4].

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1 With the kind permission of Mohammed V University; from a master level research conducted by Mrs. Meryem Hosni under the tutorial guidance of El Hachami
2 Both: mental and behavioral
3 That is the anthropological dimension or the feeling of belonging to the culture of origin
4 That is the sociological dimension or the connectedness with a defined social group

The cultural belonging of an individual induces a commitment to a set of values, standards, beliefs, rules and patterns of behavior expressing an "organized distribution" of the world, which is shared by members of a community, ethnic group, nation or country. In sum, a community creates a set of values to which each of its individuals identifies with. This codification of the world, and the behaviors arising from it, are conveyed and unconsciously reproduced by the natives of a given culture: they are acquired and transmitted by the family or other social units, and are incorporated since early childhood. The result is the transmission of an inherited, shared, and constantly evolving culture.

Yet within each culture and society, this set of values varies from one group to another and in a way makes for a diversity of micro-cultures determined by specific codes such as generation, gender, profession, region, etc.

The feeling of social belonging or connectedness in an individual induces an implicit ranking of these values, standards, beliefs and behaviors through which the members of the group tacitly recognize and co-opt one another by virtue of behaviors that demonstrate compliance to the rules.

This dual (cultural, social) belonging, which each individual carries without even knowing it, is confronted to another duality when it meets with a foreign interlocutor. This gives rise to misunderstandings, mistakes and mutual prejudices, caused by a gap between their respective values, practices and behaviors.

Any exchange between individuals also depends on a specific context (social, political, economic, linguistic, etc.) that happens in a specific time and space, and is also influenced by the sets of cultural and social heritages found in the collective history of each individual's group of origin. Each individual is therefore the bearer of these various heritages. In an exchange, albeit trivial or even daily, individuals from different origins, culturally and socially marked within time and space, do not confront objective "realities" that are independent form their dual sense of belonging; they confront self-representations, representations of their society and culture, including representations of the other party which are also shaped and produced by this dual feeling of belonging.

Mindful of this multi-dimensionality in cultural exchanges, and aware of the fact that a "grammar of cultures" does exist with a it's given codes and rules, it falls upon us to ponder on a methodology that proposes a transversal reading of foreign cultures, including their society and their hidden dimensions.

This approach must also help us to better "read" our society. For how can we understand other cultures if we do not know how to identify our own values?

1. Approaches to transculturality

The cultural aspect is considered to include a person in their entirety, thereby covering at same time their ethnic origin, religion, culture, family and social environment, personal taste, behaviors, attitudes, skills, etc.

To attempt to define culture is to be interested in transculturality, to be interested in the other; it is an active, if not an activist search. This search becomes a reflection of tolerance and the willingness to advance the integration process: working together to achieve a greater visibility and acceptance of different cultures. Avoiding cultural discrimination means opening up to all cultures sharing the same thirst for knowledge in order to break down prejudices. It is important to refrain from bringing to the fore one's origins, however without renouncing them; in other words, avoiding ethnocentrism without falling into ethnorelativism[5].

Transculturality is a method of observation and participation that needs to be encouraged in order to preserve cultures, our most important human capital. It is our duty to develop and promote this kind of sharing, these meetings and interactions, this networking of cultural information.

1.1. Transculturality

Any culture is fundamentally multicultural, and is built through contacts between different living communities who contribute their way of thinking, feeling and acting. It is obvious that cultural exchanges do not all produce the same effects, nor do they have the same consequences; but it is on the basis of these contacts that cultural intermingling and hybridization will take place.

A culture can evolve only through its contact with other cultures, but this evolution may be judged in different ways. Betting on transculturality is akin to betting on a rapprochement based on respect.

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5 This neologism coined in 1906 by William Summer, refers to the position of those who deem that their own way of being, of acting or thinking must be given preference to all the other ones; a behavior that is in line with the refusal of cultural diversity.

As a matter of fact, transculturality presupposes the existence of a relationship between individuals from different cultural groups; this is a concept that is broader than a mere "multicultural" fact. However, speaking about the existence of intercultural relationships is redundant: transculturality entails, by definition, the interaction between cultures, an exchange of communication where one person accepts the reciprocity of the culture of another.

Multiculturalism claims to be a response to the reality of today's society. It accounts for new cultures without creating real links between the culture of the host country, known as the normative culture, and the new culture brought by the new citizens.

Up until now, the principles and policies of multiculturalism highlighted the following:

- ❖ Recognition by the state of the cultural multiplicity found at the heart of society.
- ❖ Reduction of obstacles hampering the participation of culturally marginalized groups in society.
- ❖ Fostering cultural exchange.

To a certain degree, multiculturalism is the sum of different particularities, resulting in a very fragmented set, without much cohesion.

One must therefore ask whether the model of multiculturalism, dating back to the 19th century, is still appropriate in a world where everyone is looking for values and codes that will enable them to have good relationships with others and with society, hence the need to approach transculturality.

This approach is generally made up of three steps:

- ❖ **Decentralization** is about taking a step back from one's own self, trying to define one's own personal frame of reference as the result of a culture and of several subcultures[6] which have been integrated into one's personal development.
- ❖ **Penetrating the system of the other** means coming out of one's own self in order to look at things from the other person's point of view. It is an attitude of openness, a personal effort of self-analysis.

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6 The term of "subculture" refers to a coherent set of standards, beliefs, values, behaviors and attitudes, shared by a population, within one inclusive cultural matrix.

❖ **Negotiation** is trying to understand one another and to reach the smallest compromise necessary to avoid confrontation.

To be more specific, transculturality may be reached in the two following ways:

❖ **Cross-cultural learning:** meeting the other in order to improve communication and encourage knowledge and understanding of their culture.

❖ **Exchanges with the country of origin:** establish joint training between the members of the country of origin and those of the host country.

There is no such thing as a culture that is better or worse than another culture. In certain contexts, each of the cultures may be under the impression of finding themselves in a situation of discrimination; but if we accept the fact that there is no hierarchy between them, we can then recognize that all cultures are worthy and deserve respect from all others, on an equal footing. This means, furthermore, that the only way to correctly understand another culture is to interpret its manifestations in agreement with one's own cultural criteria. This must not deprive us of our right to criticism; it is desirable however, to refrain from rushing into trying to understand the whole symbolic complexity of various cultural practices at one time. This is about trying to moderate the inevitable ethnocentrism that will cause misinterpretations of cultural practices that are strange to us, according to the criteria of our own culture.

1.2. Intercultural approaches

a. The usefulness of intercultural approaches

Intercultural approaches serve several objectives, from all points of view (ethnic, economic, political, social, etc.), and have become indispensable. Experiences with cultural differences have actually become part of the daily routine for many of us.

Quite obviously, this is about preventing discrimination and racism, strengthening conflict management, fostering a better mutual understanding, managing multi-linguist; but also arousing the sense of discovery and the feeling of openness in everyone, prompting everybody to tap into their own resources, etc. To build a space of common social skills and citizenship, it is necessary to

protect otherness by acknowledging and promoting the specific characters of each, and ensuring that each one fulfills their part of the social contract.

Intercultural approaches are used to avoid marginalization, isolation, and ill being resulting from homesickness and academic failure. They make it possible to solve the misunderstandings arising from cultural "winks-and-nods," to develop the process of negotiation and ownership of rules and common practices, while promoting devices of integration that foster dialogue and conflict resolution. This is all about learning to come out of the center to reach a position of interaction with foreign persons.

These approaches are also used to become better acquainted with the conceptual framework of the research; its methodological and epistemological choices, along with relevant theoretical concepts for dealing with intercultural questions (such as identity, difference, otherness, diversity, culture, ethnicity, etc.) The power issues underlying the social, economic and political relations in a multicultural society are more than ever before in need of being controlled and put into perspective. In fact, the inequality of social relations is much more visible in the relationship between a native and a non-native person, than between two natives or two non-natives.

On the other hand, intercultural approaches are particularly valued in the educational environment, where they are used to guide professors with issues such as dealing with otherness, cultural recognition, rapport to knowledge, and also linguistic and cultural distance and deviation from basic standards. The institutionalization of intercultural approaches thus makes it possible to foster the de-compartmentalization of locally-led actions in the fields of integration.

These intercultural approaches obviously imply a specific kind of information processing, since they are also being used to represent and organize information in line the major principles of interculturality, in order to provide participants with the necessary technical tools.

Finally, intercultural approaches are used to secure wider and more varied objectives, such as: promoting the relevance of democratic expression; encouraging and supporting democratic culture as well as basic human rights and liberties; disseminating as widely and quickly as possible all forms of cultural expression; organizing intercultural activities (tourism, history and art); participating in the protection of the environment; fostering sustainable develop-

ment and the development of youth, etc.

b. The different categories of relevant players

In what fields of activity are these intercultural approaches being used? And what are the different categories of relevant players?

These two questions appear to be inevitably related; hence we have decided to treat them together.

Intercultural approaches must be used in all fields and this is already happening little by little. The relevant players, as far as they are concerned, come from every walk of life: communication, tourism, history, psychology, linguistics, sociology, ethnology, anthropology and pedagogy, etc. (in brief, quite a long list). The most relevant players seemingly belong to the educational community. In fact, those who are active in the field of education are essential actors in the social integration of migrants and must adopt an intercultural approach in order to be able to face the complex social challenges they are confronted with. The list also includes ministries and institutions, public servants, administrators of municipal policies of integration, officers and volunteers of associations, social workers, company employees, etc.

Most recently, corporate trainers and consultants in "knowledge management" have started to use intercultural approaches in order to contribute to the setting-up of foreign companies with the teaching of intercultural skills.

However, tourism is a field that must not be overlooked, for it puts the intercultural approach into practice in the field, particularly through tourism consultants and agencies. This implies the presence of social directors, supported by assistants and especially community groups and centers, places of worship (churches of various denominations, synagogues, mosques, Buddhist temples, etc.); in other words, all forms of existing cultural cooperation, all of those who wish to promote and share certain aspects of their culture of origin.

These intercultural efforts are intended particularly towards immigrant populations, asylum seekers, victims of wars and violent conflicts; but they are also important for the whole of society. Cultural differences are everywhere and not only in situations of economic and political misfortune. It stands to reason that the most affected populations are those who live through times of instability, with constant arrivals and departures, and who suffer from ignorance of the host language and a difference in social habits and models. For them it is

a matter of urgency. Yet as we have just seen, all of the components of a society are a good target for intercultural approaches.

c. The targets of intercultural approaches

The objectives sought after by of all of these intercultural approaches point more or less towards the same direction: promote the world to those who are willing to open their eyes to other cultures. Most people have a prevention-oriented approach, insofar as they try to help people change their perceptions of human relationships so that they do not adopt xenophobic behaviors, and misunderstandings or interpersonal rejections are kept to a minimum.

2. Canada, a successful model of integration

Today, all societies are multicultural. Multiculturalism is a response to cultural diversity and its integration into the national culture. Intercultural policies are therefore the means to learn "how to live together" and "how to guarantee the full participation of all cultures." Because diversity can be a source of wealth only where there is transculturality. How can we achieve freedom of speech (in all its forms) in a pluralistic and multicultural society?

To try and better answer this question, it would be helpful to study the different actions and cultural programs undertaken by Canada, a young country that is following a pattern of development characterized by its material, spiritual and cultural openness. The lessons to learn from its different policies are of utmost importance.

Canada stands out with its active and intensive immigration policy. In fact, it hosts and even recruits immigrants. According to the Canadian Ministry of Immigration, up to 250,000 people migrate into Canada each year.

The integration of this foreign population, which is not only abundant but also one that is continuously renewed, obviously creates very specific problems for the country. These problems are partially met with economic and social integration programs that benefit newcomers, either directly or indirectly[7].

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7 That is to say through the granting of social rights which all liberal democracies consider as conditions precedent for the civil participation of their members.

Emphasis was first placed on the learning of official languages, with programs focusing only on immigrants in the job market, thereby instantly excluding children, senior citizens and particularly women. At the beginning of the 90's a reform made it possible to extend these programs to other immigrants and especially to housewives, who not only received language courses but were also provided auxiliary services such as free transportation, day-care, etc.

The second part of this policy consists of financing local and private agencies, organized under a genuinely national network, in order to offer immigrants assistance in all fields related to their adaptation process: from housing to health and information services, etc.

And lastly, a very original host program was put in place to accompany immigrants in their everyday lives and through all steps of the process.

Since the 70's, the Federal Government of Canada, with the help of private partners, has become very involved in integration efforts. The Ministry of Immigration has a special department dedicated to this goal. This office also gives out national scholarships to academics collecting information on health, education and economic data; all of which is necessary so that assistance programs will be better adapted to the needs of immigrants.

Canadian policy can therefore be said to be very advanced in the field of assisting integration. It is a strategy that continues to focus on the acquisition of language skills without under-estimating other important aspects.

Beyond these direct measures, there are others that are known in North America as Welfare, a social assistance program that benefits all Canadians according to their needs. Canadian leaders have been persuaded, in light of the direct results of their integration policy, of the impossibility of completely separating this policy from the more indirect effects of Welfare. All immigrants benefit from Welfare social programs within one year of their arrival in Canada; and therefore, they receive equal treatment with Canadian citizens.

In conclusion, Canada seems to be more sensitive to the issues of integration. This is due not only to its economic interests, but also to a perspective of multiculturalism which not only acknowledges the right to differences, but also actively asserts and promotes equality and freedom for all citizens and foreigners alike.

2.1. The case of Montreal

The city of Montreal manages the issue of multilingualism in a specific context where French is both the language of the majority in Quebec and that of the minority in Canada. This dual reality required the creation of cultural population dynamics grounded in a support for the French language, while simultaneously promoting respect for the languages and cultures of the different groups that make up the population.

27% of Montreal's population is born outside Canada. This section is made up of 80 ethno-cultural groups, all of whom speak upwards of some 100 languages and dialects, and practice at least one of the eight largest religions in the world. Therefore, Montreal's biggest challenge is to make sure that new arrivals (the intake) harmoniously adapt to their host society by learning to primarily speak French, while at the same time contributing to the cultural enrichment and socioeconomic development of the city.

The Montreal Intercultural Office, the ancestor of today's Intercultural Affairs Bureau, was born in 1988.

In order to adapt the municipal government to the multicultural reality of Montreal, improve the accessibility of public services to the members of all ethno-cultural communities, speed up the process of integration to the life of Montreal, and promote intercultural and interracial harmony, the Intercultural Affairs Office has developed the following mission statement:

- ❖ Ensure the coordination and institutional direction in intercultural affairs.
- ❖ Provide guidance and expertise to the Mayor's office and to municipal services.
- ❖ Maintain and develop relations between governments and/or agencies in the field.
- ❖ Ensure coordination and institution direction with regards to intercultural affairs.
- ❖ Provide guidance and expertise to the Mayor's Office and other municipal services.
- ❖ Maintain and develop strong relationships between governments and/or agencies in the field.

There are numerous achievements, of which here we will only refer to some of the highlights, in order to show how the city of Montreal manages the linguistic and cultural diversity in its territory with an eye towards integration.

a. Welcoming and establishing new arrivals to the city

Currently there are some 12,000 immigrants who settle each year in Montreal. An equal number of people claim refugee status in Canada, the majority of who either pass through or settle in Montreal. In 2000, several measures were put into place to improve reception and integration of immigrants. About a dozen projects have begun so far, with mostly adult immigrants as their target population. Other projects are also aimed towards senior citizens, as well as mothers and their children. Highlights include activities for newcomers to get to know Montreal, with an emphasis on its history and democratic life, as well as other activities such as improving the quality of life in low-cost housing units.

Multilingual services and media directly inform new arrivals of the municipal services available: including activities, regulations, citizen's rights, fire prevention, etc. Often, for reasons of sanitation and security, the city delivers messages in 16 different languages through inserts in all of the 27 ethnic newspapers and the 9 languages represented in community radio stations.

b. Addressing the needs of citizens of all origins in the context of strategic directions and service provisions

Since the 90's, Montreal's Advisory Committee on Intercultural Relations is tasked with counseling the mayor on all matters relating to intercultural affairs with the purpose of strengthening the bonds between the city and its ethno-cultural communities.

To that effect, a calendar of intercultural activities is published each year to allow such services to take into account socio-cultural and religious events when planning their yearly activities.

Training sessions are provided to all municipal employees to help them learn certain helpful practices for such a highly multiethnic work environment.

c. Applying the principles of equality, non-discrimination and non-exclusion

The city strives as much as possible to eliminate all forms of discrimination against individuals or groups. The city is in charge of the Program of Equal Employment Opportunities for Cultural Communities, which outlines the adoption of measures aimed at achieving equal-hiring practices.

d. Increasing the potential of Montreal's ethno-cultural diversity and its cosmopolitan features

Keeping in mind that the cosmopolitan character of Montreal is a most valuable asset, the city has been investing relentlessly in rapprochement, mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue. To that effect it focuses particularly on children, for whom it organizes each year "La Fête des Enfants", as a prime venue for activities raising cultural awareness.

It is worth highlighting that the cultural activities organized by the city of Montreal are perfectly in line with the humanistic philosophy of UNESCO. This organization uses high-profile cultural activities to promote intercultural dialogue, first and foremost as a "dialogue initiated between and by cultural organizations themselves", in the spirit of a sustainable partnership and collaboration towards common objectives.

These "dialogues," which are financially supported by the Program for the Support of Interculturalism, have taken on a new direction due to the International Year of Culture and Peace. A cultural event with a multidisciplinary character, "Montreal With 2000 and One Faces" was organized in the year 2000 to highlight the turn of the new millennium. This event aimed to celebrate Montreal's wealth of cultural diversity.

It is in this spirit that Montreal's culture department, in agreement with the ministry of Culture and Communication, was keen to associate its cultural partners and encourage them to design projects with high public visibility, thereby reaching the widest possible public.

It is in this spirit that Montreal's Culture Department, in agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Communication, was keen to associate its cultural partners and encourage them to design projects with a high public visibility, thereby reaching the widest possible audience.

2.2. The Case of Quebec

a. Quebec, a welcoming city

The city of Quebec is as attractive as it is welcoming. Both a provincial capital and a tourist destination of choice, it epitomizes the very image of the identity of the people of Quebec as a city open to the world.

When a province such as Quebec hosts several important cultural communities, these are often unevenly throughout its territory. To ensure solidarity and social cohesion, it is necessary that cities create a welcoming and enabling climate for these communities.

For a city that receives more than four million visitors a year, and which intends to significantly increase the level of immigrants in the near future, welcoming visitors is an important daily activity that requires investment and proper planning.

Finally, in order to sustain the doubling of the annual number of immigrants, and particularly the increase in the retention rate, the city of Quebec has adopted a plan of action made up of several measures aimed at fostering intercultural rapprochement and integration to the host society. Fostering greater multilingualism is seen as one of the primary means of achieving such a welcoming environment. With this in mind, there are several recent examples of initiatives by the city and its partners that demonstrate an attitude of commitment towards this goal:

- A system of multilingual public signs for visitors

The multilingual public sign system for tourists constitutes the ideal means for the city of Quebec to open up to world and showcase its international character. In addition to being a desirable tourist destination, Quebec is also a renowned centre for research and education and houses a growing number of today's new-economy businesses. Quebec is attracting a growing number of immigrants and is quickly becoming an increasingly international city. Here are a few facts that demonstrate Quebec's international character:

Although Quebec is not doing enough to promote its international character, it has begun to take steps in the right direction:

❖ Quebec regularly hosts international events (cultural, political and scientific).

- ❖ Its artists perform throughout the world and its business exports their products and services worldwide.
- ❖ Its researchers are internationally recognized.
- ❖ The city is an educational and research centre that welcomes people from all over the world.

Within this context, the system of multilingual signs is intended to allow visitors to become better acquainted with the city and its history. Half of the available space is earmarked for French text, while the other half is reserved not only for English, but also for other languages.

- Multilingual tours for tourists

The city of Quebec designed multilingual tours using a set of new-generation listening stations. Under this project, listening stations are installed on street lamps along a predefined route. Tourists can access these stations by renting an operating key and listening to recorded commentary in one of four available languages.

b. Multilingualism, the feature of an open society

With over 95% of its population speaking French as their mother tongue, the city of Quebec is North America's largest metropolitan concentration of Francophones.

This large linguist homogeneity may provide a sense of security for the long-term survival of the French language in North America. However, Quebec is also well aware that it has the special challenge of maintaining French as its main language while promoting linguistic diversity in its territory. Fortunately, the city has become increasingly committed to promoting this goal.

This situation, which some may think is paradoxical, can be explained in several ways. It is the outcome of the cultural heritage of its residents in conjunction with the city's role as a provincial capital as well as a tourist destination and a knowledge centre. In addition, demographic projections for the region are announcing the beginning of a population decline. Quebec knows that the key to the future of the region is its ability to draw and retain a higher number of immigrants than in the past. They are also well aware that cities open to the diversity of the world are the most likely to attract immigrants, whether or not they speak French.

In Quebec, the issue of the language skills of employees is a matter of concern for many business people. The reaction of the Chamber of Commerce and the industry sector was to set up a work group tasked with promoting multilingualism in the population as a key step to meeting the new economic challenges of the region.

One of the means used to that end is the "Multilingual Quebec Day," an event intended to raise public awareness of the importance of fluently speaking languages other than one's native tongue. The event is an open invitation to the entire population to participate in the day's activities involving: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, and many others. Various suggestions are made to the visitors such as: dining out in cosmopolitan restaurants; speaking with friends in other languages; watching films in a language that is not very familiar; and sending emails in another language.

However, it should be stressed that linguistic diversity in a city must be a sign of openness to the world, a symbol of hospitality towards visitors, and of course, a manifestation of the cultural diversity of its community. It is very important for this diversity to always be represented in a manner that is consistent, orderly and respectful.

c. Preserving a rich cultural heritage

Today, promoting linguistic diversity in cities such as these is a way to trace back their roots, preserve their identity and in general, a way of acknowledging the contributions of earlier generations and creating links with the descendants of earlier immigrants.

B- Transculturality from a micro-economic perspective

The concept of difference has been steadily gaining grown and becoming a value in itself, a "strong" fact of culture. We can see it put to use in both practice and theory.

This concept has also made headway in the corporate world, a field rich in cultural confrontations. The globalization of trade flows, the creation and the necessary control of new subsidiaries, together with the development of international exchange programs, have all caused businesses to resort to increasingly complex management practices.

For businesses, the issue of the confrontation of cultures is really that of trying to overcome long-standing social bonds. How to involve individuals with one another, who are deeply embedded in different cultures and who have become more autonomous and more qualified?

Originating in the corporate world, the discipline of "intercultural management" covers mainly: "the conduct of trade across cultural barriers, the management of multicultural work teams, the training of future expats, and the management of international mergers or joint ventures." Whereas strong economic growth in developed countries was born out of a concern for rationality, actions relating to intercultural management seem to be based on the act of reading management practices through the mirrors of national cultures.

For businesses, intercultural management is a challenge, in terms of the ability of a system to integrate a given difference without arbitrary control "from above", and ensuring the recognition of each party as an equal. Intercultural relations should be consciously developed based on an accurate appreciation of the concepts of cultural relativism and development. This is true, whether we are dealing with a political dialogue, the coexistence of different ethnic groups within the same country, the integration of immigrants into their new society, or the relationships governing a company's head office and its subsidiaries around the world.

"The recognition of each other under the identity system must take place without eliminating one's difference, and hence without reducing one's otherness." To what extent has this been achieved?

Companies can adapt their expectations according to their level of recognition of cultural and ethnic identity. This knowledge can help company's better implement new rules. Many businesses are now striving to shift from a single culture-based management by laying the foundations for an intercultural management. To what extent can we see the corporate world recognizing cultural and gender differences as a valuable source for employee rights? In the corporate world, will the global economy help disseminate the recognition of cultural differences and lead to their development? Will this corporate recognition amplify bilingual education systems? What about the exceptions to certain regulations based on ethnicity, religious practice or beliefs?

For the field of Industrial Sociology, it has become more necessary than

ever before to think simultaneously of the rationality of "togetherness" and the threat of the powers of management to actually become more tyrannical under the guise of an ideology of a generous, multicultural humanism. To what extent can companies today design rights that respect individual cultural identity? Not collective cultural rights, which can threaten individuals, but the right of these individuals to express their cultural identity.

The issue at the heart of interculturalism is that, faced with the same context, people from different cultures do not interpret the situation in the same way; and at the same time, everyone thinks that their conduct is the one best adapted to the situation. If this is the case, how is it possible to work together in a project in an organized manner and within the framework of a concerted action?

And yet, since it seems that these differences are here to stay, it is therefore in the interest of companies to skillfully manage these cultural differences rather than try to oppose them.

1. Transculturality and multicultural corporate environments

Increasingly, managers have to cope with multicultural environments. Whether in the context of international negotiations or that of the corporate responsibilities of multinational company, cultural differences are a trap for the uninformed and a tremendous asset for those who can take advantage of them.

1.1. Understanding cultural differences

Why do these differences exist? They are due to behavioral rules, which are more or less conscious and specific to each nation. These are rules that are handed down from several generations and which originate from issues of survival experienced by each different nation.

In the corporate world, this is reflected in different methods of conducting negotiations or managing individuals. The fact is that managers are increasingly confronted to national cultures that are different from theirs. It is not sufficient for them to be able to "translate" different languages; rather, they must be able to "interpret" different cultural behaviors.

As a general rule, national cultures can be broken down into 6 primary modes of behavior:

a. Apply a universal[8] rule or adapt to specific[9] case

When faced with a problem, universalist cultures prefer to apply the standard rule. They look for a general solution, regardless of the particularities of each case.

Conversely, particularist cultures discriminate in favor of personal commitments, even to the detriment of a general rule. When faced with a problem, particularists look for a solution adapted to the specific situation.

This cultural difference may therefore become a source of misunderstandings. This is particularly true for contracts. Universalists view the contract as an indispensable component of the business relationship. Particularists give more importance to the relationship that has been developed rather than the contract that has been made.

b. Act individually[10] or as a group[11] member

When faced with a problem, universalist cultures prefer to apply the standard rule. They look for a general solution, regardless of the particularities of each case.

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8 The Universalist prefers:
- The impersonal style
- Persuade on rational and professional grounds
- Design detailed contracts, with the help of legal consultants
- Official modifications and changes
- Comply with formalized procedures

9 The Particularist prefers to:
- Become acquainted before entering the discussion
- Outline his ideas and account for specific cases
- Refer both to the personal relation and to the contract specifics
- Informally influence the developments and evolutions
- Use informal networks

10 Individualists prefer:
- Immediate decisions that are tantamount to commitment
- Decide and take responsibility alone
- Individual motivation
- Highlight everyone's performances

11 Collectivists prefer:
- Get their management chain's approval before taking action
- Team work
- Esprit-de-corps (community spirit)
- Seek group cohesiveness

Individualists think that quality of life will improve if each and everyone is self-centered. In their eyes, freedom is an inalienable value.

On the other hand, collectivists are of the opinion that individual freedom may be sold out to the public good. They deem it more important to constantly act with others in mind. According to them, quality of life will improve through actions in the benefit of the public good.

As far as management is concerned, individualists believe that decisions must be made by an officer, and that this person should be the only one to assume responsibility. By the same token, collectivists seek a consensus between all members of the relevant group. The decision reached in this way will commit the entire team. Let's assume that a single member of a team working in a shop has caused a workmanship error: Collectivists will consider the whole team to be responsible; on the other hand, individualists will try to look for and then blame the individual member who made the mistake.

Each of the two cultures perceives organizations in different ways.

In cultures that discriminate in favor of the individual, the organization is seen as a tool serving the interests of each one. For collectivists, the organization is a big family and each one must contribute to its development.

c. Recognizing affectivity[12] or neutralizing[13] it

Faced with a problem and according to the culture, recognized feelings will be addressed differently. Affective individuals recognize subjective attitudes that are guided by feelings. Non-partisans, however, discriminate in favor of objective and rational attitudes. They prefer to avoid all manifestations of emotional sensitivity.

Non-partisans think that emotions should never be expressed, especially in the workplace. According to them, an emotional attitude suffers from lack of control and objectivity.

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12 Affectives prefer:
- The aggressive clarifications
- The enthusiasm of conviction
- To see their counterpart express their thoughts

13 Non-partisans prefer:
- The negotiations led with calm
- Moderate arguments
- That their interlocutor be wary of mixing work and feelings

In their defense, affective individuals would contend that repressing one's feelings impairs judgment.

The result is that when it comes to business, each culture will react in opposing ways. The boundaries between private and professional life are more or less impenetrable depending on each culture. Some people change their behavior according to the context, while others keep the same attitude in all spaces. Those who compartmentalize their lives are specific. And those who do not set boundaries between the different parts of their lives are diffused.

d. Getting involved in a specific[14] or diffuse[15] manner

In business, the specific individuals desire to stay within the subject. Conversely, diffuse individuals give the same importance to personal contacts as to professional relations.

e. Social status: attributed[16] or acquired[17]

In some cultures, social status is attributed according to: age, origin, profession or educational level. In other cultures, this status is acquired too through achievements, by success and actions. Attributed social status is gained by one's social standing, while acquired status must be won through individual action.

f. Getting organized in a sequential[18] or synchronous[19] manner

For certain cultures, time passes by in a linear manner. Each period can be

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14 The specific prefers:
- Clear instructions
- Well-structured meetings
- Announce the conclusion and then support it with arguments

15 The diffuse prefers:
- General orientations which we can interpret
- Discussions where each one takes the time to express themselves
- Create the environment leading to conclusion

16 Those with attributed status prefer:
- To comply with the orders of a more senior officer
- That his titles and position be accounted for in his compensation
- That his interlocutor does not cause him to "lose face"

17 Those with acquired status prefer:
- To respect his line supervisors for their competences
- That his compensation accounts for his results
- That his interlocutor recognizes his expertise in the field

isolated. Minutes or days pass without limitation. Activities are organized in successive sequences. These cultures, referred to as sequential, program their use of time in a very detailed manner, and they have designed very advanced tools for this purpose.

For others, events obey a certain cycle. Each hour of the day is repeated and the seasons come back. In these cultures, labeled as synchronous, people prefer to react to circumstances rather than follow a specific calendar. As a result, several activities are pursued at the same time, parallel to one another.

As a general rule, synchronous individuals think that those who are sequential are lacking flexibility. And as far as they are concerned, sequential individuals are disconcerted by the way synchronous people ignore calendars, and they feel they are much disorganized.

1.2. Adapting to cultural differences

Those who do not take cultural differences into account often come up against misunderstandings and failures. In contrast, those managers who know and understand cultural oppositions are definitely a step ahead of the others. They will obviously take advantage of this to succeed in negotiations and international management. To do this, they will have to:

- ❖ Recognize that their management methods cannot always be exported.
- ❖ Acknowledge that there isn't a specific cultural model that is more efficient than another.
- ❖ Adapt their behavior according the cultural context.

a. No cultural model is more efficient than another one

Generally, so-called modern attitudes are opposed to what they label as traditional, if not primitive behaviors. It follows that the modern perspective

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18 The sequential prefers:
- Carefully prepared and respected calendars
- Schedule ahead of time, one activity at a time
- Be forward-looking

19 The synchronous prefers to:
- Re-arrange his schedule according to priorities
- Keep his freedom of reaction in all circumstances
- Get to know the background before contemplating the future

should make for more successful business people.

Here is a series of observations which refutes these presumptions:

- On the one hand, it turns out that nations with so-called traditional cultures actually do succeed economically:

- ❖ Asian countries under the influence of Buddhism discriminate in favor of passive attitudes: they are collective and diffuse. Yet the economic success of the Five Dragons is beyond question. Asian companies in particular adopt the seniority promotion system. This certainly does not prevent them from succeeding; as a matter of fact, Japanese managers have both a fair level of knowledge and experience.

- On the other hand, behaviors generally considered to be ineffective, eventually turn out to be quite appropriate in certain circumstances.

- ❖ An example of this involves decision-making. Individualists prefer decisions to be made by a single officer. Collectivists advocate for consensus building, which is much more time consuming. However, there are some cases where a decision should be made by the entire organization. In such cases, a consensus thus reached will actually save time. Indeed, everyone will be more efficiently mobilized to those actions they helped initiate.

b. Adapting to the cultural context

There is no choice but to accept that there is no universal method of management or cultural model that outsmarts all the others. To succeed in international affairs, it is essential to adapt to each national culture.

For example, if a synchronous manager is managing a sequential employee, it is not enough for this manager to establish a "good relationship". The manager must also plan his or her subordinate's career in detail. He or she must make an assessment and abide by a schedule of specific objectives. The sequential employee, as far as he or she is concerned, must understand that the manager is more interested in maintaining good relations rather than a good schedule. The synchronous manager will give more importance to the past and future accomplishments of his subordinate, instead of his or her immediate performance.

1.3. Take advantage of cultural differences

We have just seen that it is essential to adapt our behaviors to cultural differences. But it is even better to be able to tap into the strengths inherent in each cultural approach.

So far, we have represented cultural differences in the form of 6 oppositions. These differences of approach are a constant source of misunderstandings and conflicts between individuals. But in reality, these oppositions are less fundamental than it seems. In fact, they are actually an alternative approach to solving the same problem. Let's take the case of the opposition of Individualist vs. Universalist. Universalists think that the public good is the prerequisite to everyone's individual benefit. Conversely, for individualists the public good stems from individuals. Both Universalists and Individualists aspire to both public and individual well-being.

In recent decades, companies have been able to adapt their marketing and financial management strategies to the global economy. But very few have managed to adapt their practices in human resource management. For some, this is a secondary issue, while for others it is enough to make policy in the home office and promote it with their foreign-based subsidiaries.

2. A successful merger is a cultural challenge

Carrying out a merger or alliance is one of the toughest tasks a manager may be faced with. More than half the mergers are expected to fail within five years.

In most cases, these failures have been proven to be the result of a serious lack of consideration, if not a complete absence of it, regarding cultural issues. In fact, priority is often given to contractual negotiations and to the organization of the new entity, while bridging cultural gaps is considered a touchy subject and therefore it is often neglected.

However, mergers need to succeed in cultural integration, and to do so they must take into account three key factors:

❖ Rather than creating a new culture from the outset, it is better to try to build bridges between the existing cultures.

❖ A detailed audit should be used to describe cultural differences in detail,

in order to reduce possible frustrations caused by misunderstandings.

❖ Differences must be overcome progressively over time. On way to do this is to create teams that bring together different cultures with the task of finding new solutions to the operational problems of the company.

2.1. A successful cultural integration

To become more competitive, companies are increasingly resorting to external growth. The race towards critical mass has resulted in a large increase of mergers, acquisitions and alliances in all facets of business activity. However, these mergers are not as successful as they could be. Again, the main reason is the poor management of cultural differences. These take the form of two main difficulties:

a. Culture as an under-estimated challenge

Too often, leaders have a passive approach regarding cultural issues. To them what is most important is to clarify the objectives and priorities of the newly established company, as well as to clearly define its organization.

Everyone must know exactly what he or she must do. And yet by acting in this manner, these leaders underestimate the power of cultures. There is no doubt that each company has its own way of doing things, depending on its history, its past successes and failures, the convictions of its leaders, etc. This leads to the development of particular customs and habits that are then considered to be the right way of doing things.

For instance, some companies prefer to recruit graduates from renowned schools, while others favor non-graduates with demonstrated skills. Similarly, some organizations use analytical approaches; such as analyzing in detail the strengths and weaknesses of a market before starting business. Others prefer to experiment and adapt their strategy depending on each situation. Each of these approaches can prove to be successful. But if these two types of cultures are brought together without any measures of support, the inevitable result will be a culture shock.[20] Analytical businesses will tend to think that the others are acting too recklessly, while those that like to experiment will see the latter as being too apprehensive.

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20 Margalit Cohen – "Emerique", 1999, p. 304: A reaction of unfamiliarity, even more of frustration or rejection, revolt and anxiety.

Then why is it that the cultural dimension of business is so often neglected? There are several reasons that could explain this attitude:

- ❖ **A lack of awareness**
  Many managers are simply not aware of the importance of culture has in the success or failure of a merger. They prefer to focus on the technical aspects.

- ❖ **A lack of skills**
  Managers are rarely adequately trained to discuss cultural matters, and this makes them avoid the subject since they feel ill prepared.

- ❖ **A lack of willingness**
  Cultural issues are often perceived as having less priority than legal and financial matters, as well as organizational problems.

- ❖ **A lack of visibility**
  Of all the problems to be solved during a merger, it is the cultural aspects that are the least gratifying. Their evolution is time-consuming and the results aren't so readily visible and cannot be easily quantified.

b. The pursuit of uniformity is an illusion

Conversely, some companies try immediately after the merger to create a homogenous culture for the new entity. This approach is rather unrealistic. In fact, culture is something deeply-entrenched in each and every one of us. It is not easy to let go of one's way of looking at things, all the more reason when such way of looking at things has paid off in the past. To try and brainwash individuals and have them adhere to a new culture almost inevitably leads to a reaction of rejection. This brings about a significant frustration, a source of discouragement, if not active resistance.

Rather than seeking to create a homogeneous culture, one should strive to understand the differences between cultures and promote dialogue. Companies must aim to enable employees of different cultures and backgrounds to work together effectively. They need to mitigate the frustrations caused by misunderstandings. In order to achieve this, everybody must have the firm impression that their culture is being respected.

The first step to success is to ensure that everyone is not only cognizant of their own culture, but that they also understand the culture of others. In

this way, it is possible to identify the origin of misunderstandings and conflict, thereby making it easier to reach a resolution.

2.2. Identifying different cultural styles

The first priority must be to ensure that employees understand how cultures are different. Raising this awareness is an indispensable step towards minimizing misunderstandings. Indeed, cultural differences lead to different ways of solving problems: for example, some cultures would require an in-depth study before taking any action, while others would deem it much more efficient to start by acting first.

If these cultural reflexes are not illustrated and discussed, the risk of misunderstanding remains high. Everyone takes on a defensive attitude and tends to stand their ground. In contrast, being aware of our own cultural reflexes and those of other cultures will set the groundwork for a constructive dialogue.

2.3. Building bridges between cultures

Explaining the subject of cultural differences to the parties involved is not necessarily enough for them to be able to cooperate efficiently. Indeed, one can rationally understand other people's viewpoints without necessarily accepting them fully. And in situations of stress or conflict, misunderstandings will inevitably reoccur.

The process of cultural integration must be phased in. It has been proven time and again that it requires an active approach based on two guidelines:

- ❖ Entrust the resolution of operational problems to multicultural teams, while instructing them to pay particular attention to the cultural dimension.
- ❖ Make sure that communication is guaranteed.

a. Relying on operational matters

Cultural differences create difficulties for the ways that a company handles its day-to-day problems. Firmly rooted in their reflexes, everyone tends to think that it is others who make poor decisions. If these conflicts of perspective are poorly managed, they end up causing inefficiency and frustration.

In light of such a danger, simply declaring a confederation of values soon

proves to be inadequate. Indeed, such proclamations of values can theoretically lead to an initial acceptance of the union. However, when confronted with specific problems, the stress rises and everyone falls back on their usual habits.

Let us use the example of a traditional, highly principal-oriented firm, which begins to advocate for a greater participation of its staff. In the first phase, meetings will be expanded; feedback and opinion polls will be requested, etc. But as the situation evolves, it becomes strained since the old habits of the hierarchy-based system are unconsciously struggling to regain the upper hand.

On the other hand, assigning the definition of operating procedures of the newly created company to one person will be a source of frustration as well. Chances are that there will be a cultural misunderstanding as to the logic of these new procedures. Some people will not understand the basis for these decisions and it is possible that they may become embittered and resentful.

A more efficient approach would be to entrust the resolution of operational issues to joint teams made up of both cultures. These teams would have to explain the different cultural approaches at stake in each situation. For instance, while trying to define the optimal structure for the company, the team should underscore the different approaches that each participating culture would have pursued.

An employee is now able to disagree with a decision taken by the sales manager. The employee can learn to accept it if he or she believes that it is founded on a valid set of criteria that is recognized to come from a different culture.

To secure the success of this approach, the selection of these teams is fundamental. It is important to keep these things in mind:

- *Mix origins*

When putting together these teams, it is necessary to strike a fair balance of all the different cultures. It is important to discriminate in favor heterogeneity instead of just looking at the qualifications of team members. In fact, it is crucial that the viewpoints of different cultures be represented and accounted for through the appropriate team members.

- *Seek interpersonal skills*

Just as "technical" skills are important; it is also essential to ensure that the

team members are open to the ideas of others and are attentive listeners. Indeed, solving cultural conflicts requires not only a fair amount of self-knowledge, but also a significant interest in others along with a high capacity to adapt. Furthermore, it is absolutely imperative to include in these teams people with a constructive mental attitude who believe in the success of the merger.

Team members must have the following qualities:

❖ **Curiosity and open-mindedness**
Enjoying the discovery of difference rather than seeing it as a threat.

❖ **Capacity to take risks and confront uncertainty.**
The ability to make decisions, allocate resources and prioritize without depending on the support of a certain familiar environment.

❖ **Empathy**
Ensuring that others feel understood and respected

❖ **Self-knowledge**
Being aware of our personal limits and knowing when our behavior reflects our own culture.

❖ **Tactful language**
Being able to express oneself in a correct manner without hurting the feelings of others..

- Capitalizing on team-building

It may prove very efficient to start a project with a team-building seminar, with the objective of discussing cultural differences in a non-hostile environment. An informal atmosphere, together with the absence of operational issues, will reduce the risk of defensive reactions—thus fostering openness and attentive listening

b. Keeping communication channels open

Communication is of paramount importance to a successful transition. Three principles must be met:

- Teaming up against a common enemy

Communication should strive to avoid any polarization within the newly created entity. When teams whose members do not know each other and who perhaps were even recently competing against each other, the first reaction is usually one of mutual distrust. This situation may easily lead to mistake each other as enemies.

An efficient way to avoid this is to motivate these teams to fight against a common enemy – a competitor to beat, for instance. In this way, the teams will unite more easily and will be less prone to internal confrontations.

- *Communicate even when there isn't much to say*

Mergers and acquisitions involve a high level of uncertainty about the future. The period of preparatory talks and the one immediately following the signing of the agreement are both often particularly sensitive; for legal and confidential reasons, very little information must leak out. Therefore, rumors will be quick to stir up the fears of some and cause others to give up their motivation and stop trying.

Despite the lack of any real information to convey to employees at this stage, it is very important to try and promote a climate of respectful listening as well as the impression of transparency.

- *Adapt your communication style to the style of each culture*

To be brief, it is fundamental to make sure that the style of communication is adapted to different cultures in the relationship. This is why it is necessary to deliver a message several times and in many forms. Certain cultures prefer to be given information in small groups; others opt for conferences and written media supported by factual data; still others need to celebrate their first successes with more festive gatherings. Companies need to realize these differences and account for them.

C- Conclusions

"Transculturality is much more than a mere academic game; it is a vital requirement for the survival of mankind."[21]

"The intercultural aspect assumes its real significance when we realize that multiculturalism is not possible, that one cannot possibly have two ultimate horizons of intelligibility at the same time; that one cannot speak two languages at the same time and that monoculturalism and monolingualism are tantamount to colonialism and totalitarianism in today's pluralistic context."

We are increasingly aware of the fact that cultural pluralism, or intercultural, is a requirement present in the reality of each culture. Every being is interconnected to others, just as our cultures are interconnected to one another. Today, we increasingly recognize that in order to solve our human problems, no culture, religion or tradition can be self-contained. Whether it is modern or traditional, African or Asian, Christian or scientific, Jewish or Islamic, Chinese or Vietnamese…the need for dialogue has become simply inevitable.

We cannot shed light on our own cultural identity without relating it to our human identity, to the destiny of the whole of mankind and perhaps even the entire planet and the whole universe. We have into account what they have interpreted themselves to be? Humanity cannot belong to a single culture, race, religion or worldview.

The intercultural imperative is not a mere ethical or epistemological imperative. This is not a simple human decision or a historical responsibility of our times. It does not pertain to any project led by a single person. It is not the result of any person, anywhere, who decided to devise a theory or social project labeled as "intercultural." It is not the simple fabrication of human thinking or a fashionable idea. This is a mythical requirement that comes from the very nature of reality. Reality itself is pluralistic. No one has a privilege over that.

Therefore, this is not a new theory to be developed. This is an imperative of reality that we still can't quite define and accept. It seems that reality itself is requiring us to break out of our boundaries and accept this emerging myth through an intercultural lifestyle.

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21 R. Panikkar "Pensamiento", p 38.

Isn't reality telling us that within each culture, just as within each person, there is a desire become whole? Isn't reminding us that each cultural reality is a component of the entirety of life? Does it not describe "a circle" made up of everything and in constant transformation?

Does it not remind us always of the fact that each and every culture is open to cross-fertilization by other cultures? A set of beliefs that does not recognize the existence of this vast connection, that denies its transcendence and even destroys it, is not really a belief but rather an outright fanaticism.

The truth is that interculturality is necessary not only to understand ourselves, but also to achieve our full potential as human beings. A culture based on interculturality is a culture that will survive because it will unite all differences to create harmony.

But let us not confuse interculturalism with an ideology, as if our different cultures will melt under the high temperature of some supreme truth. The objective is not to unify everyone by asking them to discard their own identity and replace it with another. Learning from others is not tantamount to losing our identity. Interculturalism is not a system and it is not homogeneous; it is not something that individuals can build on their own, it has to grow from a sense of solidarity with others.

Interculturalism tells us that there's nothing self-contained and isolated in life. Everything is interconnected between all people and all cultures. What we need is to recognize these vast connections and use them to improve our relationships with one another.

Les danseuses Hassan El Farouj Fatima

Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management

Minutes of discussions

A - Introduction

The Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management has been a process designed to develop and implement innovative ideas for the analysis, understanding and development of corporate diversity. The objective has been to create cultural diversity inclusion strategies, and adapt them to different cultural environments.

Led by the ONA and the Instituto de Empresa Foundations, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Averroes Committee, this Think Tank brings together 20 leading personalities from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, all of whom can contribute to make a significant difference to the environments in which they are engaged.

The experts of the Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management, met once a year between each meeting researchers from IE Foundation and ONA foundation conducted different researches to help focus the different sessions of the debates.

The First Session of the Think Tank was held in Casablanca at La Villa des Arts of the ONA Foundation on the 9th of December 2005. On this occasion, diversity experts, university professors, politicians and economists from Morocco, Spain, France, Switzerland, Canada and the United States, shared their expertise and experiences on different aspects of cultural diversity. The input from this group helped to explain the key factors of diversity that make for corporate success.

The Second Session of the Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management was held in Madrid, at the IE Business School, the 10th of January 2007. Participants from the previous session and new invitees discussed in depth some of the fundamental questions that first appeared in the first session and tried to open new areas of debate. During the time span between the first and second session, and following the recommendations of the first Think Tank, a research study was conducted amongst Moroccan managers trying to analyze their perceptions regarding cultural diversity. The results of the research shed an interesting light on how Moroccan managers perceive cultural diversity and specific cultures. The study also touched upon the issue of gender and the internationalization of Moroccan companies. The results were used to open the second session and helped to jump-start the different discussions that took place.

The Third Session of the Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management conducted its third and last meeting at the Villa des Arts in Rabat, on the 29th of February 2008. Participants from the previous sessions, together with new invitees, discussed some of the fundamental issues from the first two sessions while also opening new areas of debate. During the time span separating the second and third session, and following expert recommendations made during the second meeting, a research study was conducted amongst Spanish and Moroccans managers with the purpose of developing a perceptions model that could lead to a better understanding of cultural diversity in different cultural contexts. The results of this research led to many animated discussions and helped to identify several key elements that in turn became a practical strategy towards a better integration of cultural diversity in our societies.

A Think Tank is a brainstorm of ideas, and thus different lines of debate and ideas often intermingle and take the debate in broader areas. For the purposes of clarity, debates have been summarized and then reorganized and restructured along these main topics. For that reason, we also have to accept the loss of some interesting opinions and ideas that were in the margins of the main.

Also in the spirit of simplicity, certain parts of this document appear in quotation marks without citing their direct source. In all of these cases, the reader should assume that the phrase or term was taken from one of the participants of the Think Tank discussions.

We include in each session as a brief a summary of the research documents that were send to the different experts to help focusing the discussion themes

B - First Session: Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management: Casablanca 9th December 2005

1. Research Brief: A claim for cultural diversity

The phenomenon of globalization is fundamentally changing the shape of national economies and business models. There is a tendency among national economies to dematerialize the economy, increase exchanges and rely on powerful economic groups to fuel growth.

The "business model" has completely changed. The geographical system of reference is no longer a determining factor, given that the "virtual" nature of property transfers brings into question not only the law, but also the tax systems or international economic relations.

Morocco adopted quite early on a liberal economic model and is now fully engaged in the process of integration into the world economy, despite numerous constraints, such as: the relative weakness of its industry based on small businesses; the still-prevailing primary sector, which is dependent on erratic climatic factors; low domestic savings and low domestic demand, etc. These objective characteristics of the Moroccan economy are probably partially responsible for the governmental policies that promote foreign investment and international partnerships.

However, a foreign investor or partner may be disconcerted by certain attitudes and behavior. He or she might also be faced with problematic management situations if they maintain an ethnocentric attitude.

Hence, taking into account cultural diversity in the management of global organizations appears to be a crucial pre-requisite.

The integration of cultural diversity into management must be based on the hypothesis that there is no ranking or hierarchy among cultural models and that, consequently, there is no universal method of management.

A manager must follow these guidelines:

- ❖ Management methods cannot be exported directly into another culture.
- ❖ There is no model better than another.
- ❖ Behavior must be adapted to its cultural context.

1.1. Understanding cultural differences leads to more effective management

It is well known that behavior in the workplace varies according to the original culture of each individual.

But why do these differences exist? The reply could probably be found in an academic debate between anthropologists; but in the real world, the relevant question would be: "how does the original cultural features influence effectiveness in the day-to-day operations of an organization?"

Behavior at work basically conveys attitudes forged in the original culture of the workforce. A better knowledge of cultural diversity therefore definitely helps in "correctly decoding" such behavior. This leads to practical issues such as: how decisions are made, how risks are taken, and how people are managed.

The manager not only has to cope with multilingualism, but he or she must above all understand and adapt to different cultural standards as well.

In this respect, several questions should be raised, one of the most pressing being this one: How far should we go in mixing modernity and tradition? Secularism and religion?

Generally, attitudes and behavior determined by cultural models considered to be "modern" are pitted against those considered as "traditional" or even primitive. The overly simplistic conclusion drawn from this point of view, considers that those skilled in modern management have more successful national economies and private businesses. But would such a statement withstand the following analysis?

Many East Asian countries, for example, are very attached to their traditions; they are strongly marked by Buddhism, which provides a spiritual dimension fundamental to their culture. Hence, they are seen by Westerners as countries that foster passive attitudes; where the individual's identity is merged with the group; distinct positions are not always clearly defined in an organiza-

tion; promotion often comes through seniority rather than merit; seniority is associated with personal links such as a human relations network, experience, etc. And yet the economic policies of these countries are successful.

As far as operational management is concerned, some other questions seem to be relevant: What about the decision-making process? Depending on whether the management system is autocratic or democratic, planning and decision-making are either individual and "top down" or collective and "bottom up".

What about personal initiative? According to the prevailing "modern" cultural model, employees should are confined to accomplishing set tasks in a copycat and repetitive way; instead, they ought to take part in the dynamics of change, show innovative skills, be involved at certain levels of the implementation of strategies, etc.

What about the relationship between staff and line? Does personal obedience prevails, or is there a management system based on mutual commitments regardless of positions?

What about the organizational structure of the company? For example the matrix structure, which is effective in some countries, may not be in others. In some places, reporting to two different persons may clash with a culture that emphasizes giving the same loyalty to a single boss that is given to one's father.

What about gender perception? Is femininity perceived solely in a biological sense? What determines the socio-economic status of a woman in a given country? How can she attain a position of legitimacy in the decision-making process?

The Think Tank, by exploring these issues and others, will likely contribute to a better understanding of cultural diversity and a better implementation of its practical aspects.

2. Themes and discussions

2.1. Welcome note

At the outset of the encounter, **Rachid Slimi**, Chairman of the ONA Foundation, asserted that giving importance to diversity and finding models to deal with it within companies, is an absolute necessity in a world where

extremism in terms of religious, national, ethnic and even linguistic beliefs, is increasing. Many companies choose to cross geographic frontiers to do business abroad, and when they get there they find themselves faced with a different cultural environment.

" Je voudrai simplement souligner en substance, que le Maroc a été opté pour un régime politique basé sur la pluralité et un régime économique basé sur l'entreprise et l'esprit de l'initiative. Et le Maroc veut vivre ses choix dans l'ouverture au monde et sur le monde ! Cette ouverture se traduit à la fois par la dimension internationale que certains groupes économique Marocains ont atteint, et par la présence sur le sol Marocain d'entreprises étrangères, or, les activités économiques, dès qu'elles dépassent les frontières géographiques, sont confrontées fatalement à des environnements culturels différents. Nous aurons d'ailleurs l'occasion d'écouter quelques témoignages dans ce sens grâce à la présence d'acteurs économique internationaux autour de cette table. "

Apart from the political will to cooperate that exists between Spain and Morocco, there are also economic, academic and cultural reasons for doing so. Foundations like ONA and IE are an example of institutions that make daily efforts to improve the dialogue between North, South, East and West. As stated by Rafael Puyol, Vice President of IE Foundation, the purpose of the Think Tank is to be able to "explore in the near future, issues such as economic cooperation, immigration, the role of women—and probably some other issues which we will prove to be relevant, as far as cultural diversity is concerned".

The objective of the think Tank as stated by the moderator Noureddine El Hachami, is that all the research, expertise and opinions shared by the participants from the different fields of philosophy, economy, demography, anthropology and more, would help to pave the way for "an intelligent implementation of the concept of cultural diversity in both public and private organizations".

2.2. Cultural diversity in the organization: global experience

Discussions began with some examples of diversity management in Canadian companies. Canadian society and industry place a special interest in integrating minorities and immigrants, given that their proportional contribution to the economy is higher with respect to the majority of the population. Moreover, their socio-political and economic participation has proven to be be-

neficial. However, as found by the Conference Board of Canada during a "summit on visible minorities," even if 6 out of 10 organizations admit that it is important to recruit visible minorities in their board of directors, 68% of them are not actually doing it and 90% have no plans to do it. One of the Canadian institutions that exhibit some of the best practices as an employer of minorities is the Mounted Police, in which minorities represent a high part of the hierarchy. Another example that illustrates the will of Canada to develop a cultural diversity policy is the nomination by the Chief of State of a female Governor General of Canada, Michaëlle Jean, originally from Haiti.

The case of Boeing was also discussed as an example of diversity management: "It is said that America is a diverse nation because historically it has been a melting pot made up of people coming from all over the world. For instance, within the Boeing Company itself, the global nature of the business justifies the implementation of the concept of cultural diversity, both in the work place and from a strictly strategic point of view. One example is the design process for future aircraft, where the needs of passengers that are not even born yet, still need to be imagined by the design team. To do this, it is necessary to account for every kind of cultural approach to problem solving. That is why the company, besides having a design centre in Seattle, has other centres in Moscow, Madrid, Japan, etc. In such a way, design is subject to research 24 hours a day by people who think differently and hopefully can come up with different ideas."

The importance of the commitment to promote diversity by the leadership of the company was also highlighted not only from a cultural perspective, but also in terms of their thinking. To that end, Boeing has established the post of Vice President of Diversity. Another policy in Boeing is to have a proportional distribution of employees that accurately reflects the population of the city in which it operates. There is also ongoing research on the employees in order to know what cultural diversity management approach to use and how to adapt them to changing situations.

A lively debate followed on the perceptions of diversity amongst different cultures, some participants highlighted the fact that the existence of different perceptions of diversity in the Euro-Mediterranean area makes the problem of integrating minorities even more difficult in practice. The consequence is that a specific strategy of achieving diversity may not work everywhere.

"In Spain, there are several problems related to the integration of minorities, especially considering the fact that some of these minorities arrived recently into the country. When it comes to the United States, many things have improved but many efforts must still be made in companies to recruit and integrate minorities."

There was also a discussion of the importance of understanding the deep meaning of diversity and its relationship to the concept of unity. "When dealing with cultural diversity from a human point of view, it is important to keep in mind that ultimately, humankind as a whole shares so many things and has so much in common. Similarly, a corporation needs to have a strong sense of the importance of corporate unity in order to be able to integrate diversity as part of a common objective."

There was an emphasis on three main ideas concerning the corporate world: first, the importance of clearly defining diversity and its implication for management, including dominant values, leadership style or creativity; second, the need to undertake concrete actions in order to create a respect for diversity, avoid misunderstandings and establish confidence and trust in business relations; and third, the elements that will play a pivotal role in implementing these actions must be kept in mind, such as the educational system, private corporations, public institutions and civil society.

The debate followed with a philosophical angle defining cultural diversity by describing some of its paradoxical dualities and framing them into a new comprehensive approach:

"The first apparent duality was **tension vs. harmony**, understanding that there is in fact no opposition between the two. Harmony does imply a certain amount of tension, and on the other hand, harmony does not necessarily mean uniformity. For example, it is the role of education to show that it is possible to have harmony between a secular and spiritual education, just as science and magic can coexist: *"La pensée scientifique s'oppose à, et rectifie la magie, et la magie s'oppose à la science et alimente le rêve! Mais l'une ne lutte pas contre l'autre, les deux co-existent dans le cadre d'une dynamique des façons de penser!"*

Another apparent duality was stressed in the **unity vs. multiplicity**, tension underscoring the idea of cultural identity as a fictitious intermediary between unity and plurality.

The idea of cultural identity was further expanded by some of the participants representing the academic world, especially from an anthropological and sociological approach. There was an emphasis on the anthropological view of the reality of today's society, including the need to understand the balance between globalization and cultural identity and how this duality affects young people.

An example of cultural identity was discussed regarding Switzerland, highlighting the approach to cultural identity adopted by this country during the XIX century and how this invented identity is being questioned today.

It was noticed that although interaction exists between different cultures throughout the globe, for example with immigration, the world still remains fragmented. Therefore, the definition of globalization should be reformulated. The process of withdrawal and the exaggeration of cultural peculiarities are a result of a lack of hope and a growing apprehension towards globalization. If this lack of hope is ignored and not given importance, particularly when it happens in young people, there will be many unpleasant surprises.

The debate on cultural identity was continued within the framework of Spanish-Moroccan relations. The Mediterranean identity was proposed as a potential source for a practical management model. A Mediterranean perspective of the world can be a useful model to do business in the region today. "During the last two millenniums, we have been doing business in this area; but we still maintain our own management models." Some participants then suggested that we should re-consider our perception and explore new ways of management inside the framework of our own cultural diversity.

The real challenge as was pointed would be to both respect and practice cultural diversity. Cultural differences such as family values, historical background and those related to social classes, do in fact still exist resulting in a variety of cross-cultural situations in which cultural misunderstandings and stereotypes still appear often, including:

❖ *"Je viens d'un pays sous développée donc vous m'écoutez moins."*

❖ *"Je viens d'un pays musulman et donc je suis misogyne…"*

❖ *"Et enfin je suis une femme et on n'écoute pas les femmes."*

It is of paramount importance to clear up misunderstandings in the field of cultural diversity and to try and balance the need for cultural diversity

against the tendency of stereotyping that is occurring today. Already there are several examples of this acculturation through stereotypes, which has created very confusing situations for young people.

It became clear in the debate that diversity is a reality in different cultural backgrounds and corporations. It was also very interesting to observe the different understandings of cultural diversity offered by the different regions.

The debate also produced two different approaches to cultural diversity. One practical approach focused on implementing instruments and measures for cultural diversity in corporations. The second approach focused on trying to gain an in-depth understanding of cultural diversity, in order to implement in a second stage the correct instruments and measures. Both approaches are complementary and feed each other, together forming a more comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity.

It was clear in the debate that there is an urgent need to find solutions to the problems faced by diversity management. Management theorists and practitioners should find a way to translate the ideas of philosophers regarding diversity management, into practical scenarios applicable to business enterprises to contribute to the intelligent management of cultural diversity.

2.3. Tradition and modernity in managing across cultures

Next, the discussion focused around the subject of tradition and modernity. A new approach was suggested in an effort to understand the real meaning of modernity and tradition. This approach is based on the following ideas:

❖ The need to avoid stereotypical preconceptions, such as the idea that *modernity* corresponds to the west and that *tradition* is to be found in certain types of societies. "Having a modern economic model of management in a company does not exclude the possibility of maintaining some of the traditional heritage. A traditional management style can be pursued as long as it proves to be efficient. In traditional organizations, the principle of continuity emphasizes the principle of strategy diversification, and thus diversification adheres to traditional as well as modern parameters".

❖ The importance of fulfilling objectives and delivering performance as well as corporate social responsibility, are some of the trademarks of traditional models: "*Dans une societé traditionelle, curieusement il est reconnu que la maxi-*

misation de l'interaction sociale ou du confort collectif est le principe de l'action fondamentale.'' These "traditional" ideas are also crucial for modern organizations; thus, traditional management principles can help in achieving these modern objectives.

❖ There was also an emphasis on the importance of helping corporations understand that modernization does not necessarily mean mimicking a particular model. For example, Japan has handled the interaction between modernity and tradition beautifully.

Cultural identity, in any case, is not dead; on the contrary, cultural identity evolves with time as shown, for example, by the existence of the French language thanks to the evolution of Latin language.

"A company should take into account the cultural environment under which it operates. It should consider cultural peculiarities as an advantage, while at the same time not forgetting about its performance targets. In today's competitive world, companies need to differentiate themselves from one another. They also have to manage tradition by adapting it to the norms of diversity and governance. Innovation can help these companies to be more competitive, and tradition can help them to differentiate themselves. But a corporation also needs to understand the imperatives of modernity and its demands. All companies should therefore be encouraged to open up to new cultures without giving up the culture of the enterprise they belong to".

Some participants distinguished the healthy acceptance of tradition in corporations in contrast to an extreme rigidity of tradition that can result in completely inflexible regulations. They highlighted the need to harmonize the financial discourse with the preservation of culture.

Others highlighted the need to include diversity within the greater objective of economic performance. The only way to accept the rules of the game of economic performance is to consider racial and ethnic origins as a source of imagination and adaptation. Some participants highlighted the idea of economic performance further by stressing the need for talent in corporations. "There is no question that as a business leader I cannot afford to hire anyone but the best the world has to offer. And I want the world to be my talent pool."

Participants pointed out the differences between the US and Europe, in the sense that in some European countries immigration is more recent and it

is sometimes difficult to hire people with the adequate qualifications. Investing further in education is a fundamental requirement for corporations today in search of talent. A good example is the Boeing Corporation, which gives each of its 150,000 employees the opportunity to take any courses or programmes that would allow them to develop their careers. When speaking about performance, creativity and innovation are emphasized, and it has been proven that creativity and innovation come from diversity. "We came to the conclusion that we don't need to recruit the best talents, we only need to recruit the talents required to do the job. The best talents may give you a 5% immediate edge; but using the right talents to do the job could bring diversity to the company, taking that 5% edge up to 100% in terms of what you will get out of it."

Two main ideas were considered crucial in this debate. On the one hand, to understand modernity and tradition with a broader mind it is important to first understand that the two are not opposed but in many ways are complementary.

The participants also agreed that without diversity a company cannot reach high levels of performance. There is a direct link between performance, creativity and innovation. In fact, these three concepts come from the correct management of diversity. A company should develop strategies to integrate people from different cultures because their different perspectives can only be beneficial to the company. The real challenges are how to integrate within the company different cultural backgrounds, and how to improve performance through diversity management. The need to find accurate data from minorities in Europe, including their purchasing power, was emphasized as one of the primary instruments for a better integration of cultural diversity into business life.

2.4. Cultural models at work

This debate opened with the topic of cultural models at work. The Example of the Universal Exposition was highlighted. "At the Universal Exposition, cultural differences and different management styles are reflected. The participants are "obligated" to deal with each other and to interact in order to make this project succeed. In Japan for example, a host country for the Universal Exposition, the management culture reached a consensus. The exposition is organised by both modern companies, such as the Toyota Corporation, and by the traditional public administration. This dual style of management has succeeded in ma-

king a great project. In such events, one can see how corporations and civil society face the challenges of globalization and work together to contribute to citizens' welfare."

The discussion highlighted the importance of adapting to a local culture while operating in foreign markets. Some participants mentioned how business schools have an important role to play in training executives regarding the different local practices, in addition to providing them with fundamental knowledge. As an example, the crucial role of training and adapting to local cultures behind the success of Telefónica in Morocco was mentioned.

The success achieved by Meditel was also pointed out as an example of Spaniards and Moroccans successfully managing their cultural understanding. There was also mention of how today; Moroccans tend to understand the French better than the French do Moroccans, which was not the case 25 years ago.

Others stressed the importance of understanding immigration better by analysing cultural models in management, and highlighted the need to study immigration in terms of demography (age, gender and race, and their integration in the workforce), in order to give some clarity to the problems of diversity models at work.

The debate went on to analyze specific management models that differ in terms of their styles of decision-making, cultural relationships regarding power and hierarchy, and the links between self-interest and individual responsibilities. Participants agreed that these different working models can be integrated into larger frameworks and converted into tools for success within corporations. Adapting to the local culture of the country was stressed as one of the fundamental factors of business success.

2.5. Women in management

The debate on women in management opened with the statement that the participation of women in all management positions is of critical importance in the business world. There was also an emphasis on the relevance of the complementary roles of feminine and masculine styles of management within an organization. This has been proven to be a valuable source of innovation. Yet the fact is that very few women make it onto corporate boards, less than 6% in Europe on average. In Spain for example, there is a new law being developed that would push private companies to have more women on their management boards.

"Women can bring new ways of thinking to a corporation; and therefore a better understanding of women's role in different cultural contexts is of the utmost importance"

The main lines of thinking during the debate were focused on solving the controversial topic of how to evaluate the role of women within the corporation. One speaker emphasized the initiatives that Boeing is undertaking in order to promote more women leaders inside their corporation. The current debate on the difficulty of balancing working life with family life among US corporations was also discussed.

Next, the debate turned to need of not only recruiting but also managing gender diversity within the corporation. "Women in their professional environment must have the necessary tools to express their different opinions, as well as the instruments to appropriately manage their differences".

Participant stressed the need to analyse cultural diversity and gender diversity using different levels of analysis, highlighting the balance between tradition and modernity found in examples like Morocco, where a change in terms of women in management has been really visible in the last few years.

Some participants spoke about the importance of taking a quantitative approach. Once the number of women at all levels of the corporation is large enough, then the analysis of the different models of performance can be handled properly.

Meanwhile, others highlighted a qualitative approach to the theme of women in management. They emphasized the need to look for excellence whether it is in the hands of men or women, and stressed the role of certain women of excellence in bringing about change. They shared specific examples from Moroccan history, such as Madame el Fassi who in the 1940s was the first woman university graduate, or Princess Lalla Aicha who had the courage to pursue a modern political discourse in a post-independence environment where conservative elements dominated. It was also remarked that in order to solve the complex problems related to women in management, homeopathic means should be employed rather than mechanic ones. One example is to provide citizens with a good education in order for them to be able to cope with those issues.

In the case of the International Expo, there were several examples of

women holding positions in the entire company structure, for instance with the countries of Eastern Europe or in China, where women were present in all the administrative lines in the expo. In contrast, there where exhibits where women where hardly present at all, as in the case of Japan.

A new line of debate was opened regarding the existence of quotas and positive discrimination. A participant suggested the idea that positive discrimination already exists for males. Male positive discrimination explains the fact that males represent the majority of the workforce. There was a call for a clear and organized plan of action in order to achieve change. In the experience of some of the speakers, things began to change once targets were set and measured, and then shared within the organization.

Some participants argued that although today women and minorities are recruited, they often don't have the means or opportunities to express their perspectives and their different ways of solving problems, as well as their added value to the company. The reason is that they usually seek to be more involved in their work rather than being institutionally recognized.

The debate stressed the complementary nature of feminine and masculine models, and also highlighted the need for the proper integration of men and women into the organization of the company, as a key factor for success in business. Some participants thought that rather than talking about a feminine style of management, one should talk about a personal one, which emphasizes the importance for organizations to integrate all different talents.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

This first session of the Think Tank gave the participants an overview of diversity and its multidimensional aspects within corporation. The consensus reached in this meeting is that diversity is indeed beneficial to a company. Each country or corporate organization should try to find the best policy or strategy to develop diversity management solutions.

First of all, the debate demonstrated that there are different perspectives when it comes to understanding diversity and applying it within a company. More specifically, there is a difference between the Anglo-Saxon approach based on a practical orientation, and the Mediterranean approach, which is more theoretical. The search for a complementary model would result in a

significant improvement of cross-cultural practices in business organizations.

Second, there is an awareness of the insufficient empirical data available on cultural diversity. There is a need to develop applied research strategies to better understand the diversity management policies undertaken by Spanish-Moroccan companies, with the ultimate goal of improving diversity management within the business world. Participants recommended the study of specific cases in which concrete examples of specific corporations can shed light on the strategies that should be emulated, as well as show the failures that should be avoided.

Lastly, the Think Tank fostered a better understanding of diversity through a horizontal approach towards the subject. The different background of the participants, coming from universities, corporate organisations, and public administrations or from the media, greatly enriched the debate.

Think Thank on cultural diversity in global management, Casablanca 9th December 2005

C- Second Session: Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management, Madrid 10th January 2007

1. Research brief: Perception and practices of cultural diversity in Moroccan companies

The research study was conducted by scholars, and based on interviews with 30 Moroccan managers from SME. One third of the companies focused only on the domestic market, the second third focused on exporting abroad, while the last third frequently interacted with foreign companies.

1.1. The relevance of cultural diversity

The Moroccan managers interviewed declared they were sensitive towards cultural diversity, and that they considered it a source of wealth that needs to be fully explored. They emphasized their deep respect for other religions and cultures, although they showed very little knowledge of other cultures and almost no interest for some of them. In addition, some of the younger managers reacted by saying that although they considered cultural diversity to be important, it does not constitute a management priority; therefore, managers do not pay attention to this issue.

1.2. Perceptions on specific world cultures in business

Unanimously, all responses expressed without a shred of doubt, a large amount of respect and interest towards other cultures. Each culture was considered to have positive contributions for the development of humanity. However, the researchers perceived some nuances regarding some of the different cultures, as well as a certain degree of ignorance.

This is the predominant opinion of Sub-Saharan culture: it is rich, simple, primitive, tribal and even backward. Little identification was shown by Moroccan managers towards that culture, and some of them did not even seem concerned by this region to which Morocco is geographically attached.

In contrast, Moroccans felt much closer to European culture, which in general is well known and judged positively: it is associated with development, culture, creativity and rationality. Although there are negative perceptions as well: it is prejudiced, materialistic and individualistic.

Asian cultures overall are well appreciated; and certain qualities where highlighted: discipline, humility, seriousness, open-mindedness, and also, its ability to establish harmony between respect for identity and the acceptance of others.

North America centered on the USA. The general point of view amongst Moroccan managers was that: it is an intrusive culture, arrogant, overwhelming with its cowboy spirit, and dismissive of other cultures. "American officials are pretentious; they want to shape the world in their image. As for middle class citizens, they tend to ignore the rest of the world." And yet some saw this culture as being positive and very innovative.

And finally, the culture of South America does not seem to be well known by the majority of Moroccan managers. They judge it based on stereotypes, such as samba and football. Interestingly, they deemed it to be similar to Moroccan and Arab cultures and claimed it holds some resemblance. They underscored qualities such as: pride, good humor, and a fighting spirit. As far as negatives, they mentioned lack of security and a reliance on the USA.

1.3. Internal diversity, gender and regionalism

Managers seem to be abolishing discrimination in their companies, and the consequence is that diversity is increasing: in terms of gender, religion as well as regional origin. However, the reality remains somewhat different. On the one hand, the variety of spoken languages is increasing. On the other hand, women still have reduced access to higher positions inside companies.

1.4. The internationalization of Moroccan cultures

This is still a pending matter for Moroccan business, and only those firms operating internationally want to further develop their presence outside their home country. Those working inside Morocco seem preoccupied with sustaining their competitiveness: they are only seeking foreign partnerships to increase their activities within the Moroccan market. If the need arises, they are willing to recruit foreign collaborators, yet they require partnerships first. The result is that there is a push for partnerships between what were once small and medium Moroccan enterprises, with other previously small and medium foreign enterprises.

In conclusion, while Moroccan managers are generally open and sensitive

towards other cultures, there is an urgent need for training in order to make diversity a useful business tool and also clarify some stereotypes regarding specific cultures.

2. Themes and discussions

After a brief summary of the research results, different debates opened up touching upon several ideas brought out by the research, such as: diversity and gender; expatriates and their role in the cultural diversity debate; diversity awareness and the possibility of diversity training.

2.1. The gender debate

The research showed that Moroccan managers understand the role of women in the workplace and they declare women to be equal co-workers. And although there are some statistics that show a slow growth of women in the workplace, the debate demonstrated that there are very positive signs of the increasing success of women in the Moroccan business environment": The fact is that in Morocco we do not want women wearing veils. In the USA, we accept this difference in dress and these women are also respected in the Middle East. The fact is that women with veils do not have to be necessarily Islamists, but unconsciously most people make this connection. And so, after living these experiences, I quickly changed my mind and my prejudices fell down. Then, I told myself: well, I am going to start checking the curricula of these women and holding back my prejudices".

"There are many implicit topics, not only the negative judgments from management, but also so many ridiculous complaints concerning these veils. So after an event in Morocco, we had lunch with our team, and that was the moment when we started to speak about our lives. After this experience, I can say that these women have been totally integrated into the company because we opened a space of dialogue for all of us to get to know each other. This is the moment that allowed me to accept these differences. I am conscious that this does not always happen in this way, and that the situation can be exactly the opposite. All I can say is that I don't have the solution to those other situations but maybe similar methods can be used to arrive at this possibility of understanding. As we said yesterday, maybe we need to look beyond the appearance of women."

Within the conversations regarding women's diversity, participants emphasized that different profiles and cultures of women co-exist inside Morocco.

"In a company that considers itself modern, the perception is that all women ought to follow a European dress code and hair style, and that they should seek competition. If a woman wears a veil, she is automatically rejected using the following pretexts: I can't put her in the front office because customers will not like it; then, if I place this woman in the international department she will also be rejected; so I should send her to back of the office, in accounting, but they won't like her either; of course I can't place her as a sales-woman because customers cannot see her wearing a veil; in short, the veil is going to give an image of my company that I do not want. So the question is: should I hire an employee who wears a veil?"

"The fact is that in Morocco we do not want women wearing veils. In the USA, we accept this difference in dress and these women are also respected in the Middle East. The fact is that women with veils do not have to be necessarily Islamists, but unconsciously most people make this connection. And so, after living these experiences, I quickly changed my mind and my prejudices fell down. Then, I told myself: well, I am going to start checking the curricula of these women and holding back my prejudices".

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The idea of different veils was discussed, with a marked difference between the veil as a sign of a personal relationship linking an individual to God, and the new veil that represents a political act: "I am going to impose my

ideas on my environment." Therefore, when hiring a veiled woman, or a man who doesn't shake a woman's hand because of a religious attitude, we feel that we do not know whom we are hiring. Is he or she a person following a personal belief, or is it a political agenda towards society? And if we integrate them into the company, are we going to achieve an acceptance of different views and behaviors, or will they impose their own? Can diversity with others always be accepted, or only to the point that it is not going to destroy my own diversity?

Some of the participants stressed the point that we should follow the example of other countries, by acknowledging that this is a fragile issue that international managers will have to deal with in Morocco as well as in Europe

2.2. The effect of expatriates in the cultural diversity debate: "Could brain drain be a win-win scenario?"

Brain drain and the role of expatriates in the cultural diversity debate was one of the main lines of discussion during the session. The debate looked at two distinct areas: first, the economic roles of brain drain, including its challenges and positive aspects; second, the role of expatriates in bridging gaps in cultural diversity.

a. The economic significance of expatriates

Some members expressed their concern about the negative economic effects that brain drain can cause to the countries of origin. But some positive effects were also highlighted. For example, in Africa there are several countries that now have levels of growth up to 2.6% due to a new generation of workers and professionals who are coming back from abroad: especially from France, the United States, and higher education institutions such as IMD and IE.

"When I started teaching ten years ago, the Chinese students who used to come here either wanted to get a job in New York, Madrid or London. What is happening now? All the Chinese students are going back to China! Why? Because they said they can make more money in China than in New York City or places like it. So in other words, as the economic environment of the country changes and becomes attractive, I think money follows opportunity and people follow opportunities."

The conversation moved on to the importance of creating the right business

environment that will attract qualified workers to come back.

"If someone leaves, for instance, to go to the United States in order to learn about nuclear energy and then comes back to Spain, he would indeed have opportunities. But in case he doesn't find opportunities, he will pack up and leave again and that, obviously, is not good for Spain. So what we have to do is find the value of our people and try to make use of it. In Spain, we have seen that many brains have been drained to the United States, but afterwards they have come back and have found opportunities. We have to make our country as attractive as possible and be able to offer these people good opportunities when they return to Spain. That is what we have to do; we have to give opportunities to other countries and to our own country".

For instance, for Spain, Morocco is very interesting because Moroccans could fill different kinds of qualified and non-qualified jobs in Spain. "When I arrived in Morocco, Meditel had done research for possible employees and finally hired seven hundred citizens with a magnificent level of qualification. The people we found in Morocco were as well qualified as the Spaniards, so we had no need to bring people in from the outside. As we started developing things and creating opportunities, Moroccans that lived in Canada, France and Spain came back and settled in Morocco because Meditel gave them the opportunity they deserved."

Some participants stressed the idea that In some situations, a governmental program to recuperate Moroccans working specialized jobs in another country might be a good idea. It is a program such as the ones they have in England and some other countries.

There was further discussion about the personal challenges that qualified workers face when they come back. It is not easy coming back to one's country after four or five years of studies abroad. The result of these years of experience is a high degree of specialization that often cannot be valued or practiced in the country of origin. This is something obvious in the finance world. It happens in banking with specialists: they come home from abroad where there are stock exchanges, derivatives experts and so on, but all this doesn't exist in Morocco.

"In order to have a win-win situation, in addition to incentives, returning workers should have a choice and the possibility to have access to decision-making positions, positions of influence. This has started to happen in France;

for example in the car industry, in companies such as Renault and PSA, you can find that in their staff there are a lot of people coming from Latin America. These companies want to develop in Mercosur and this is a way to make a cultural bridge and gain experts from these other countries."

Following this train of thought, there were discussions about the important contribution that expatriates make to the economy of their host country. One example mentioned was the policy in the UK that aims to retain students who graduate with honors from UK Universities.

"The United States historically has been the recipient for the rest of the world's brain drain. The United States as you know is a country built on immigration, especially since the Second World War, and talented people from around the world have tremendously benefited the country."

b. The role of expatriates, helping to create a better understanding of cultural diversity in both their home and host countries

One of the interesting aspects of the debate was the analysis of the role expatriates play in building bridges between cultures.

Participants discussed the dual purpose of sending students abroad: acquiring technical expertise, together with the opportunity of opening their views to new ways of thinking.

"Parents who have paid 100.000€ for the training of their kids are not only investing money, but also, an emotional sacrifice. We told them: yes, finish your studies, work for a few years in a big multinational and get some experience for yourself. We want them to get this experience and also be filled with the mindset of the country where they have been. These are immaterial things that we cannot see, it is not like a diploma, it is not like an industrial sector that we can develop; but what we expect from them is a way of acting and of opening their mind. The challenge comes in different ways. Somebody is going abroad, are they going to adapt and take in a new culture while preserving their own?"

"I have found that the people that I know or that I have met over my twenty years of professional experience in various countries have differences according to their own personal experience. The ones that have had this chance, this opportunity of going to another country to work, are people who have succeeded in the fusion of both cultures and have reached a better position in their pro-

fessional lives. They have also established links as non-official ambassadors of their country. But I have also seen that the experience of people, who have not managed to unite both cultural influences, is that they are the ones who form ghettos by rejecting local culture. A crucial challenge is that once those people have returned, are they going to try to replicate the management model they learned abroad? Or are they going to reproduce a management model that is appropriate to their culture of origin? Is the adaption of these two models possible?"

Some participants stressed the fact that in Morocco there are two things that can create a positive change: the emancipation of women and Moroccans that live abroad. These are two social forces that can structurally change the mentality and dynamics of the country. When a Moroccan living abroad comes back to Morocco, he or she doesn't only import money and knowledge, but also brings in a level of social demand, a level of perception of citizenship, which we also have to adapt to each context, but is ultimately going to contribute to a change in society.

The discussion also focused on the individual challenges of those who return:

"I think these experts who emigrate belong to no man's land. Something curious that I have lived through is that once you move abroad, the people from your host country don't see you exactly as one of them. I came to Madrid in the eighties from Malaga to study economics; and when I went back home from the holidays, people from Malaga curiously called me "the one from Madrid", even though I had never felt identified with that city. I have always felt Andalusian! Anyway, it has always been difficult to transmit one's experience when returning to your home country or region."

On the other hand, expatriates also leave interesting imprints in the host countries in many different levels:

"For instance, in Marrakech we have seen that several movements, such as an artistic movement, a design movement and many others, have been created by non-Moroccans who live in Morocco and will probably stay there forever. It doesn't happen as easily in the business world as it does in Marrakech, and depending on the circumstances we have seen different results. For example in Agadir, where there is a foreign community that stays for long periods of time, we have observed that there is no fusion between foreigners and local citizens.

A different challenge altogether is integrating a non-educated workforce that has emigrated to escape poverty, as is the case in Morocco with Sub-Saharans. Those that arrive in a clandestine manner either belong to mafias or are homeless and see Morocco as a country they have to pass through".

An interesting part of the debate of cultural diversity is the role that expatriates have in eliminating stereotypes and correcting negative perceptions of a given culture:

"We ask ourselves whether expatriates, especially students, economic players, diplomats, etc, might contribute to erase stereotypes in order to facilitate and improve the connection or interrelation between different cultures. I think young students who have a good experience in a foreign country would be the ones who would be in charge of the dissemination of positive ideas when they come back to their original country."

But eliminating stereotypes also requires a philosophical effort on the part of the host country:

"I think the terminology causes problems, and that's why I would rather use the word provenance than origin. For instance, we could say that having a different provenance is different from having a different origin. It is just the place that we come from, not the place of origin; because sometimes it is difficult to know where one's origin is. It is easy to say that there are different and very specific origins, but there are also some inconveniences with this word. This is a terminological problem. If we say to someone, "what is your origin?" we are also saying implicitly: "you are not from here." So it is actually an aggressive question, in the end.

But perhaps we ought to look at provenance and origin as being different from one another. Where we were born is not the same as the culture we have developed throughout our lives. This attitude has helped me to be able to relate to people from different cultures by not restricting them to an idea of their place of origin".

And lastly, there was a discussion of the practical side of the role of expatriates in business:

Participants highlighted the need for indicators of efficiency, as was stated the previous year, regarding the methodology of diversity management regar-

ding Boeing, when they were designing centers in Seattle and they were going to Madrid or Tokyo because the architects, engineers and designers from there had different ideas. It is always the same objective, but in this way they are going to have different ideas, different sensitivities, because they are going to get a broader artistic perspective. Obviously the one from Russia is going to share its values and the Japanese is going to share its own. And maybe at the end of the day, Boeing is going to have different proposals for the same plane that are very different but that are all interesting because at least there is a choice and there is not just a single way of thinking about production. So cultural diversity in the work place means being in a context that accepts differences and that can also accept a certain amount of common norms.

Participants highlighted a useful way to turn diversity into a competitive advantage by turning a negative modus operandi into a positive one. What is negative is to make an approach work while not giving the chance for other approaches to work as well.

"Some people say: I don't like Morocco because they spend two hours drinking tea and only ten minutes to one hour doing business. But Moroccans would say: You know, to talk business we need to be in a serene mindset; we need to be calm; we need to be able to observe; we need to be able to listen and all that will be invested in a negotiation, and this will allows us to do something else. So we have a cultural shock. But we must understand that these are different nations and that we have to understand both cultures before we can take what is best from both of them. This approach needs some sacrifice from both parties in order reach an understanding."

2.3. Diversity training

Participants stressed the fact that in the academic university system of Morocco, whether in engineering, law, economics, etc, the subject of cultural diversity has never been addressed. Students are not prepared for this issue, and the professionals who are already integrated in the world market frequently have serious problems when they need to communicate with other cultures.

"One of the issues that came out from the research is that many of the corporate managers don't really have a clear vision when they talk about diversity. It is interesting that they don't really want to talk about the things

they understand. And it seems to me that one of the very important things about this particular method, this particular Think Tank, is that it creates a conversational space that allows people from different backgrounds and nationalities, to perhaps teach each other how to talk about diversity.

This line of thought was further developed by analyzing what can and cannot be taught regarding cultural diversity:

"There is no reason to teach something at school when it is something that you learn at home with your mother, your father and your friends in the neighborhood. It is an issue that is part of the Moroccan culture, and if the training has to exist, it should maybe be philosophical or sociological."

"I just wanted to make some comments about what we can and cannot teach. I am going to put forward an example in which the characters are two geographers. One geographer discovers a new phenomenon, a new mountain that we did not know about and was not marked in any map. He gets to the south face of the mountain and he questions the villagers from that side. He asks them how they call the mountain. They tell him that the name of the mountain is Atland, and so he writes down Atland in his notebook. Then he measures the mountain and finds out that Atland is 5.000 meters high. Then he goes back to his laboratory and does his mapping. Another geographer from his same laboratory goes to the north face of the mountain and asks the villagers of that side how they call the mountain. And they tell him they call it Athep. And so he writes down that the name is Athep. Then he measures it and he finds out that it is 5.000 meters high. Some day, when both geographers meet in a scientist meeting, they will see that they have two names for the same mountain, Atland and Athep. What should happen at that point?

We cannot tell those two villages how they have to define themselves from the point of view of that mountain; because the only thing that they know and see is the face of the mountain where they live. So maybe a possible solution could be to invent to just invent a new scientific name that would be transmittable, but it would only be transmittable from a scientific point of view. We would be able to teach the scientific name of the mountain, but the name Athep will be something taught only at that village.

I think this example is something we can use as a reference point. So from the example, if I have to make a relationship between this and that tra-

dition, both of which exist since long ago, I do not think we can teach the correct answer. It is very important to be able to live a priori outside. We need to understand that we cannot, once we have made an effort to analyze this, try to make it an academic subject that we can teach."

Following that discussion, there was an emphasis on the notion that the culture of each person involved in a company cannot be transmitted through teaching. Expertise can be taught but not experiences. Culture is something that needs to be lived in order to really be felt and understood.

"This is what good sense is about. I think that it is interesting to be able to cross and mix the transmission of instructions with the transmission of things that are not talked about because they cannot be instructed. IF we try to teach those things, those specific things that build trust, that are traditions, then we would be making a fascist organization. I think it is very important to somehow try to create good sense. If we feel the "voice" of good sense, then we should be feeling the things we cannot teach. I believe that we must not confuse the elements of competence with the elements of cultural diversity. We must not mistake one with the other. I am completely convinced that we cannot teach cultural diversity and that making a theory or a methodology will not be adequate."

"It is true that tradition is an accumulation of things that cannot be talked about. But it is also clear that if we want to see how subordination is working in a company or in an administration, we have to take the standpoint of the Anthropologist or the Sociologist. These sciences are going to tell us, for example, that the power of the family can strangle the freedom of others and create submission. So when someone at work is submitted to a superior, it is difficult to understand this behavior. Maybe we shouldn't always teach cultural diversity but allow our future engineers to go to work in a Spanish or French company. That way they will live there and understand their relationships with these other cultures. This better knowledge of others will of course make them able to establish good contacts with other cultures, and they will manage much better in all their business relationships."

In order to clarify matters, a methodological issue was raised regarding the need to separate the context from the content. The positive effects of traveling where mentioned, as a way of making people aware of the differences between their traditions and those of others, while teaching them to

compare different elements from different cultures.

"If we continue using the mountain metaphor, we should do so knowing that it is very difficult to have a point of view that could give us the whole idea of the mountain; rather, we could build up a point of view by comparing all the different perceptions. There is a word we haven't used enough; it is "comparison." Actually, I think that comparison is, as a methodological element, what that helps us get to the essence of this topic by not being too rigid. Because when we compare, we show what the power of each element is, and we see what the different entities are. You know what I think about identities, that they are fictitious constructions. I would like to mention that magnificent sentence from Lewis Carroll's in his book, *Alice in Wonderland*:

"Be what you would seem to be, or if you'd like it put more simply: Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise. Actually, the idea is that there is a syntactical labyrinth due to a semantic confusion. Just like with identities, we never get to understand everything. It is exactly like what happens when you put mercury on a child's hand. It would just escape through his fingers."

The question then raised was: how could stereotypes grow around a certain dress code, skin color or social origin? To make stereotypes fall down we need to understand how stereotypes were formulated in the first place.

"If we address the question effectively in our training system, in our families, in the streets, in how the media takes part in forming our way of being. Do we have a priori feelings? Are we using stereotypes? You have spoken about the Middle East; we have studied the Middle East Regions. Saudi perceptions are different from those of people from Qatar or from their other neighbor countries. So precisely, when I speak about someone from Saudi Arabia, what do you think about them? Can you eliminate those stereotypes that you have by knowing that amongst Saudis there are young people that have degrees from the University of Montana, who embraced the new notion of freedom, liberty, development, etc? The thing is that they share many things with you beyond whether they pray at one time or another. But I don't want to provide techniques, there are no recipes. Being free of stereotypes is way of being that is created by many external things. The question is: do we have the means to create a new way of being?

"We could even think about that in a transversal manner. When we are teaching communication, we have to teach cultural diversity because we do not talk about the classic cliché; we do not talk to an Arab as we talk to someone coming from Sweden. This is because the key elements of behavior change from one country to another. And this is something that people need to face with a good attitude, in order to change their manners when interacting with people from other cultures, to reach respectful relationships. It is not something mathematical that we can just establish, so we will have to think about this issue when we think about quality."

Participants stressed the fact that most American universities at the baccalaureate level, require in their curricula courses on diversity. Although usually what that means is that students are required to meet in small groups and talk about the meaning of differences between human beings. They discuss what they think about those differences. So this becomes part of the preparatory training for many American students and they can use this knowledge if they ever go into business. They have been required, perhaps against their will, against their own volition, to think hard about what diversity means.

2.4. Diversity awareness and practical examples of good diversity management

Awareness of diversity was further discussed, not only in relation to students and managers, but because society as a whole needs to be aware of how new generations are being shaped and in particular stressed as a real need in organizations and in economic life.

"Diversity in the economy was, and still is, an issue. I base a lot of this on my own experience in the Netherlands where I am heavily involved in diversity programs at the moment. A lot of corporate people and intellectuals were sitting around a table talking about diversity and what we thought was diversity. But actually, the people on the streets are already defining the new reality of what diversity is going to be in Europe and in the United States, or for that matter, probably in Morocco as well. And what was interesting was that when you are looking at the research, you mention younger managers, and what I am seeing here is a very similar pattern right across the world, actually. After traveling a few months, I observed that diversity is a direct realization that it is no longer an issue. I don't think it's viewed by people on the street as an issue; it is a reality, it is a function of realty, it is a factor and it is no longer something we need."

Some participants stressed the fact of the new wave of diversity. "Diversity is now being made in the streets. I discovered this with the work we have been doing recently in the Netherlands, in the city of Amsterdam, in a neighborhood called the Balmer. The Balmer is to Amsterdam what Brixton is to London, or to some extent, what Harlem was in the old days to New York City. In this neighborhood, which is perhaps about a third of the size of the city of Geneva, there are over 120 nationalities that are residents. It is a low-income neighborhood (I don't want to use the word ghetto because it isn't really a ghetto), with a community based on first generation immigrants. And four or five years ago, like other countries in Europe, there were significant issues. France was getting ready to blow up, Pim Fortuyn was assassinated in the Netherlands, and there were other people who were stabbed or killed in the same country for various reasons related to either ethnic, religious, or some other form of diversity. I think that what is happening now is that many of the communities themselves have begun to take responsibilities for problems that the government or the administration has not been able to resolve".

"For example, there is an extremely active Moroccan community in the Netherlands, particularly in Amsterdam, which has political and economic clout. That group did not really exist as a group five years ago. Now there is also a Chinese group based in Amsterdam, with both political and economic clout, which is grassroots-based and is now being courted by corporations and politicians who want to follow up opportunities with the leaders of these organizations. We have created a group called *Breathing Balmer*, which is a multiethnic, multicultural organization. Now we have got all the multinationals chasing after us, such as Western Union, GFK and other people who are interested in Moroccans and the Surinamese, and also people from Macau, all of whom are transferring their money back home and they want to get into these particular markets."

"In other words, what I have seen happen in a relatively short period of time, is that we have gone from a period of Europeans trying to think about what to do with diversity, to a period where I think a lot of grassroots organizations are filling in the gaps and coming up with solutions where the politicians were unable to come forward. I also think that this is going to, within the corporate world, and perhaps it has done so already, force companies to think in different terms about what diversity really means in the

context of corporate organizations."

The examples lead the discussions towards how to make corporations more aware of diversity. Some participants expressed the notion that at the end of the day, what we are really talking about is of an individual's attitude towards other individuals or entities with whom they have to interact. Thus the question is how to influence people's attitudes on an individual basis.

"There is an old American expression, where we used to say: "you cannot legislate morality". But one of the things that the French are doing is that I think they say, "Ok, maybe we can legislate morality." If we can use this example to get people to start changing the way they think, if we can orchestrate their behavior, they will be able to change their attitude, and this would result in some behavior modifications."

Participants stressed that the reason the corporations are interested in diversity, is not for any humanitarian reason, but for shareholder value. "They are interested in it because we can make more money. And this is what we have seen in Amsterdam. "Suddenly Heineken, ING, Abbey and AMRO, who we know are big Dutch institutions, want to know how to be part of this multiethnic diversity movement. Why? Not because they are showing up with a white horse and a big white hat, but the bottom line and the only reason they are there, is because they know that we have the customers and they want us to give them the access to these customers. This is what I think is the challenge and the function of the trader in terms of shaping people's attitude and getting them to look at economic opportunities rather than discriminate and segregate or other kinds of negative words."

Participants questioned the difficulty for companies to manage diversity. The objective is then making companies get interested in this issue, and this is only going to be possible by making them see the real possibility of increasing their profits; that only through diversity will companies be able to perform or to achieve at the globalization level.

"I want to tell you about an interesting case. This is the case of Meditel, which we all know about. Once they settled in Morocco, they became Moroccan in the way they developed their management as well as other things. They had to understand that it was in their interest to mobilize their relevant abilities so that they could take into account those specificities, those cultural

specificities of Morocco; mainly because the modus operandi in one country is one way, and it's a different way in another country. This put on the table a need to understand, and this wasn't done from a civic duty point of view or as a trophy for the company. If they hadn't taken this strategy they would have probably failed."

Other examples of good diversity management were also highlighted:

"I come from Central Europe and when I look a little at my history, specifically at the foundation of the Hungarian State, Saint Steven, thousands of years ago, wrote a testament to his son where he wrote that the country could only be rich if they had different cultures, different religions and different languages. He said: "if you know how to use these potential riches, then you will make a really rich country, but only if you have these elements." Now, coming back to the issue of perception, having a positive perception about diversity, and succeeding in transmitting this positive perception, is the main concern for education. The key is how to show these elements as a positive and not as a negative factor. This is not something new, it is something that people discussed thousands of years ago and I think we should be able to do this today."

"I want to mention a book called "Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands." I don't know how many of you have read the book. It is a story of sixty countries in the world that are considered to have culturally appropriate behavior in terms of individuals and business people. This research was done by three PhDs, and it is a nice, hefty little volume, which has just recently been updated. It should be required reading for any international business person and it should be on the curricula of most business schools that want to have an international orientation."

"I think there is one example of diversity management that is just sitting in front of our noses and that we can read about everyday on the web, in newspapers, etc, and that is the European Union. In the European Union you have a diversity of languages, of culture and of everything sitting together and working extremely efficiently. Go and see how the European institutions are working. O.K, they may be criticized but when you see the results that they are producing, everything changes. Of course, this is not a company but we can see a structure where they have exactly what we are talking about and which is working with incredible success. They have developed some policies in the last years inside the European Union that have been extremely

efficient. I also think that it is something so big that is sitting in front of us, that we aren't able to see it because it is just too big."

"I cannot avoid remembering, due to the debate we have had, the verses of the Koran which talk about the diversity in the different civilizations. This is something extraordinary for me because it says clearly, that people have to know each other. I think that in the heart of all the different monotheist religions, we find that diversity is not a factor of destruction, but a factor of coexistence and respect for other cultures. There is a positive vision on diversity and we shouldn't just focus on the Tower of Babel. I would like to find a faithful translation for that verse of the Koran so that we can see that it is very much in line of what we are dealing with here. Globally it said that we have created different civilizations and different nations, so that they can meet with each other. That is what God did by creating different civilizations, so that they could meet with each other! I believe this is a very constructive vision."

The debate moved on to the need to preserve cultural differences in the same way that we preserve biodiversity, especially since the globalization machine will unavoidably erode many cultures not strong enough to resist it. Thus, the more global the world is, the more we have to protect that diversity; because if we live in a globalized world and we make a mistake, then we make the same mistake all over the world.

"Nowadays there is a program in the UNESCO that has actually used as a slogan a reference to the Isle of Goré in Dakar: "When an old man dies, a library is burnt in Goré Island." So if we do not preserve knowledge then we lose it. I think this has a relationship with what we were saying and maybe it refers to a desire to preserve and save the characteristic elements of our cultural diversity."

"I would like to suggest that worldwide, certain institutions exist that are wholly prepared to take on the challenge of preserving cultural diversity: the museums. There is a great deal of experience in the world of museums that I think could help position corporations and nations to better come to terms with some of these issues. Museums are about seeing, and they are about lot of ways of seeing. Museums create spaces for dialogue around things that they see, and that I think, provide an important institutional context for this discussion.

I would also like to bring this down to a practical level by giving you examples of museums that I think are actively engaged in reinventing themselves to better come to terms with a world of a cultural diversity. One is the *TropenMuseum* in Amsterdam, which was set up in the 19th Century. Primarily it is a Colonial Museum where they exhibit the clothing, the merchandise of the Dutch Colonies, etc. The museum was completely transformed between 1970 and 1980 into an institution to better educate the Dutch public about cultural differences and cultural similarities. It is an institution that has completely transformed itself.

Another museum, which I confess has now become my favorite museum in the entire world, is the *Australian National Museum* in Canberra. What has happened in Australia is that the National Museum has become a place for telling stories about the wonders of the cultural diversity that characterizes Australia. I think they have made very important steps in coming closer to their own indigenous cultural issues; they have tried to engage the public in terms of education, in terms of educating people and inspiring them.

One of the great things about museums is that they help with the imagination, they help us imagine, to see and experience alternatives. It is that experience that I think is vitally important for increasing discussion on this issue of diversity, not only in the corporate sector, but also in other sectors. Museums can ask the questions: What is it like to be an aborigine living in a modern culture? What is it like to be an immigrant? Those are the kind of questions museums throw at their visitants. I think museums have a vital role in seeing and interrogating what our vision of the future is. I think the question of cultural diversity is terribly important in getting people within the corporate sector and in the broader public sector, to think about the future."

3. Conclusions and recommendations

At the end of the session, five main areas were identified with an aim to provide a more practical framework for future debates.

3.1. Focused research

In order to clarify the debate on diversity and achieve more specific pedagogical results, the first recommendation was to pursue different studies that could shed light on cultural diversity within business organizations.

Specifically, there was a recommendation to develop corporate motivation studies. It was also recommended to begin an in-depth study of the perceptions of Moroccan and Spanish managers regarding the Moroccan business environment. The purpose is to find a model that could then be exported into other cultural settings.

3.2. Developing academic programs

Research studies should be used to develop a pedagogical program for Academic Institutions. This program can then influence other areas of society by training corporations and the media. Several relevant institutes working in these areas where as possible candidates for collaborations in the future mentioned.

Seminars could be conducted where business people would get together and talk about their positive experiences in other countries. One of the things they could talk about is how they managed to integrate cultural diversity and the group could work together to draw conclusions that others could use in their own business experiences.

3.3. Networks and open debates

Online forums for debate should be developed. Key players should be involved in these debates, for example the Chambers of Commerce, since institutions like these can make help create a network to share the knowledge and conclusions of these debates with others in business world.

3.4. Communication dynamics

The results of the debates should be made public by means of politicians, the media, artists and journalists.

3.5. Identification of the place or the site

Museums can be included into this process in different ways, including the possibility of linking academic institutions and museums to create a visual and textual archive of all these debates, perhaps even providing a bibliography of all the material related to the issues.

Following this strategy will help the business community to actually reach some specific goals towards resolving the challenge of managing diversity.

Think Thank on cultural diversity in global management, Madrid 10th January 2007

D - Third Session: Think Tank on cultural diversity in global management, Rabat 29th of February 2008

1. Research Brief: Study on cultural perceptions in the Spanish-Moroccan business context

1.1. Research Focus and methodology

The overarching objective of the study was to identify the cultural parameters that can help improve perceptions of product, as well as trade flow and human resource management.

The qualitative research was conducted using structured focus groups following the methodology developed by the ONA and IE Foundations. The IE Foundation ran half of the focus groups using Spanish managers, and the ONA foundation ran the second half using a group of Moroccan managers.
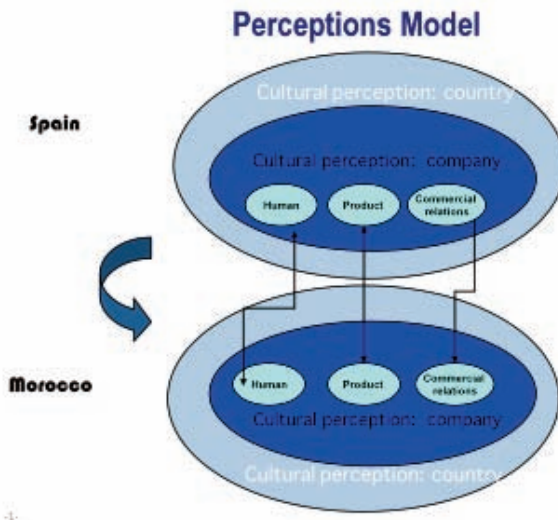
1.2. Research results: Spanish managers' perception of Morocco

The IE Foundation conducted three focus groups for this study. The first was conducted in Madrid on October 16th 2007, and it included businessmen and women as well as business students, most of whom had no previous experience in Morocco. The next group was brought together on November 19th of that same year, and it was made up of businessmen and women as

well as academic scholars who had a direct experience with Morocco. The last focus group occurred in Casablanca on January 24th 2008, and it was made up of Spanish business managers established in Morocco, mostly in the North and in the Casablanca area.

Although the composition of each group was very different, some interesting common perceptions were identified as well as some significant differences between participants that had a direct experience of Morocco and those who didn't.

a. General perceptions on Morocco and its relationship with Spain

All of the participants stressed the key role of the Spanish media plays in creating the image the general public has of Morocco. The widespread attitude that "good news are not news," has pushed the media into stressing only negative events; thus it has had a negative influence, particularly on people with no direct experience with Morocco.

Despite the many difficulties and challenges that lie ahead, all of the focus groups, in particular Spanish businesspeople in Morocco, are optimistic of the future of Spanish-Moroccan relations. "We are bound to understand each other" was a perception shared by all the participants. Many also emphasized the need to improve the visa process in order to avoid a loss of opportunities in the long run.

The effect of direct experiences in changing stereotypes was highlighted. Some directors recognized certain apprehension before going to Morocco, in terms of insecurity or violence, a feeling that quickly disappeared after traveling to or settling in Morocco. Other common stereotypes were also quickly dispelled after having a direct experience of the country.

The study also found a generational gap amongst Spanish businesspeople, where the younger generation feels more distant from Morocco than the older generation. Most of the students believed in a global community; yet more so than the other groups, they stressed a significant difference in values separating Spain from Morocco, including religious values and a different sense of community. The difference in income level was also stressed as a cause for this perception of distance amongst younger generations.

With the youngest participants there was also a general lack of interest to connect with their Moroccan peers, as opposed to establishing relations with Europeans or Latin Americans.

One of the strongest results was the easy adaptation of Spanish businesspeople to Moroccan life together with an emotional attachment to the country that developed after staying there for a few years. Spanish businesspeople recognized some challenges and difficulties in everyday business life; however, they all expressed their willingness to stay in the country. Most of them feel like Moroccan ambassadors once they return to Spain, and they play a role in dispelling some of the misconceptions and negative stereotypes of the country.

Most groups stressed the influence, mostly negative, of history when forming their perceptions of both countries. Although the Arab legacy in Spain is considered positive, for many it is not associated with Morocco (this was particularly relevant in the group of students).

b. Cultural perceptions: country, products, commercial and human relations

❖ *Perceptions on the country*

Spanish businesspeople mentioned a clear and positive development happening in Morocco, which has had an effect on the economy as well as on politics and institutional development. They perceived a clear difference between rural and urban areas. For many, Morocco reminded them of Spain a few years ago, and thus they believe that Morocco might see similar progress.

Participants stressed some peculiarities of the Moroccan market, including the fact that the population pyramid is reversed, which means that most of the Moroccan population is made up of young people who frequently have problems getting employment. They also emphasized the fact that the country acts as an intermediary because it sends emigrants abroad, but also receives immigrants from southern African countries. Many perceived a lost opportunity in the fact that Moroccans look much more towards Europe, while ignoring the business opportunities in Africa.

The participants who had never visited Morocco had a general perception of a country in development that has a strong religious influence and

lacks openness in its political institutions.

❖ *Perceptions on Products*

Participants with little direct knowledge of Morocco thought the main Moroccan exports are leather and textiles, while their idea of Spanish exports was low cost industrial products.

Those who knew the country felt that the Service Sector has the most potential, including the telephone industry, electricity, water and banks. This is a change from the focus on agriculture and the fishing industry, which were the main exports 20 years ago. New cosmetic products were also perceived to have good potential as Moroccan exports.

In contrast with the perceptions of group members who did not know the country, those familiar with Morocco think that tourism is not only restricted to cheap tourism but also includes high class tourism, and that it is important to make investments in this sector.

❖ *Perceptions on commerce*

Most participants recognized important cultural differences in conducting business:

• The concept of time: Moroccans' sense of time is very different from that of the Spanish, and this might have negative effects on the required efficiency standards.

• Concept of hierarchy: power relations are perceived to be much higher among Moroccan employees.

• Short-term interest as opposed to long-term vision.

The majority of participants agreed that cheap labor and access to new markets are the main reason for Spanish businesses to invest in Morocco. They also perceive that Moroccan businesses are more interested in short term business and copying products, rather than developing long-term partnerships.

❖ *Perceptions on human relations*

All of the groups had a general perception of the hospitality and friendliness in human relationships found in Morocco. But they also stressed cer-

tain mistrust in the negotiation process, certain "cleverness" in business deals.

All of the Spanish businesspeople agreed that developing a greater mutual trust is the first and most important step towards success in the Moroccan business context. They also recognized that language difficulties are greater for most of the Spanish managers rather than for their Moroccan counterparts.

All of the participants in the study expressed an excellent opinion of Moroccan women employees. In general, they are more highly valued that their male colleagues, in terms of rigor, efficiency and loyalty to the company. There is however, a general fear that many will leave work after get married.

1.3. Research results: Moroccan managers' perception of Spain

Three Focus Groups were organized in January 2008 in collaboration with SMB officials, one in Tangier on January 18th, the next in Agadir on January 22nd and Casablanca on January 23rd.

The first observation is that there is an obvious difference of perceptions between entrepreneurs living in Tangier and those in Casablanca and Agadir.

In Tangier there is a "fraternal vision" of the Spanish neighbor, with whom they claim an ancestral cultural connection. Thus, even when they discussed some difficult issues such as Ceuta, they maintain certain moderation and tolerance that contrasts strongly with the more intransigent attitudes of the participants from other regions.

The managers from Casablanca expressed a significant detachment towards Spain, since for them it belongs to a larger group of European countries with which they have set up or may establish a co-operation. They treat Spain just like any other European country. The only exception is France, which is considered the closest and most privileged partner.

At lastly, businesspeople in Agadir showed a great mistrust towards Spain and this research study in general. They looked at Spain through several stereotypes, calling it a "secondary" member of Europe, a "corrupt "investor, and a negotiator with a false sense of superiority.

All in all, the perception of "closeness" or affinity towards Spain seems

to rely on the geographical proximity coupled with a shared history. Going back to the Muslim presence in Andalusia, participants underlined the contrasting histories of both people, including colonization, the migration of many Spanish people to Morocco during the Franco era, followed by the more recent migrations of Moroccans to Spain. Geography and history have also led to a both cultural divisions such as the feature "bon viveur" in contrast to the attachment to traditions, and also certain flexibility for individuals in Morocco that is less rigid than in some cultures of Northern Europe.

However, some of the entrepreneurs believe that Spanish Membership in the European Union has broken up this cultural affinity. They feel that Spain has turned its back on the Mediterranean dimension of its identity. There are also other factors that influence this distance, such as the recent emphasis of some Moroccans on their Muslim identity, as well as problems with terrorism.

Most of the participants considered that the misunderstandings and tensions between the two countries are mainly the result of the false image that Spain has of Morocco, and particularly of Moroccans themselves. They believe that the Spanish media plays a decisive role in this relationship because it reduces Morocco to the issues of clandestine immigration, terrorism and under-development (poverty, illiteracy, etc).

This simplistic and negative image is frustrating and humiliating to Moroccan entrepreneurs, who wish to be recognized as equal peers and partners by their Spanish counterparts. Participants insisted on the fact that the Spanish do not recognize the considerable progress achieved by Morocco in recent years. They want the Spanish media to show that that Morocco also has "motorways, high-tech companies and high-ranking staff."

The participating managers attribute to their Spanish neighbors a high level of status. They believe that by getting closer to Northern Europe at the economic and commercial level, the Spanish have gained discipline, quality and expertise. All those who have worked with the Spanish partners described them as demanding and rigorous clients, imposing norms and controls on the quality of production, the business process and time limits. Even though this attitude created some annoyances for Moroccan managers, especially with relation to the "imposed" prices that are perceived to be

very cheap, it is also considered as a positive value that is inspiring to many Moroccan companies.

The study reveals that Moroccan leaders have only a very limited knowledge of the current bilateral economic exchanges with Spain, as well as of the available opportunities for co-operation. However, they are aware of their lack of information on the matter and they regret this and want to improve it.

Most of the participants remain open and interested in the promotion of partnerships with Spain. But there are many obstacles such as the lack of information on markets, language barriers, and negative images in the Spanish media, etc. Participants expressed a need for support in order to get closer to this "natural" partner of Morocco.

With this mind, all businesspeople on both sides should make stronger efforts to be more involved in the work of exploration, gathering information, and developing links, setting up networks and taking advantage of opportunities for exchange. Entrepreneurs also expect the Moroccan government to provide better conditions for competition by reducing customs tariffs and taxes, and by promoting commercial and economic development. On the other hand, Chambers of commerce and professional associations have to conduct studies and statistics on the evolution of economic exchanges between the two countries. They must also inform Moroccan entrepreneurs of opportunities for co-operation and even to organize business meetings between company managers from both countries. Finally, Moroccan entrepreneurs expect Spanish authorities to begin a strategy of mutual development and to set up partnerships with the Morocco, so that individual initiatives are backed up by a larger governmental effort.

Having said all of this, there political tensions that stand in the way of improving the commercial relationship between both countries. The most significant is the perception of an attitude of superiority that Spain has towards Morocco.

Lastly, a larger effort on the part of Spain in participating in cultural and social activities in Morocco would contribute to improving its image in this country, changing the perception of an "opportunistic" investor to that of a

mutual global partner.

2. Themes and discussions

In the first part of the session, and after a brief presentation of the research results, different debates opened up touching upon different ideas brought up in the research including cultural perceptions of managers in the Spanish-Moroccan context, as well as the broader subject of finding ways to change mutual stereotypes in order to improve commercial relations between both countries. The second part of the Think-Tank centered on the theme of demographics, the mobility of people and abilities, trying to give a new vision of the concept of immigration. The Debate ended with the design of a practical plan of action that would better integrate cultural diversity into both societies.

The debate began with a general discussion of its objectives as the third and last Think Tank, with the general goal of using this reflection to improve the decision making process in Mediterranean zone.

"How, for instance, could our educational system give our youth more cultural diversity? This is an obvious question, one that is responsible for bringing about the reform of our educational system. This has been the recurring theme of many discussions for several decades. How can we drive this change? Even if it happens at a slow pace, it may have a re-structuring effect on the other parts of the system itself."

"How can our media disseminate a reading of our report with an approach that is not biased by a nostalgic reading of history? For it is in the media, in cinema, theater, literature and the arts in general, that there is often a kind of nostalgic reference to our past, regardless of whether or not it is a glorious past or not. It is important to focus on the future and take a look at issues that are local, national, regional and even international."

"How should economic players look at their relationships with other countries? What about their relationships with foreign businesses operating in our own country?"

"How can States and public powers take a more balanced approach to the issue of emigration without in so doing jeopardizing their social models?"

2.1. Debate on cultural diversity and its perceptions in the Spanish-Moroccan business context

Discussions on this topic began with a reaction to the findings of the research study, and in particular, with a focus on the benefits and difficulties of Spanish-Moroccan commercial relations after the entrance of Spain into the European Union.

"We have noticed that there was a paradigm shift that began when Spain joined the European Union, and that contractors have started to become a little more distrustful. Let's however put ourselves in that historical context: Spain was competing with Morocco in a number of agricultural exports, and thus membership in the EU gave Spain a privileged competition with the EU itself, which was in turn Morocco's main client. This paradigm shift is due to the context prevailing at that time when Spain joined the EU. In any event, the relationship between Morocco and Spain has changed drastically before and after the membership of Spain in the EU".

Discussion continued on cultural perceptions in the different regions of Morocco. In particular, participants were surprised by a lack of fluid communication between Spanish businesses and the businesses in the Agadir region, especially considering how close the region is to the Canary Islands. An improvement of communications was seen as fundamental to improving the business opportunities that exist in the region.

"Spain has a very developed culture of tourism, which may be used in Morocco to contribute to increasing the hotel occupancy rates along a vision of cooperation. The same can be said of agriculture, especially citrus fruits and vegetables, fishing and downstream processing activities. But today's industrial fabric is much more diverse and hence partnership has become an interesting possibility, particularly in some areas of excellence for Spain such as renewable energies, including photovoltaic and wind energy, waste management and flow, among others."

In addition to investment in tourist industries, some participants stressed the significant increase in Spanish investments in the south, particularly in fishing and agriculture.

The need to further develop business links in the south of Morocco was emphasized by some practical examples:

"I have experience coming from the corporate world that will further illustrate the situation. My company has participated in a big contract in the city of Laayoune. We receive our imports from Spain at the ports of Tangier or Casablanca. The transport costs from the Port of Casablanca to that of Laayoune are quite high. Our competitors have been able to charge lower prices for their products because they decided to have them imported directly from the Canary Islands to Laayoune, which is actually cheaper. This is something to ponder on".

Participants highlighted the cultural proximity towards Spain that is perceived in the North of Morocco, and how investments and good business relations over the last twenty years have played a part in significantly modernizing some specific areas south of Larache. This area has a well-developed and modern Agro-Food industry.

Participants also agreed with the positive development of Spanish businesses in Morocco that is mentioned in the study, along with the fact that most Spanish managers working in Morocco were satisfied of the working conditions in the country.

"In fact, I think that the Spanish companies doing business in Morocco are quite satisfied, and remember that they are not only limited to the agricultural sector. A telling example of this is the presence of Telefónica in Morocco. The Morocco-based call center of Telefónica hires telephone operators from all over the World, including of course, Moroccans fluent in Spanish. Likewise, many Spanish companies are currently investing in tourism, particularly secondary residences intended for European buyers".

2.2. Cultural models

The discussion continued on the cultural perceptions of Morocco that often represent a misperception based on general stereotypes. One common stereotype is the idea of Moroccan managers being "fatalists." Participants clarified that there is a certain dichotomy in Morocco where we can still find a rural society based on traditional cultural models, in contrast to a highly developed modern and dynamic society based on an international managerial culture. Some participants expressed that the influence international standards on Moroccan business practices has helped international managers to enter the African market through the intermediation of Mo-

roccan companies. The stereotyped perceptions of some of the traditional elements of Moroccan society should not be used to make a generalization of its modern enterprises.

A difference in the perception of time is also a common misinterpretation. Some of the participants stressed the idea that this general stereotype could be stem from the traditional rural habits of seasonal agriculture, wherein farmers give the impression of not working in between each season. Participants went on to emphasize the actual importance of time in the Moroccan mindset.

"To speak about our relationship with time, I will mainly draw inspiration from our history and culture. While the French say: "speech is silver but silence is golden," we have been saying for centuries that's time is gold." There are also many other sayings along the same vein, such as "time is a sharp blade, either you cut it or it will cut you." That is our true relationship towards time, and hence we must make it better known so that we may bring negative stereotypes to an end."

Strict power hierarchies are also a generalized stereotype, to which participants reacted by expressing the idea that managers in Morocco actually follow the rules of international management, and thus hierarchical relations between a managers and workers are the result of business efficiency, not the result of a traditional idea of submission.

"I have a lot of respect for Abdallah Hamoudi but I have to admit that I don't agree with his book Masters and Disciples, where he explains that our behavior in relation to authority is one of submission. I find this almost to be a rewriting of the speech of Étienne de La Boétie in his Discourse on Voluntary Obedience. This is totally not the case since the beginning of our modern times."

The changing role of Moroccan women managers was also stressed in the discussion, in particular the perception of Spanish managers that Moroccan businesswomen are very professional and efficient. Reference was also made of the Legal changes that have occurred over the last few years, specifically the Moudawwana reform of the personal status of women. As results of the evolution of gender roles, women in Morocco now make up 40% of certain engineering schools and up to 52% in the Medical School in

Casablanca.

Foreign managers often mention their perception that Moroccan society is a collective society. Some participants pointed the positive relation to community in Moroccan tradition.

"Well, the relationship of Moroccans with their community, not only as far as business is concerned, but in all areas, is historically very strong. It was first acquired through the ancient management of land, wells, forests and public domain, as well as transportation routes. So businesses have a rapport with the community that they don't seem to take advantage of. The time is now ripe to use this sense of community in an environment that has been further developed with better infrastructures."

2.3. Perceptions and stereotypes

The debate of cultural models and perceptions lead to a discussion on why stereotypes exist and how are they formed.

"When I think of Morocco and Spain, I think of two neighboring countries that should normally know one another well. And then I think of Canada and of the USA, two countries that ought to know each other well, but where their mutual perceptions do not reflect the reality. Canadians perceive Americans in a different way than they really are and the same is true the other way around".

Participants discussed the idea that perceptions are not always negative, and sometimes countries take advantage of their positive image although these positive elements are not necessarily proven by scientific studies.

"If you ask Canadians and our French cousins, what country has the highest rate of productivity and which has the most active labor force, the French say that Canadians are the most active and the latter hold the same view. But in reality, in its periodic study, OECD said that France boasts the second most productive workforce in the world. This comes as a huge surprise to Canadians. We tend to believe that people who take two-hour lunches and work forty hours a week cannot possibly work well and hence are not productive. But the fact is that they are good workers and very productive, and how come? Well, because they have invested heavily in innovation, science and technology, while we have done a little less. Hence, although

they are not as active, this does not mean they cannot be more productive than us".

The debate moved on to the fact that perceptions of other cultures are formed by a mix of different elements, among which the media has an increasingly important role. At the same time, stereotypes were seen as a consolidation of perceptions that have different roots.

"It is clear that perceptions are not phenomena encrypted in our genetic codes; these are constructions based on actual experiences, I dare say productions, and I would even add that the media have contributed thereto to a large extent. But the media have undoubtedly drawn inspiration, at least at an initial phase, from a reservoir of different rationales, i.e. from historical relationships, with all the good and bad aspects thereof. I call this is an interactive process because I think that the prejudices and stereotypes conveyed by the media further reinforce the perceptions caused by a historical legacy. This brings me to speak about the operational level, in particular in relation to certain prejudices, including the perception of fatalism and the relation to time".

The relationship between cultural diversity and perceptions of it was clarified in an effort to separate content from context, underscoring the need to move into the direct experience of other cultures without relying on secondary sources.

"I think, as a matter of fact, that moving from cultural diversity to promoting this concept of perception is very important. Philosophically it has served as an analogue to reflect the sharing of thoughts. Each time philosophers wanted to convey the idea that a set of common ideas actually existed, they said, "we have an analogue, we feel things in the same manner." Thus the idea of sensible perceptions is promoted when talking on cultural diversity to make it relative and to take into account the fact that there is a certain unity of the human species and at the same time, there is also the danger of a civilizational imprisonment. When we use civilization as a presupposition for analysis, we take on the risk of becoming locked within a particular civilization. Hence, sensory perception as a means for sharing and feeling empathy is an element of utmost importance. Sensory perception gives me the advantage of allowing me to recognize myself in something else, without necessarily knowing it. You haven't met a friend for a long period of time, you

are asked to describe his facial features and you are unable to do so. However when you see him, you recognize him because of the existence of a previous perception followed by empathy.

I think this issue of perception is very important. The fact is that stereotypes develop when we forget about perceptual data, when we forget what you called the direct experience. At a certain time, descriptions replace perceptual data. A journalist could not do without description and could not help falling into the trap of prejudices, because in fact prejudices are the result of lost or forgotten information, which they tend to eventually replace. In fact, trying to go back to actual experience, what Anglo-Saxons call "acquaintance reality," is essential; not really in order to describe things, but rather in order to know that descriptions depend on actual experiences and that in reality when descriptions are detached from actual experiences, they lead to stereotypes".

Participants discussed the need to do proper research and conduct surveys to reach the real facts, however as some participants pointed out surveys and research can also be biased. "Let me just tell you a little anecdote about this: a well-known reporter for the French newspaper Le Monde, asked me to provide him with names of contacts in the Maghreb area in order to write a "cultural page" on the Maghreb. I gave him the contact info of an scholar in Tunisia, who specializes in Austrian philosophy. She interviewed her for three hours. She wrote a full-page article in Le Monde and did not even mention her name. Malika was very upset. I was later able to meet the reporter and I asked her: "how is it that you did not quote Malika in your article? She does an extraordinary job, she has managed to get scholarships from the Austrian Embassy in Tunisia for the students she teaches Austrian philosophy to, and who in turn come back at the end of their studies to teach at the University of Tunis, and she has worked with the Foundation of King Abdul Aziz to give internships to her students, etc. The reporter answered: "She has nothing of a Tunisian." So if Malika had worn a veil, and had she been going to the mosque regularly, she would have had her picture on a full page. Thus, only direct experiences make it possible to avoid these supposedly logical links created by stereotypes".

There was a lengthy discussion about the role of the media in consolidating stereotypes. Some journalists participants of the debate shared their thoughts based on their experience in journalism and in networks all over

the world and the fact that media techniques are somewhat influencing a sort of a sociopolitical model that is emerging all over the planet.

"Three basic categories of people emerge within this sociopolitical model, and only the higher level is able to organize knowledge and skills, and is thus able to create change and influence others into accepting those changes. Taking in consideration how the lower groups are influenced by emotional elements, Influencers can organize emotional discourses and disseminate them in popular programs in TV or Magazines.

There is a first and lowest group, made up of those who watch television. Indeed, compared to the situation of about a hundred years ago, watching television is relatively a means for the acquisition of culture and information, which their grandparents or their great-grandparents did not have. But in our contemporary reality, television is essentially a media of emotions and not one of knowledge and competence. The result of this is people who are very passive towards the changes occurring around them, so passive that they sometimes fail to adapt. And I think that the new layers of poor people that we see rising in the world, the casualties of globalization, those who stay on the margins of the information and communication technologies, are those who generally have access only to this media of emotion. So we can say that we will make an effort, we will resist this trend and we will ensure that journalists and their chief editors on television will improve their information and training. This dream is difficult to achieve because competition for advertising between television channels leads to further competition on information.

Now there is a second layer: there are people who watch television and rarely read magazines and newspapers, or when they do, they read magazines like the British Sun, yellow journalism and tabloid newspapers. I have a feeling that this layer is somewhat more ready to change; it is a sort of precursor. It is capable of interpreting changes, of applying them to it, and especially of imparting them on the lower layers. It is the dominating half.

And then there are those who are at the top: the dominating layers, the ones who watch television, read magazines, read the newspaper daily and also read books. So why are books important? Well, because like the dailies, books serve to organize knowledge and skills. So these are the people who dominate the planet, the change agents and change makers. I don't like this

emerging situation very much, because I think that social and power hierarchies will grow ever stronger because of the very way in which the media operates when conveying skills and information. In fact, I don't know whether we can fight this phenomenon, and it can go quite far because the dominating layer can make use of a sensational topic to induce a set of popular emotions and thus organize new popular actions. We can bring an entire population to vote for a fascist, for someone who will go against international law, who might end up leading me to kill my neighbor because his color of skin or religion are unlike mine. I don't feel comfortable in this strange planet, but frankly, I just don't know if we can do something to reduce this".

The debate on the media and its role in creating perceptions was taken further by some participants who stressed the importance of having access to different strategies of communication, with an emphasis towards reaching the younger generations.

"We used to have an open and liberal press, which provided a counterweight. I believe that with the consolidation of the world press, this counterweight is coming under the control of dominating groups. The impact or effect of this situation, particularly among young people, is that the traditional media (newspapers, magazines and television) is being increasingly abandoned."

"The fact is that most young people don't read anymore and don't watch TV because of access to the Internet—this is the era of Facebook and Myspace. These are virtual spaces through which one can convey very powerful messages to the global community within 24 hours. "I think that if we try to address perception, we should take into account the fact that the world of the media has changed significantly and that we need to tap these new tools with which we are perhaps not as familiar as with the conventional media. There is an enormous difference in cost and an almost immediate impact. This idea must be able to have an immediate attraction so that people may be interested in participating therein. As far as the definition of the contents is concerned, we must participate together to define it. I just wanted to emphasize the importance of using modern-day media, especially if we aim to reach a young market or audience."

2.4. Effective ways to transcend the stereotypes

The debate moved on into the ways of overcoming stereotypes, not only

in the Spanish-Moroccan context, but in any cross-cultural context. The research study emphasized the importance of direct experience as way of changing cultural misconceptions of another culture.

Some participants brought out the idea that French-Moroccan relations involve a much deeper level of direct contact amongst businesspeople, as well as artists and students. For instance, in Morocco there is a much larger presence of French banks than Spanish banks, which in turn leads to a larger development of French industries.

Participants recommended developing more links between the chambers of commerce of both countries, without forgetting to further develop links amongst artists, as an effective strategy to bridge the gap of cultural understanding.

There was a lengthy discussion of education as a key factor in changing stereotypes and the promotion of events to promote the "direct experience." "We must create structures that will support relationships between youth on the two shores of the Mediterranean, such as holiday visits and cultural exchanges. Some thirty years ago I studied German in France, and I spent 15 days in Germany with other French students as part of an event organized by the Franco-German Youth Center. We had a total exposure to German environments, we even interviewed certain German political parties, and we visited many different places. De Gaulle founded this institution in the aftermath of the Second World War, and it enables young people of both countries to get to know each other better. The trip had the participation of students studying German in France and vice versa. Perhaps we could create a similar center in order to encourage exchanges between students as well as teachers, perhaps even among young people all together".

Education and investing in human resources was for many participants the key to Spanish economic development since the 60s. Some even valued this element as being more important than foreign investments.

"Allow me to say that this idea of parallelism is not really that parallel. As a matter of fact, some aspects are similar but they occur at quite different times. For instance, the development of Morocco today, particularly in fields like tourism and foreign investment, make me think of that of Spain during the 60s. However, the secret of the success of Spain, from an economic

perspective, is due mainly to investments in the human capital, which explains what happened in Spain during the past 30 to 50 years. There is, in my opinion, no other explanation: Spain reformed its systems and liberalized its markets, but without investment in human capital all this would have been vain. So, what I am saying is that this parallelism between Spain and Morocco is quite interesting for the latter, particularly since it is going through very similar situations. The need to invest in future generations leads us to a discussion on the educational system in Morocco and some of its challenges, especially those of public education".

Some participants discussed the improvements in Moroccan education, specifically with regards to alphabetization, highlighting the fact that 25% of the national budget goes to public education and is distributed all over the country, which is especially important due to the fact that half of Moroccan population is still rural. Participants also brought up the numerous challenges faced by the Moroccan government, with urgent needs such as water supply or electrification, and the need of receiving support from foreign Institutions that can help in developing a first rate education, such as giving scholarships to talented students.

The debate then discussed two distinct topics: on the one hand, the need to invest locally in basic technical and superior education in Morocco; and second, the possibilities for a certain number of students of studying abroad and the development of a good scholarship system for institutions inside the country.

In an analysis of student preferences, it seems that language is one of the most relevant factors. Today, following the demands of global economy, Anglo-Saxon countries tend to be the most preferred amongst Moroccan students, followed by France and then Spain in third place. The fact that the Spanish language is a bridge towards Latin American businesses was highlighted as an important factor that can make learning language more attractive.

"I think the problem is language. We receive many Moroccan students in our Spanish universities, especially in Andalusia and particularly in Granada. When I was the president of Madrid University I signed an agreement with Mohammed University in Rabat, and many of its Moroccan students now study in some of the largest Spanish universities. I would like to ask our Moroccan friends: how can we improve the relations between Spanish and Mo-

roccan universities in order to receive more Moroccan students in Spain? Today, Moroccan students speak Spanish better than they used to before, so we have to devise new ways to solve this problem."

Some participants underlined the idea of language as a vehicle of culture and civilization. Different languages have a certain logic that is often different than our own, and it is by understanding a foreign language that we are able to understand a foreign culture.

In addition to the language, there was also a discussion of the difficulties in obtaining visas to go to study in Spain. This is a significant problem, since in the last few years they are many opportunities in Spanish schools, opportunities that can be a dead end due to the difficulties in obtaining visas that force people to stay in Moroccan Universities, all of which are French or Arabic speaking. Therefore, good students end up in Eastern European countries to which it is easier to obtain a student visa. Those countries are not always as well prepared as Western European countries. Also, the university entrance system in Spain, known as Selectividad, imposes significant barriers to students wanting to study in Spain.

There was a discussion of the need for Spain and Morocco to work together within the framework of the European Union. Besides of working together to solve "negative problems," such as the environment or security issues in the Mediterranean, there are also some positive aspects of working together. For example, there is the possibility of making a bridge between Morocco and Spain, linking Europe to Africa. The cooperation of Spanish and Moroccan businesspeople working together can help to open the African Markets and to improve competitiveness to better take on other international challenges.

The debate closed with positive constructions to change stereotypes. Participants agree that the media could also have a leading positive role to change misunderstanding and simplified perceptions.

"I would say that overall we have somewhat segmented our targets. First there is the public at large, and then there is the youth who is accountable for a particular approach, and then the corporate and business community, and then scientists and intellectuals together with academia.

With regards to youth, we will have to adapt to their habits of media use,

their centers of interest (music, video art, etc.) if we want to convey certain messages to them. What we also said was that we should encourage cultural exchanges and travels. The easiest way of doing that is through organizing exchanges between colleges and schools on a regular basis, and not only at certain times of the year, thereby allowing people to get to know one another better. There are of course scholarships, but also de-localizations. With all due respect to our friends from Spain, I would say that France has been much more aggressive in this instance.

I think that in the corporate world, as we have said before, we ought to mobilize the chambers of commerce and also create new institutions. The Moroccan Association of Women Entrepreneurs illustrates a connection to gender which is not the same that is generally expected of the Arab-Muslim world; things are not how they are perceived in the Western world and there you have the living proof in front of you. There is also the need for an intelligent use of the economic and financial press, featuring articles that are smartly written with well-designed answers, all targeting financial and corporate operators who can put into practice all that we have said.

As a general rule, the public is quite sensitive to art and literature. By art, I mean all form of expressions of sensitivity; this goes from painting to photography, singing, choreography, dance, theater, etc. And it is perhaps through this means that we must, as our institution does, try to promote art as a source for understanding. We have so far had people from 62 nationalities who have managed to express their sensitivity inside these walls, through exhibitions, music and other artistic forms. I believe that art is still an interesting strategy, which may be combined with television. Through television we can counter the stereotypes of a broad audience, promoting integrity based on respect and mutual enrichment, and hence we will build a more positive relationship among cultures.

There still is the academic world, and I think that even though there is a language barrier, the English language used by the scientific community makes it possible to overcome 80% of the problems created by this language barrier. It is well known that Spain is an excellent center for emergency medicine. Everyone was wondering how only hours after the Madrid attacks, thousands of victims were referred in excellent condition to medical and hospital centers, so much so that the Spanish had to begin to explain to

other European countries how they managed to do this. In the same vein, it can be rightly said that in the field of emergency medicine, Barcelona is the world's reference for ophthalmology, and hence there may be some interesting activities to initiate as part of the academic cooperation. Today the city of Fez has become a major reference center for anthropology, history and heritage, with interesting work publications, internationally recognized; so therefore we see a great opportunity for academic communication that can improve the assets of both countries".

2.5. Debate on demography mobility and immigration

This debate opened by first defining its scope and then examining some of the main data on demographics and mobility.

"Eventually, words end up carrying a meaning and significance that may fail to evolve over time, and thus they may continue to be used to refer to situations that have become obsolete or have even ceased to exist. Allow me to take this opportunity to review some information. Let me highlight that in 2004, France lost 70,000 active employees due to the phenomenon of population aging. These 70,000 new retirees will be joined by an average of 85,000 new retirees each year until 2010, which means that in the five years between 2005 and 2010, France will have lost a workforce of 352,000. This situation is valid for virtually all the European countries, since all are equally affected by these changes in the age pyramid. In some of them, such as Finland, the situation is even more critical than in France."

It is very probable that today, France is not the most attractive market for managers wishing to invest in foreign countries. According to a report published by CEGOS in 2003 and regarding consulting on the management of human resources in France, in about half of the 300 companies surveyed the HR managers acknowledged to have no plan to manage this demographic transition. In other words, they will eventually manage things on a case-by-case basis. When cannot find a scientist or a biotechnology expert in my own country, I will tend to look towards countries like India or China, or somewhere else; but it will be on a case-by-case basis, it will not be the result of a national plan of action.

Spain offers an example that typifies this situation. In 2007, a Spanish company recruited 9,000 Moroccan female workers with fixed-term contracts;

it also intends to recruit 15,000 short-term workers in 2008. This was done through the National Agency for the employment of managers and executives (ANAPEC), who has also started negotiations with Italy and Greece on the same issue. This is a good experience in my opinion. Indeed it is far from being the perfect model, but it has the merit since it is a somewhat contractual immigration, even if it concerns only a specific work profile and even if it extends over a specific time period and strict conditions; but this is at least breaking with unregulated and indiscriminate immigration. Hence, it is possible to imagine in the future an immigration process based on a mutual agreement and on the joint willingness to create, instead of one based on the exploitation of cheap labor and human. We should therefore strive to adopt a philosophy for the common creation of wealth, one that taps the human capital".

The data of demography move into an economic analysis of immigration.

"Let me try to put the issue of immigration, including qualified immigration, into the wider framework of the economic relations of the North-South Mediterranean, particularly those of Morocco and Spain. For at least the last ten years, immigration has been an adjustment variable stemming the perverse effects of the classical model of economic relations between the North and South. The results for the region have been a reversal of net financial flows, mostly to the benefit of northern Europe. Morocco is a clearly case apart: if we look at international financial flows in the rest of the world, including trade, foreign investments and public aid, the remittances of Moroccan expatriates amount to 3 billion Euros today, i.e. 9% of GDP. In spite of all this, Morocco still has a negative net financial flow compared with the rest of the world, and this is where immigration becomes the variable for adjustment in the economic relationship. And it is an unskilled labor force of migrants that been leading this phenomenon."

"In the case of Spain, while this type of unskilled immigration is very recent, it must be said that Moroccan immigrants in particular have positively contributed to the growth of Spain. The president of the Spanish Government conducted a very interesting study last year, which reviewed the quantitative contribution of immigrants to the Spanish economy, which has added up to an additional 620 Euros of GDP for each Spaniard since 1996. Thus in 10 years' time of economic growth in Spain, it has been estimated that the

rise in growth fostered by the phenomenon of migration was in the order of 0.3% per annum, which is very significant compared to the situation in many other European countries where that share is about 0.25%. I dare say that Moroccan immigration had a lot to do with this growth in Spain, since it accounted for a third of all immigrants. These are the starting points that I deem important to keep in mind".

From the Moroccan side, there is the issue of the participation of immigrants in the economic growth of the country. Immigrants return to their country of origin, and often, they are people who are bringing with them new skills and financial resources, which leads to the introduction of a two-way immigration process instead of a one-way structure. As part of the increased cooperation of Morocco with Spain, there has been a focus on the so-called models of co-development, which considers immigrants sending remittances as agents of development in their countries of origin. But the fact is that most of these acts of cooperation have focused exclusively on social issues. I don't understand why we cannot think up new joint-development projects that will include companies and can produce a mobilization of the resources of immigrants in Spain and Europe".

Some participants highlighted the need to embark on a new phase in immigration, in favor of the qualitative against the quantitative. In particular in the case of Spain several considerations were stressed:

"The first is the question of language. I do not think we should diminish the importance of this aspect. Today manager's work with information technology and this is very language-intensive, and thus it is no wonder that Moroccan managers choose to immigrate mainly to Canada and France. This is a problem for Spain, just as important as the issue of salaries. We must focus on the role of the Cervantes Institute, which has already greatly improved in Morocco with the opening of a 6th Institute in Marrakech, in addition to the previous 14 schools throughout the country. Learning the Spanish language must be encouraged in all Moroccan schools, because these 14 schools of the Cervantes Institute are really for the elite. These schools are indeed needed, but we must do more. There must be more direct exposure to Spain for more Moroccans, through student exchanges or internships, for example.

A second important issue is the training of the staff in Spanish companies. According to different statistics, there are 500 to 2,000 companies doing bu-

siness in Morocco, all of whom are offering a high degree of know-how, technology, etc. Hence, the training conducted by these companies is a vital support for the language acquisition of professionals who may choose to emigrate, and will create better qualified workforce as a whole. This morning we talked about universities and mentioned the French have more business schools in Morocco. We must follow the example of the Masters Program initiated by Santander Bank. There are certainly some initiatives already in place, but these are rather limited. In-house training by Spanish companies in Morocco must improve so that it can eventually facilitate the development of skilled immigration".

The problem of obtaining visas for qualified workers were also highlighted "The case of Spain is far from being resolved. Let me be clear on this, a Moroccan visa applicant will find it easier to get a visa from Spain than from France. And yet, for qualified professionals the opposite is true: it is actually more difficult to get a visa from Spain than from France. Spain has no policy intended to ease the movement of managerial staff, students, etc."

The debate continued around the issue of mobility, and it included a discussion of demographic data.

"Spain is a labor market that is the result of the decrease in the birth rate during the sixties. The active population is primarily comprised of adults; in other words, this means that we will soon face significant problems of population aging. By 2020, the Spanish labor market will reckon with 22 million people, while in reality it will require 27 million—a shortage of 5 million. Today's unemployment rate stands at 9%, while it must be reduced to 5%, in order to solve the problem. Another part of the solution can be to give women a greater share of the Spanish labor market. In addition, a third option would be to extend the retirement age from 65 to 70. I think that immigration can prove a healthy alternative. As a matter of fact, the number of students in 2015 will fall by 300,000 students. Therefore, we are heading inevitably towards a larger immigration of unskilled workers as well as skilled and competent professionals. It is therefore an imperative for the Spanish government to define a policy for this special immigration. I am of the opinion that this type of immigration would be of interest not only to Moroccan qualified workers, but also to Latin Americans, Eastern Europeans and Asians. Spain needs to remember that it has been, and will remain, a host country

for selective immigration."

Participants analyzed the complexity of international mobility and all its challenges. On the one hand, it was important not to make a direct link between an aging population and immigration, since the aging population in Spain and other countries can be reversed, as we have seen in the past, or new economic models can develop wherein an aging population will no longer be the problem it is today.

Participants also indicated the benefits along with the dangers of sending people to acquire skills abroad. It is dangerous to send the best people abroad due to the risk of not having them come back; however if they return and then adapt what they have learned abroad into their local culture, this can be the best asset to advance and modernize a country.

The fact that Morocco is not only as a country that sends out immigrants but also one that receives them was highlighted.

"An average of 16% of all engineering and high-level training students in Morocco, hail from sub-Saharan African countries living in civil war. Many of these students, who are often very highly trained, have also received a religious education prior to their arrival in Morocco, and therefore they have experienced a high level of multiculturalism. I think we should offer official development aid for the "construction" of people, just as earlier development assistance has been used for the building of roads, bridges or ports. After all, it is in our common interest to work together, with those from sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb countries and Spanish nationals wishing to study or continue their education in a country worth living in. It is probably not that complex to build, if begun promptly. I think it is possible to give nurses and truck drivers the same level of training as a computer engineer, because I think that they all require the same level of qualification in terms of multiculturalism. This human resource training will be beneficial in all respects, and hence we ought to try and convince our governments to earmark public funds to that end. For those who are interested, Professor Jarmouni wrote an article a few weeks ago entitled We Will Fight for Our Human Resources, wherein he provided more information to that effect."

The complexity of mobility was further discussed with the existence of different types of mobility depending on the will and needs of the person moving and the attitude of the host country. Countries should recognize

the differences in each case, but in all of them two ideas must be applied:

❖ Investments are important, because with more investments, be it in schools or in factories, less problems of forced or illegal immigration will occur.

❖ And second, I think we must prepare everyone, whether in the south, north, east or west, to work with someone from another culture. This means that foreign languages should be taught early on and together with the opening up to other cultures.

The debate ended with some ideas on how to properly plan skilled emigration achieving win-win situations for all. We ought to be interested in the needs of countries with a large potential to receive migrants. We could target win-win situations that are not about "bulk" exporting, but rather for example, whether the German automotive sector could potentially need thin cable welderings or workers specializing in electronic cards which have become so common in today's cars. It just so happens that we now have a high vocational training capacity in Morocco that is big enough and which trains interesting graduates: some 320,000 I think in about fifty different disciplines spanning the levels of qualification, technician and senior technician. This is an extraordinary yet untapped potential.

It is a pity that for whatever reasons, we cannot fully mobilize this wealth for the good of our economy. What we need to do is get to know better the profile of our aggregates. I think that an in-depth needs study would help us create this win-win emigration we are looking for, even if this requires some common training, including languages. For example, f I know that a sector of the Canadian industry needs a given number of technicians in a certain field, and that these technicians would need to go work in an English-speaking area, then an English language program will be included in the training modules. Ideally, this would be a project agreed upon with the Government of Canada in order to train the number of staff needed in a specific field. I believe that this is a good summary of the different views that we exchanged during our debates and I hope I have not forgotten anything."

2.6. Immigration and cultural communities

The discussion then moved on to the effects of immigration in the host country and as result the emergence of a bi-national community. This mixing

of two societies within an organized framework can help improve communication in both directions and will thus change traditional perceptions and stereotypes for both countries involved.

"There is a bi-national or trans-national community that is increasingly emerging between Spain and Morocco. More and more individuals are truly bi-national, their parents being a mixed couple. This morning we talked about the Marrakech Cinema Academy. Fouad Nouri, a well-known Moroccan director, is married to a Spaniard and his children live in Spain. He produced a film in Spain that is in Moroccan Arabic, and which has not been featured by Spanish movie theaters. This reflects an outright lack of solidarity and encouragement for this bi-national community that is direly lacking resources. This situation stands in contrast with that of France, where a strong relationship does indeed exist, owing to a stronger presence of this bi-national community. I think that we ought to invest further in this bi-national community because it ultimately represents a cultural bridge between Morocco and Spain."

The discussion moved on to the idea of institutionalized communities, whether Spanish-Moroccan or French-Moroccan, and the dangers these institutions interrupting individual development.

"Having a relay for a community is a disaster. It is tantamount to an imprisonment in the host country, and hence a blend into that host country becomes inevitable. I am fortunate to be paid by the Public Treasury and not by an Islamic institute in France. When I publish a book, it pleases me less when an Arab or Muslim journal in France speaks about it; I would prefer the attention of a French journal. And when I train my students (I teach different specialties, including Medieval Muslim Culture), I am far more pleased when a candidate for a doctorate is a French student of the Arabic language, who will likely become more interested in the subject than a Moroccan candidate."

Here's another example: French relay systems do exist, but they are unfortunately disastrous. Mr. Ferjani, a Lyon-based Tunisian sociologist conducted a study on Muslim practices in Lyon, and one of the findings of his study was that many Muslims did not go to pray in the affiliated mosques. He eventually asked as to why they didn't and found that they pray near the Perrache Train Station, in an ecumenical place with many other religions. To the ques-

tion of why they do not go to the other mosques, they answered that these have been politicized by imported political problems, such as the ongoing tensions between the Algerian government and the FIS Party (Islamic Salvation Front), leading to skirmishes requiring sometimes the intervention of law enforcement. They want to go to a place where they can find God and to pray quietly; hence, the ecumenical venue close to Perrache Station suits them perfectly. Thus relays can be disastrous.

Discussion move to the idea of an individual bridging the gap between two different cultural areas. However, they also acknowledged the risk and difficulty of extrapolating individual experiences to collective experiences.

"There is a limit to Tarbes' sociological note which consists in thinking that social phenomena work in a ripple of polarization, on the basis of individual facts. I think that Durkheim's method of real collectives is just as interesting. I do not deny the significance of polarization and magnetization, but these are the expressions of Tarbes and they involve all the dangers of "gurutization" because we want to turn an isolated fact into an example, and this is risky. What we need is not so much the example, rather we need not to shun counter-examples. Montaigne said that "a wise person keeps the company of fools because in so doing he surrounds himself with those he must run away from." The bottom line is that no example is good enough to be followed."

The discussion ended with some reflections on the effects of extrapolating group attributes and forcing them on individuals, with a special focus on gender issues.

"In my association I am now trying to fight for a new advocacy, so I refuse for women in my association to continue to advocate on the basis of feminism. For me, feminism is woman's biggest enemy. A confrontation between the sexes is today a barrier, while what we are in need of now is rather more understanding. As part of my advocacy, I say publicly that we refuse to portray ourselves as victims. We are women entrepreneurs, we take an active part in economic development; we do not feel that we are victims and hence we have to break the shackles of victimization based on our status as women. Resistance will always be there; still one must forget about it and forge ahead."

"This perspective of gender avoids civilizational imprisonment and several other kinds of imprisonment. Speaking of cultural diversity and women, it is

true that there is a huge difference between a woman living in a rural area in Saudi Arabia and a Turkish Muslim woman living in an urban setting. There is a tendency to include everything under the term "Muslim world", but still, there is a huge diversity as shown in this example of the Turkish urban woman and the Saudi rural woman."

3. Conclusions and recommendations

After three years of open discussions and focused research, the Think Tank ended its thinking period and opened the door to action. The idea is now take a better understanding of cultural diversity to the different actors in society that have significant decision-making power, and that have been represented in the Think Tank: the media, the diplomatic sector, education, training, and the business world, among others.

"The word to conclude the debates of the think tanks can be summarized in one: implementation. Now, what are the pre-requisites if we want to draw a roadmap for what we would like to do? What would we like to see become a source of inspiration for policy makers? We want cultural diversity to be seen as a positive thing, and for it to become a source for enrichment and profitable use as the noblest meaning of human capital. How can we do this?

Well, the first thing we ought to do is to correct negative or erroneous perceptions. Here we have talked about a whole set of actions, in the media, in the process of socialization and particularly in the educational system. When we reviewed the training curriculum for our future managers, whether they hail from engineering or management schools, from the ENCG schools of Tangiers, Casablanca or Settat, ISCAE, applied industrial management B.As from our economics departments and so on, the concept of intercultural management is outright absent. At no time do we prepare our own future managers or operators to interact with other cultures. Well here is a specific recommendation that we can make. I wonder if in Madrid or Paris this is not achieved through compulsory internships. A nephew of mine lives in Shanghai today and yet he studies in a French School of Commerce. The school where he studies deemed that it was necessary for him to live one year in Shanghai in order to learn how to interact with a different cultural environment.

Participants agreed that the Spanish-Moroccan model has served as an

open model to better integrate diversity into business organizations in different cultural contexts, and it has helped to see cultural diversity as a real competitive advantage for global organizations.

Participants identified six different areas of society in which cultural diversity should have a positive impact:

3.1. Governments

Cultural diversity should enter the educational system so that it can shape a future generation of world citizens that will understand cultural differences, seeing them not as a source of conflict but as source of synergies. Mobility should be understood beyond immigration, understanding the mobility of skills as a fundamental asset.

3.2. The business world

Business organizations, such as chambers of commerce and business federations, can also play a fundamental role in helping their members to use diversity as an asset for business success.

3.3. The academic and scientific world

Exchanges of professors and trainers are fundamental for the advancement of sciences and the rest of the academic world. Understanding our cultural legacy is a crucial element in the creation well-rounded citizens.

3.4. The young generation

As often stressed during the debates, the young generation has a different language and as well as different methods for communication. Internet activities should therefore also be part of the dissemination of a better understanding of cultural diversity.

3.5. The media

One of the main conclusions of the research has been that the media has a strong influence on the opinions of the general public. Therefore in order to reach the general public, a special effort should be made to help journalists to better understand issues of cultural diversity.

Think Thank on cultural diversity in global management. Rabat 29th of February 2008

Vision paradisiaque, Saladi Abbès

Practical recommendations for managers

A - Cultural perceptions model

The initial hypothesis is that the cultural stereotypes and perceptions of a specific country, subconsciously limit the development of business and trade.

The Think Tank research clearly confirmed this initial hypothesis, suggesting the existence of common pre-conceptions towards "the other," which in many cases changed after getting to know the culture of the other country. Trade is being restricted by the deep-rooted stereotypes and pre-conceptions that both the Spanish have of Morocco and the Moroccans have about Spain. This situation often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading to a reinforcement of stereotypes.

The Think Tank research of both Moroccan and Spanish managers clearly demonstrates that in order to achieve cultural awareness, we need to further explore prejudices and archetypes.

The study of stereotypes and prejudices will help us understand how common perceptions and shared feelings work within a community. This effort can help explain how existing common perception replaces direct experience. Hence, we can understand how a stereotype emerges, based on a study of the elements inside a specific cultural context that are used to explain and interpret other cultures.

The clichés used by journalists and others who are unfamiliar with another culture, are a distortion of the facts, reduced to simple descriptions lacking any context. It is therefore essential to advance cultural comprehension, to return to a direct experience, to an "acquaintance with reality." Direct experience is essential, not so much to re-describe reality, but to understand that our descriptions of it come from direct experiences within a certain context.

When a description is separated from this direct experience, the result is stereotypes.

When descriptions are converted into common perceptions and therefore into stereotypes, they imprison a civilization, limiting it to a set of specific and closed parameters. In this case, even direct experience ends up becoming a confirmation of certain stereotypes.

Therefore, the first condition of our cultural perceptions model is to go back to this direct, personalized, and concrete experience of a specific context, without depending on second-hand descriptions that have no context.

In addition, there are universal ideas and abstract qualities that different human cultures adopt in order to find better solutions for their survival. These universal qualities or archetypes have been claimed and interpreted by different human communities as their own, and together they form the legacy of human behaviour.

Hence, in the field of human relations there are cultures that opt for a more individualistic or collective behaviour. Both perspectives seek a better society. One has the idea that if everyone makes their own decisions, the as a whole community will work better. The other has the idea that the rest of the group should support the weakest individuals. Both views could be useful in a given moment. It is the influence of history and geography that has created a marked tendency in some cultures towards certain specific models of behaviour.

These universal ideas behind human cultures represent the extreme opposite of direct experience. They lack context, they are abstract and impersonal; they can be reached not by direct experience but through introspection.

The second step in our cultural model is the introspection of these universal archetypes, which are inherently depersonalized, abstract and lacking context.

If we place both extremes along the same line, going from the most concrete to the most abstract, we will find the key to how stereotypes emerge. We can then learn how to eliminate them by integrating them into a new framework for cultural behaviour.

The third and definitive step in our cultural model is therefore: to fully eliminate stereotypes in order to develop direct experiences on the one hand and to reflect on universal archetypes without cultural limitations on the other as explained in the following figure.

This perception model is a reactive practical tool. It is not about planning
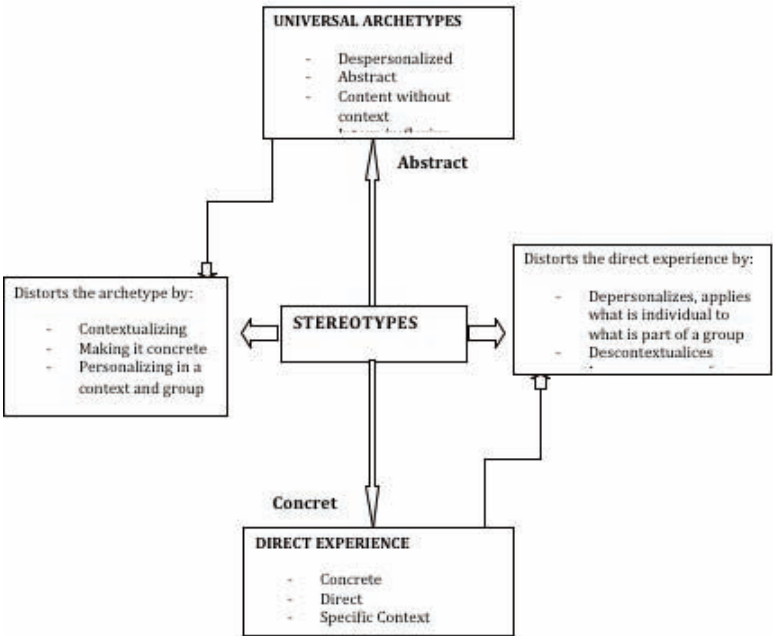
a course of action prior to a cultural experience, but about creating a consciousness of a series of unconscious realities, in order to have the right reaction in a commercial relationship.

Relations inside cultural contexts are usually considered lineal; however, research shows that cultural knowledge is not lineal. As we acquire new direct experiences, it attempts to introduce corrective elements. The model represents a circular perception process in which direct experience causes us to reflect, and from this introspection of archetypes we can find practical tools to improve our concrete experience, and so on.

B - Five practical steps towards cultural awareness

The perception model described in the previous section can be channelled into a practical tool comprised of five steps:

1. Self-diagnosis

The first step is to be aware of the possibility that our perceptions, which we believe are real, may actually be an expression of a prejudice. There are clear symptoms that can help us to identify an expression of prejudice, such as: the use of stereotypes as an argument; or the systematic denial of any element that can change a stereotype, even in the face of real facts.

One excellent form of self-diagnosis is to have direct contact with an original product of the prejudged country, and then define the attributes that we associate with that product. If these attributes match up by more than 50% with our preconceived attributes of the entire country of origin, we have before us a clear example of stereotyped perception.

2. To be open to direct experiences

Once we are aware of our "preconceived" ideas and of the possibility that our perceptions of another might not be entirely correct, the second step is to accept a direct experience of this culture. In our Spanish-Moroccan context, Spanish businessmen as well as Moroccan businessmen both have an extensive range of opportunities for specific experience with partners from the other culture.

Both public and private institutions offer interesting opportunities for businesspeople to develop their direct experience with another country. The economic bodies associated with the Spanish Embassy organize several activities each year. There are also the annual business meetings organized by the CEOE with the support of both Spanish and Moroccan members. The Hispano-Moroccan business committee, headed by the CEOE's presidents and by the General Confederation of Moroccan Businessmen GCM, organizes more than twenty annual bilateral meetings. The federation of businesspeople from Andalucía established in 1996 a platform named Centre of Cooperation Andalusia Morocco- CECOAM- that works to create better relations between Moroccan and Spanish businesspeople. Finally different

private institutions have been established over the past decade to strengthen mutual business relations, such as the Larache's Business Club or the Agadir's Canary Business club.

In addition to taking every opportunity to obtain a personal direct experience of "the other" country, international managers should be open to all cultural facets of this foreign country. Understanding movies, literature and art is an important tool to gain a greater insight into a foreign culture and to be able to understand its "emotional soul." Businesspeople do not often devote their time to such cultural activities, precisely because they do not realize their importance. However, many Moroccan managers mentioned during our research that French businesspeople do take more to understand Moroccan culture.

A positive cultural attitude does not end with the business deal. On the contrary, each new experience can take the manager involved towards a better understanding of the country.

3. Introspection of universal archetypes

Direct experience can help us to identify the abstract model that inspires a specific behaviour. Abstract cultural ideas or archetypes can help us identify the usefulness of cultural behaviours and to think of ways to apply these ideas in the day-to-day fabric of business life.

Fons Tropenaars stated that culture was the way in which communities resolved a range of universal problems that could be divided into three types:

- ❖ Those arising from relations with other people
- ❖ Those arising from the passage of time
- ❖ Those related with the environment

There are other ways of analysing cultural behaviour, such as communication, negotiation or the existence of hierarchies; but nevertheless, the dimensions stated by Tropenaars are deeply rooted in every culture, serving as the base on which cultural elements are constructed.

4. Applying re-directional elements

Abstract models can give us new guidelines for understanding cultural

behaviour and can help us convert a cultural difference into a competitive advantage.

For example, some foreigners complain about Moroccan business practices, "in Morocco, they drink tea for two hours and do business for two minutes." A Moroccan may respond by saying that "in order to perform well in business, it is necessary to be calm and relaxed, to be able to observe, to take the time to think, to take the time to listen to the other person. All these elements can help to develop an efficient and productive business relationship."

Another interesting example is the concept of community when talking about Moroccan culture. In traditional Moroccan culture, community is applied to many other fields such as the distribution of farmland and water distribution. The idea of community can also be applied to business efficiency, with the idea that personal demands can be transcended for the good of the community.

These examples show a practice termed as "applying re-directional elements". The idea is not to see certain cultural practices as something we do not understand, and must be made to work "our way". An active cultural approach consists of observing cultural behaviour based on our direct experience; next we must think if this particular behaviour can lead us to some abstract archetype which will then help us understand its purpose—whether it is in relation with the community or with time, etc. Then we can evaluate if that specific behaviour can be managed in such a way that it is a competitive advantage for our business.

Of course not all cultural differences can be transformed into a competitive advantage; but being conscious of the possibility that they can be, will open new opportunities and will set in motion the kind of cultural behaviour process that should always guide us in our experience as international managers.

5. Evaluation and restart

The fifth step is the evaluation of the process to measure its success. For example, one measure of success can be the improvement of our relations with a Moroccan partner.

However, the evaluation of the model is not the end but rather the beginning of a continuous process. A new discovery of how a certain aspect of the Moroccan or Spanish culture works will spark a dynamic reaction, in which each direct experience will lead us to a deeper understanding, in an endless cycle of mutual knowledge. Cultural reality is so complex that we never stop learning; each new direct experience could lead us to re-evaluate previous experiences, and understand them much more deeply.

Being permanently open to the possibility of learning new things about the culture of the "other", country helps us to better understand ourselves and to maintain a spirit of constant innovation within our business life.

Conclusions: Moroccan intellectuals discuss culture and modernity

Nowadays it has been established that beyond the "material" conditions that lead development, the cultural characteristics of a people have certain characteristics that not only help or hinder development, but can also determine its lifespan. Following this idea, individuals are in possession of different cultures and these are the essence of life.

Durkheim's defines culture as an assembly of different ways of thinking, feeling and acting, all of which have been acquired by an individual in a specific society. This definition can help us observe, without any value judgments, how the conduct and thought processes that make up a "world vision", are actually conditioned by cultural activities such as games, traditions, gatherings, rites, values and practices. In fact, the attitudes and conduct of individuals within their social life are very much influenced by their perceptions of work, effort, time, their relationships with others gender, the origin of power in their collective group, etc. This is what explains their "difference" with respect to other groups.

As a developing country, Morocco must handle a variety of limitations on its economy while keeping in mind the aspirations of its people and trying to fulfill them in a satisfactory way. The country must aspire towards modernity; it must dominate direct the transformations[22] it is going through into the symbolic, cultural and institutional requirements of the society it wants to become. The model of democracy has clearly been strengthened by a representative system that embraces plurality.
Significant reforms have happened at the institutional level, yet the system is still not mature and its intelligentsia is still searching for its place amongst the other actors in society.

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22 The concept of identity is a central theme in the humanities. The works of Paul Ricœur, Charles Taylor, Mano Touraine, Abdellah Laroui, Abdelkébir Khatibi, Anthony Giddens and many other sociologists, anthropologists and historians, all bear witness to the pressing urgency of this problem.

This intelligentsia cannot just "think towards the future," it must also try to inspire, direct and mobilize the strengths of its country.

We must remember that the relationships to "the other" and to "the glorious past" have together formed a dynamic that has been crucial to all intellectual efforts in the Arab world since the 19th century. This intellectual world is currently made up of three camps, each with its proponents and detractors:

- ❖ The radically nostalgic: often Salafist with a fundamental religious rhetoric, it advocates a return to tradition and it's "golden age." It wants a complete break from modernity.

- ❖ Those who favor modernity: this advocates a total break with the past.

- ❖ Those in between: this position is linked to modernity without rejecting the past, and tries to make a contextualized reading of history.

Becoming self-absorbed with the desire to return to a glorious past forces a direct confrontation with the objective concept of universality and is incongruous with the evolution of the world. The next strategy leads to a total abdication of personal identity because it alienates independent thought in such a way that it destroys the very essence of liberty. The only reasonable option left is making an honest effort towards modernity while maintaining a healthy distance from history. This is the price that the Arab intellect must pay if it wants to get rid of the negative influences of fundamentalist tendencies that try to "worship the past" and affirm their identity "in direct opposition to another".

In today's world, with its calm acceptance of diversity, there is no place for a culture of isolation. Specificity quickly becomes relative, and trying to hold on to it as an absolute truth becomes a lie that leads to self-absorption in the name of a false sense of social equilibrium. It is disquieting to see communities mobilized around a defense of identity that embraces violence and intolerance as appropriate responses to anything that is different. Obviously, the culture, history and values of a people all constitute a wealth of heritage. But this does not mean that a group cannot evolve and learn to relate to others. We must remember that cultures are not isolated from one another, nor are they paralyzed. In fact, they have always been interrelated with one another; and ever since the ancient wars between empires, the human race

has worked towards a broader understanding of cultural diversity.

Therefore, there are only absolutes for those who do not want to expand liberty and instead abuse the concept to create an artificial conflict between tradition and modernity. However, all societies are specific in certain ways, yet these traits cannot become the core of an ideological discourse because they pertain mostly to culture, and should therefore be considered as advantages for progress and the common good of all people.

Al Jabri is an intellectual whose work is very instructive in terms of his analysis of Arab thinking. He looks at the subject in terms of the Arab relationship to modernity, caught between embracing it by rejecting its past and at the same time not being able to let go of it. And although he tends to embrace modernity, he does not accept a simplistic imitation of values and its unquestioning acceptance of "the other". And yet he makes an effort to avoid being assimilated into Salafist ideology by advocating a very different vision of the past! Al Jabri argues that the renaissance (the nahda) in the Arab world of the 19th century, failed to materialize because of a historical perspective that was too caught up in "worshiping the past".

Al Jabri is an intellectual that has strong links to the concept of "reason", and he believes in the autonomy of the spirit in relation to the world of ideas and the material and physical world of the human existence. From this point of view, his contribution is unquestionable. He is part of a critical analysis of Arab thought and the negative elements that keep Arab society in the dark.

In his quest for an understanding that can lead to a significant transformation of Arab societies, Al Jabri has studied two essential perspectives: epistemology and ideology.

The epistemological view on the relationship to the past implies a new analysis and a readiness to break with certain aspects of the past without a bad conscience. Since this reading of the past will be done through the use of "reason", a connection will be established between history and knowledge. Knowledge is in perpetual transformation, always being rebuilt, constantly enriching its methods of analysis and explanation of human and natural phenomena.

Al Jabri's ideological position can be interpreted as a history-centered approach that looks at the past as an "occurrence" that can therefore be

overcome. In other words, Al Jabri is inviting Arab and Muslim intellectuals trapped by the obsolete thinking of the past, to simply break from it without really forgetting it. The important thing is to look at it with a critical perspective.

A Laroui juxtaposes the interdependence of Arab thought with Western thought, since for him a culture cannot be based only its rejection of another! In this way, A. Laroui reaffirms his belief in modernity and seemingly dismisses ideologies based on the fundamental rejection of the West. In his book Islam and Modernity published in 1986, he argues that according to an important part of the Arab intelligentsia, all ideologies have lost their universal character due to the negative influence of the national ego or the ethnic spirit. This doesn't stop A. Laroui from constantly asking the key question of: how can we access modernity and share it with others?

The first part of his answer highlights the conflict created by a strict a priori attitude against modernity. He goes on to discuss the need to break with the past to open the path to future progress. However, he doesn't advocate a radical break. Like all good historians, he advocates a selective reading of the past. Therefore, it is not surprising to find an advocacy for cultural diversity in his work, even if he doesn't explicitly say so:

Morocco is living through a very particular situation regarding this issue: There is not a head-on confrontation between tradition and modernity, rather a coexistence of the two. This relationship varies depending on the age of individuals, whether they live in the city or the countryside, their level of education, their exposure to different levels of knowledge, etc. All in all, one can see a surprising contrast between tradition and modernity in the daily life of any Moroccan, whether it's at home with the family, at work, or in any public space.

When A. Laroui defends modernity, he tries to legitimize his efforts on a belief in the freedom of individuals and the incorporation of reason into society by means of science. The main task of the intellectual is therefore to promote science and reason against the dogmatism of a traditionalist culture. The positive results of progress, from telecommunications to the Internet, the media, migrations of people, increased mobility and tourism, all of these have contributed more than anything else in recent history to changing our collective imagination and transforming our values. Thus it has become more painful than ever to affirm an identity by directly opposing modernity. Inte-

Schools have to really invest themselves in developing an overarching education program that is transparent, works closely with parents, and follows a multidisciplinary strategy. The objective is that education will not only be a transmission of basic knowledge and know-how, but will help transform attitudes and behaviors towards other cultures.

Le conteur, Ben Allal Mohammed

Annex: Think Tank participants

Celia de Anca is currently the Director of the Centre for Diversity in Global Management at the Instituto de Empresa Business School. She was previously the Director of Corporate Programmes at the Euro-Arab Management School (EAMS) in Granada. She has also worked for the Fundación Cooperación Internacional y Promoción Ibero-América Europa (CIPIE) and in the International Division of Banco de Santander. She has a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Boston), and from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. She holds a degree and PhD from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, with a comparative thesis on Islam, ethical/ecological investment funds and the London Market.

She is the co-author of Managing Diversity in the Global Organization, published by Macmillan in 2007. She has published articles in specialized journals, in addition to regular articles in the press. She is an external advisor for the Merrill Lynch Diversity & Inclusion Council. She is a member of the Ethics Committee of Inver Caixa´s Ethics Fund in Spain and a member of the International Scientific Committee of Euromed University in Marseille, France. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the IE Business School, advising the board on policies of diversity and inclusion. Ms de Anca is fluent in Spanish, English, French and Arabic.

In 2008, Celia de Anca has received the Business Woman Award from the Spanish Association for Business Women of Madrid (ASEME).

Salvador Aragón is a Professor of Information Systems at the IE Business School since 1998. He has a degree in Industrial Engineering from ETSII San Sebastián, Universidad de Navarra, and an MBA from the IE Business School.

He has held different positions throughout his professional life, including: Chief Innovation Officer of the IE Business School since 2006; ENTER & IMRC Research Fellow from 2003 to 2006; Academic Director of the College of Information and Technologies (CIT), IE Business School from 2000 to 2003; Since 205 he has been Director of Consultancy with Infoempleo.com;

Director of Studies and Research with Círculo de Progreso in Madrid from 199 to 2005; in 199 he was Director of Masters and Executive Development Programs (CIT) at the IE Business School; in 1998, Project Coordinator with Círculo de Progreso in Madrid; Project Coordinator for Gonvarri Industrial in Burgos, Spain in 1997; and he since 2003 he has been a Researcher at the Information Management Research Centre in the Instituto de Empresa.

The common denominator of all his pursuits is the relationship that technology and innovation have in transforming markets, business organizations and their people. Indeed, his role as Chief Innovation Officer at IE is closely linked to these interests.

Mr. Aragón regularly participates in major congresses related to his sector, and often collaborates with Spanish media agents. He is a member of the editing board of Infoempleo.com and of the journal *Estrategia Global*. He has also authored numerous research projects. In 2003 he published *Yacimientos de Empleo: Horizonte 2006*, which featured forecasts that largely came true. He has also collaborated in several books such as: *Experiencia del usuario* (Anaya); *Nuevas Fronteras del Empleo*; and *Intermediación laboral online* (Aedipe-Prentice Hall). He is the author of *Mujer y Empleo: Acciones y Decisiones* (Círculo de Progreso). Mr. Aragón is also author of numerous research works: *Examining Knowledge-based IT Management Competencies of Business Executives* (International Conference on Information Systems, ICIS Seattle, 2003); *Futuros Yacimientos de Empleo* (AEDIPE-Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2003); as well as producing annual reports on supply and demand for qualified employment in Spain through Infoempleo.com.

Abdellatif Bencherifa is an Anthropologist. Former President of Moulay Ismail University in Meknes, Morocco.

Ali Benmakhlouf is Professor of philosophy at the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis and member of the International Institute of Philosophy. He holds a PhD at philosophy from the Sorbonne-Panthéon, University of Paris I. He is specialized in logic and history of logic, and Arabic Medieval philosophy, topics which he has developed in the following books he has published: B. Russell, *l'atomisme logique* (1996); G. Frege, *logicien philosophe* (1997); *Averroès*, collection « Figures du savoir » (2000); *Le vocabulaire de G. Frege* (2001) ; *Frege, Le vocabulaire de B. Russell*, (2002); *G. Frege le nécessaire et le superflu* (2002); *Bertrand Russell*, Belles lettres (2004); *Le vocabulaire d'Aver-*

roès (2007); *Al Fârâbî, philosophie à Bagdad au Xeme siècle* (2007); and his last book, *Belles lettres* (2008), which is about the French renaissance philosopher Montaigne. He has also published many articles and papers in prestigious media.

He has held different positions as:

❖ Since 1997, Joint director of the collection "Philosophies" in Paris.

❖ Since 1995, Joint director of the collection "philosophical DEBATEs", the Fennec, Casablanca.

❖ Correspondent of the international college of philosophy (Paris), of the Foundation of King Abdul Aziz, for the social sciences and the Islamic studies (Casablanca).

❖ Associate member of the "Averroès" center, University of Fez, Mo rocco.

❖ Associate member of the foundation for the social sciences of Casablanca 2007: Person in charge for the Erasmus students at the department of philosophy of UNSA.

❖ Since 2008, member of the national Consultative Committee of ethics.

❖ Since 2008, member of the Centre National du Livre (2008-2011)

❖ Since 2005, member of the International Institute of Philosophy (IIP)

❖ Since 2008, member of the Société Française de Philosophie (SFP).

❖ Since 2004, member of the Arab dialogue World/Asian world under the aegis of UNESCO

❖ Since 1993, he organizes conferences in Morocco within the framework of convention between the international College of philosophy and the Foundation of King Abdul Aziz for the Social sciences and the Islamic Studies.

Six of these conferences were published by the editions the Fennec: *La raison et la question des limites* (1997); *Routes et déroutes de l'universel* (1999); *Le voyage des théories* (2000); *Tout est-il relatif?* (2001); *Droit et participation politique* (2002); *Sémantique et épistémologie* (2004).

Bill Carney is originally from Harlem, New York, and was raised in Africa and Europe. He obtained his B.A. in Political Science from Wayne State University while employed with the General Motors Corporation. He was subsequently appointed Manager of Fleet and Government Sales in Africa. In this role he was responsible for developing several automotive assembly agreements in Tunisia, Morocco and Iran.

He subsequently held various marketing and planning positions within the corporation, involving relations with Japanese, German and U.S. subsidiaries and associate companies. He was also Director of the Corporation's Countertrade and Compensation working with the subsidiary of Motors Trading Corporation, and focusing predominantly on Africa.

He was the first recipient of the General Motors International Fellowship, under which he completed his M.B.A. at CEI in Geneva (now IMD, Lausanne). He subsequently joined the faculty of CEI / IMI-GENEVA in 1984, and from 1984 until 1991 he was Program Director of the International Seminar on Industrial Marketing at IMI and subsequently at IMD, Lausanne.

He is currently Professor of International Marketing at the Instituto de Empresa in Madrid. From 1999 to 2004 he was a consultant for CREATE, a high-tech start-up vehicle at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale in Lausanne. He is also a visiting professor at Thunderbird, and was Visiting Assistant Professor at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. where he pursued Ph.D. studies in International Marketing and Entrepreneurship.

Since 1987, Mr. Carney has been Managing Director of International Management Development Inc, a company specialized in marketing services and executive training. He simultaneously serves as Executive Director of Laughing Bear Productions Ltd., a music and multimedia production company involved in commercials, corporate sponsorship and marketing promotions.

Mr. Carney is an internationally-known lecturer and has worked with companies both large and small in Europe, the U.S., the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. His current research interests include customer behaviour, international trade, customer management, e-commerce and the psychology of music.

José Collado is a Doctor in Economics Sciences from the University of Malaga. He is a full time Professor of Applied Economy and Economic History

at the Faculty of Economics at Madrid's UNED University (Spanish National Long-Distance University), and he is also a Professor at the Research Institute "General Gutiérrez Mellado," an organ of the Spanish Ministry of Defense.

He has held numerous research positions, including one with "The Geopolitical Evolution of North Africa and its implications for Spain", a project of CESEDEN (The National Defense Center for Upper Education), where he contributed his expertise on the subject of "The economic factor in North Africa". From 2006 to 2007, he held a position in EALEDE, Defense School for Higher Studies of the Spanish Ministry of Defense. At the moment he is responsible for the research project of the European Union entitled "ACTIVE-ASIA: ASIA-EUROPE Credit Transfer in Virtual and Long-Distance Education".

Currently, he works with the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences of UNED University (in the Department of Applied Economy and Economic History) and at the Research Institute G. Gutiérrez Mellado, where he develops doctorate courses about Islamic Economics and the Economics of Mediterranean Islamic countries.

He is involved in as a director of several Doctoral Thesis, such as: The European Process of Integration and the Difficulty to Integrate of the Arab World, to be defended at the Autonomous University of Madrid by Mohamed al Masry; Religious radicalism and security in Southeast Asia, to be defended at the Research Institute General Gutiérrez Mellado by Javier Gil Perez; The Ideal Economics, to be defended at Complutense University of Madrid by Muhammad Abubakar Abdullah.

Recent publications include: The Mediterranean, a Meeting Point Among Cultures published in 2006, in which he contributed the chapter The Economy of the Southwestern Mediterranean; Reflections on Terrorism in Spain published in 2007, in which he wrote the chapter The economic factor in North Africa; Polytheism and its Encounter with Islam published in 2008, to which he contributed the chapter Opening in the Dusty Trunk of Our History; The European Union and the Mediterranean: Development, Commerce and Euro Policy in the Mediterranean, published in 2008, where he was responsible for the chapter Economic Structure and High-Frequency Problems of Development in the Mediterranean.

Noureddine El Hachami is presently the director of the social and economic analysis center in ona foundation. He graduated in political sciences

from Hassan II University of Casablanca, and then started a master in international relations within the same university before joining for three semesters the executive program of management in the London Business School; he finished his courses by preparing during three years a PhD in public policy in the University of Montpellier.

He first joined the business school of Casablanca as a professor assistant then left the academic world for a career in multinational companies. His first assignment was with "pfizer pharmaceuticals", where he was in charge of marketing and development in north Africa during three years; he then moved to Basel, Switzerland as a market researcher for "Ciba Geigy" in charge of the near east countries. After a period of five years, he joined Hoechst Roussel Uclaf group as a business development manager in West Africa.

In 1998, he created his own company and started a consulting activity; as such, he achieved different missions for international organizations: IWO, UNDP, WHO, TIO, UNICEF, FAO...and different ministries (Agriculture, health, industry, public works, etc...)

El Hachami is a member of the "Moroccan firm economists association" and is a guest fellow in different training institutions.

Ramón Enciso Bergé is the Spanish coordinator of the Comité Averroes. He has a degree in Economics from Universidad Complutense of Madrid. His professional career began in 1971 at the Banco Central of Spain, where he held the positions of Head of Production in Palma de Mallorca, and Associate to the Board of Directors in Paris. In 1976 he began working with Telefónica de España S.A. as the Director of the Budgetary Control Service. He held the positions in this company: Director of Planning and of the Department of Organizational Matters of Personnel in Madrid; Director of the Cabinet of the Main Directorate of Operations in 1986; in 1987, Director of Company Goals in the Operations Department; in 1988, Director of the Department for the Management of Multinational Projects; in 1988 he was also President of Telefónica Systems in Buenos Aires, Argentina; President of Strategies for Telephone Marketing with Telefónica ESTRATEL; President of Grupo RADIO-RED in 1994; General Director of Resources with Telefónica Mobile Services; Managing Director for Telefónica Cable CATV; Head of MENSATEL Paging with Telefónica and RADIORED; Chief of Institutional Relations with Telefónica

Mobile Services in Spain; Managing Director and CEO of MEDI TELECOM in Morocco.

He has been an advisor for companies like INDELC and T.D.S. in the United States. He was also a member of the Strategic Consulting Committee for the DRIVE Project, and a member of the 13th European Economic Community. Mr. Enciso Bergé was also a member of the Corporate Advisory Council of the law firm Cremades & Calvo-Sotelo, and Advisor for Al Akhawayn University in Morocco.

Angeles Espinosa is the Tehran Correspondent for the Spanish newspaper EL PAÍS since 2006. Specialized in the Arab and Islamic world, she holds a Masters Degree in International Public Policy from John Hopkins University in Washington DC, and a degree in Journalism from the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. As a foreign correspondent since 1987, she has covered the main confrontations in the Middle East and Central Asia: the American intervention in Afghanistan, the two wars against Sadam Hussein, the Iraq-Iran war, the conflicts of Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen, and has also interviewed all the regional leaders. She is the author of El Reino del Desierto, about contemporary Saudi Arabia, and Días de Guerra about the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Ms. Espinosa is a recipient of two Ortega y Gasset Journalism Awards for her coverage of the Afghan war in 2002, and the Iraq war in 2003. In that same year, she won the prize of the Club Internacional de Prensa for the best Spanish journalistic work abroad. She is also a recipient of the Spanish civil service order, the Encomienda de la Orden del Mérito Civil.

Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales has been the Secretary General of the International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE) for fifteen years. He holds a PhD in philosophy from the University of Madrid. Throughout his professional career he has occupied a wide variety of jobs, including high positions in the Spanish State Department. He was the Enclosed Managing Director for the Main Directorate of Science and the Technological Cooperation, and also held the position of Attached Chief of the Main Directorate for the Cooperation with Africa and Asia.

Since 1993 he has held the position of Deputy Secretary General of the

"Bureau International des Expositions;" and since December of 1993, he is Secretary General of this organism. His support was important in the candidacy of the Aragonese capital of Zaragoza in its successful bid for the Expo of 2008. His vision of future and international leadership was fundamental to this international appointment, which is a historical event for Zaragoza and its entire province.

Mr. Gonzalez Loscertales has held the following positions: from 1983 to 1988, Head of the Mission for Co-operation with Central America in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; from 1988 to 1989, Deputy Director General for Scientific and Technological Co-operation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; from 1989 to 1990, Deputy General Director for Co-operation with Africa and Asia in the Spanish Agency for International Co-operation (AECID); and he was also the Director of the Participant's Division at the Expo 92, which took place in Seville from 1990 to 1992.

He is the author of the book *Utopía e historia en México: los Primeros Cronistas de la Civilización Mexicana (1520-1569)*. He has also written many articules, including: *El Hombre y el Mito* (1983); *El Libertador Simón Bolívar Ante la Opinión Pública Española del Siglo XIX* (1983); *La historia de la guerra de México, de Pedro Pruneda* (1981); *La Colonia Española de México durante la Revolución Maderista, 1911-1913* (1977).

He has also collaborated in collective works such as: *Política del Porfiriato, Emigración Peninsular y Emigración Canaria a México: Análisis Comparativo de la Emigración Peninsular y Canaria* (1882-1911) and *Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americano* (1977).

Mr. Gonzalez Loscertales has received the following decorations: Grand Cross of the Order Do Infante of Portugal, Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and he has been named an Officer of the Order of Isabel La Católica in Spain.

György Habsburg was born on December 16, 1964 in Starnberg, Bavaria, the son of Dr. Otto von Habsburg and Princess Regina of Sachsen-Meiningen. On October 18, 1997, he married Duchess Eilika von Oldenburg. The couple has two daughters and one son: Sophia, born on January 12, 2001; Ildikó, born on June 6, 2002; and Karl-Konstantin born on July 20, 2004.

In 1984 he graduated from Tutzing High school in Upper Bavaria. Between

1984 and 1985, he spent one year pursuing Law studies at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. In 1985 he spent one semester at the Euro-Center in Madrid and received a diploma from the Sociedad Cervantina. In 1986 he enrolled at Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich, studying History and Political Sciences. During 1989 he studied one year of Spanish and Islamic History at the Complutense University in Madrid. Between 1990 and 1993 he studied History at Ludwig Maximilian University.

In 1987-88 he cooperated with the German television channel ZDF in the department of Contemporary History and European policy. In 1989, for a three-month period, he attended the news department of Sultanate of Oman TV. Between 1990 and 1992 he produced religious and political documentaries through his production company, Markus Film, based in Munich.

Mr. Habsburg has also worked as a free-lance journalist for several European newspapers, covering trips to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mainland China, the Caribbean Islands, the Maghreb Countries, Japan, Panama, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, Austria, Hungary, etc.

In 1979, 1984, 1989 and 1994, he cooperated with the election campaigns for the European Parliament. A resident in Budapest since 1993, he serves as the Head of the Office of Dr. Otto Von Habsburg, building up the Pan-European Movement in Hungary. He is Senator for the Technical University of Budapest, BME.

From 1993 to 1997, he was Director of MTM Communications, the largest film production and distribution company in Central Europe. Between 1996 and 2002 he was a member of the Board of Directors of MTM-SBS (TV2) Television, the leading commercial television station in Hungary.

A member since 1999 of the International Council of the Instituto de Empresa, one of Europe's leading post-graduate universities. From 2002 to 2004, he has held the position of President of EUTOP in Budapest and since 2004, Member of the supervisory board of the European Union Public Communication Foundation and President of Hungarian Red Cross. Habsburg Consulting founded in 2006. Mr. Hapsburg is fluent in German, English, French, Spanish and Hungarian, and basic Italian.

Boutheyna Iraqui obtained a doctorate in pharmacy in Paris XI in 1983. She accomplished training in entrepreneurship with IMS (International Mana-

gement System) within the framework of the Empretec program of the UNC-TAD. Her profile interested the organizers and she was selected as a coach, then as Master Trainer of the program in Morocco in 2003.

Boutheyna Iraqui´s professional career is a succession of Enterprise creation. When she returned to Morocco in 1984, she created her pharmacy but very quickly joined the fellow-members and started a wholesale business of medicine. The following year, she decided to create her own business distributing medical equipment: Locamed-service. She did not stop at this stage but went to open three sales points with strength of 60 employees. Then, the company, became leader of the national market in the distribution of the products of orthopaedic and physiotherapy. In 2000, she created another company for the manufacture of the orthopaedic equipment.

Her federator assets valued her experience of twenty years in the associative scene: from trade union of pharmacists where she occupied the position of treasurer then of general secretary, to the creation of the National Association of Jet ski, also, she is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Popular Bank in Rabat.

In 2000, she participated in the foundation of the MENA Arab Network of Businesswomen. She is also a founder member of the association of the Empretec graduates of Morocco which she chaired. In 2001 she joined AFEM.

In 2003, she was elected vice-president. In 2004, she initiated the creation of AFEM regional delegation in Rabat and was elected its President.

In 2006 she was elected national President of AFEM. In one year and a half, thanks to motivated team the Association's funds tripled, the organization got structured through the hiring of a permanent staff and embarked on its certification.

In December 2007, the Association launched "Casa Pionnières", the first incubator in the Mena Region for 24 women carrying projects, and now working on "Rabat Pionnières" and "Fès Pionnières".

In September 2007, she was elected from the national list a member of the Parliament with the RNI (National Gathering of Independents).

Boutheyna Iraqui is considered among the minority of leading women in Morocco.

Sportswoman, she was a national champion jet ski in 1999.

Bassim Jai Hokimi graduated from Ecole Polytechnique Paris, Télécom Paris and Stanford University (Master of Science in Computer Science).

He started his professional career at Royal Air Maroc in 1984 to become head of Information Systems and Telecommunications in the same company in 1988.

In November 1994, he left Royal Air Maroc to create and manage as CEO an investment bank devoted to debt securities trading: MEDIAFINANCE, a key player on the Treasury Bills, Treasury Bonds and negotiable private debt markets in Morocco.

In October 1998, he started a new career as consultant in Paris, within the ORGACONSULTANTS cabinet (SOPRA group). His missions covered a great diversity of subjects, such as financial planning, strategic marketing, outsourcing and new technologies for prominent European companies.

He went back to Morocco in 2002, to be appointed Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of ONA, the first private group in Morocco in April 2002.

He left ONA presidency in January 2005 to found ATLAMED S.A. a management company for private equity funds to operate in Morocco and its neighbouring Atlantic and Mediterranean countries. ATLAMED started its first fund that same year in partnership with prominent Moroccan financial institutions, to promote the modernization and expansion of various Moroccan small and medium sized companies.

He is still member of the board of SNI-ONA group and some of its subsidiaries operating in Mining and Agro Business.

Bassim JAÏ HOKIMI is also member of the Board of Bank-Al-Maghrib, the Moroccan central bank as an independent member and member of the International Advisory Board of Instituto de Empresa business school (Madrid).

Iván Martín was born in 1964. He is an economist and currently holds the position of Scientific Coordinator for the "Labour Markets and Migration in Arab Mediterranean Countries Project" at the European University Institute in Florence. He is also an Associate Researcher of the Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (ICEI) in Madrid, Spain. Between 2006 and 2008, he was Director of the Socio-economic Forum at Casa Árabe (Arab House)

and its International Institute for Arab and Muslim World Studies in Spain. Before that, he was an Associate Professor of International Political Economy at Universidad Carlos III in Madrid for six years. He has taught for a total of 13 years, in American universities, in graduate and undergraduate programs in Spain, as well as in a number of master programs in universities in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Granada and Paraguay.

He has worked as a consultant in Paraguay and Bolivia, advising on institutional development, strategic planning and regional economic integration, and more recently in Morocco regarding gender mainstreaming in the GTZ. His research interests and publications have focused on several issues: Europe-Maghreb economic relations; the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the impact of North-South Free Trade Areas; Maghreb and Arab economies; and also employment policies in Arab-Mediterranean countries. He has directed or contributed to several international research projects on Euro-Mediterranean economic relations and employment in Arab Mediterranean Countries. These projects have been sponsored by the British Council, the European University Institute in Florence, the French Institute for International Relations, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Morocco, the European Mediterranean Institute (IEMed) of Barcelona, as well as the Fundación Tres Culturas in Sevilla. His publications can be found at www.eco.uc3m.es/immartin/.

Eduardo Oliveira was born in Madrid. He has 20 years of experience working in different companies with the responsibility of designing and structuring financial facilities to support international projects and investments. Among other positions, he was Director of Trade Finance at Banco Atlántico and Head of Structured Finance in Expansion Exterior.

Mr. Oliveira is currently Chief Financial Officer of H Oil Group. This company specializes in the development of infrastructure projects in emerging markets, with a strong focus in Africa. He is also an agricultural engineer at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, and also a professor of international finance in different business schools such us IE.

Rafael Puyol is President of the Board of Governors of IE University in Segovia, Vice-President of Institutional Relations of I.E. Higher Education and

Vice President of the IE Business School Foundation. He is a senior professor (in absentia) at Madrid's Complutense University. Prior to joining IE he served as Rector of Complutense University between December 1995 and 2003, where he also taught Human Geography in the School of Geography and History. He has served as President (and continues to be a member) of the Population Group. He is also part of the Association of Spanish Geographers (AGE), and Vice President of the Real Sociedad Geográfica.

He is a Member of the Board of the Spanish Chapter of the Club of Rome, and President and Vice-President of the Universidad-Empresa (University-Business) Foundation. He was Vice-President of the Complutense University's General Foundation, and is a trustee of another five foundations as well as a full member of the Hague Club. He has been director and member of the Executive Committee of Portal Universia. He has also been a member of the selection panel for the Príncipe de Asturias Award of Scientific and Technical Research since 1996 and since 2007 is part of the panel of Social Sciences. He is the former Vice-President of the Conferencia de Rectores de Universidades Españolas (CRUE – Association of Rectors of Spanish Universities). He is a member of the editorial boards of Gaceta de los Negocios and Dinero magazines, as well as Nueva Revista de Política, Cultura y Arte.

He holds the Grand Cross of Aeronautical Merit and the Grand Cross of Naval Merit, and has been awarded Gold Medals by Complutense University and the Universities of Prague, Bratislava, Anáhuac (Mexico), Havana and Helsinki. He was awarded the Commemorative Medal of UNICEF's 50th anniversary, and is an honorary member of UNICEF's Spanish Committee. He has been awarded honorary doctorates by the Universities of Anáhuac (Mexico), Norte (Asunción, Paraguay), Ricardo Palma (Lima, Peru), San Antonio Abad (Cuzco, Peru), Panama National University, Interamerican University (Puerto Rico) and Pedro Henríquez Ureña National University (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic).

A specialist in demographics, he has authored numerous publications and papers on this topic. Overall, he has published 16 books and over 100 articles.

José Manuel Reyero is a Technical Expert in Commercial Affairs and an Economist for the Spanish State. He has held different positions in both the

public and private sector, such as: Commercial Advisor in Belgrade and Miami; General Director of Services in the Ministry of Economy and Commerce; in 1982 he was the first General Director of the INFE, today ICEX; Executive Vice-president of the ICEX from 1998 to April of 2004; and Delegated Advisor of Promo Madrid from 2004 to 2007.

He has been also a civil employee of the European Commission in Brussels, ordered of the policy of Financial Promotion of Exports within the Main Directorate of Outer Relations. FIX PREVIOUS FIX Between 1989 and 1998, he was the General Assistant Director of Banco Santander, with responsibilities in the financing of Outer Commerce. At the moment, he holds the position of Economic and Commercial Advisor in the Embassy of Spain in Rabat.

Carmen Rodriguez holds a Diploma in Scientific Studies and Exact Sciences from the University Paul Sabatier (DUES), in Toulouse, France. She has attended various specialized courses on Foreign Trade, International Financing, Corporation Development, International Marketing Techniques, Advertising and Politics and International Relations.

She has held diverse positions related to foreign trade and international financing. Since 2004 she has been the Chairperson of P4R, previously known as Expansión Exterior, whose main shareholder is ICEX, the Spanish Institute of Foreign Trade. P4R is a state-owned company that provides commercial and financial consultancy services to Spanish companies regarding exports and investments abroad, as well as in-house consultancy services for the Spanish Government.

Previously, Ms. Carmen Rodríguez has held several positions, such as: CEO of EXPORTALIA, a foreign trade and international financing company, whose shareholders include a group of Spanish savings banks, as well as AFI, International Financial Analysts; First Vice-President of the KBC Bank's Global Trade Finance Group, where she was responsible for the bank's Structured Finance in Latin America; Chairperson of SIRECOX, a foreign trade, state-owned company whose two shareholders were ICEX and REPSOL; she was also the Sole Administrator of INIEXPORT, specializing in foreign trade, with the INI, National Institute of Industry, as its shareholder.

Since 1984 she has been a member of the Board of Directors of several

leading Spanish companies, among other important positions: member of the Spanish UNRWA Committee; a Patron of the Jesús del Pozo Foundation; member of the High Patronage of Casa Árabe; Patron of the Spanish Foundations with China and India; and also a Member of the Institute of Directors and Administrators (ICA) of Spain.

She has received two official awards: the Spanish Commendation of The Order of Isabel La Católica; and she was named Great Officer of the Istiglal Order of Jordan.

Nadia Salah is the Eco-Media Group administrator (2 daily newspapers, 2 news magazines and a radio station). She is also chief editor of the Group's publications. After studing economics and political sciences in Grenoble (France), she enters Moroccan press: L'Opinion (10 years), then "La Vie Economique" (1 year), before creating the Eco-Media Group in 1991.

Rachid Slimi has a master in political science and public finance. He studied at the Public Affairs Management Institute, George Washington University, Washington D.C. He has held many different positions during his professional career as equity analyst at Banque Commerciale du Maroc, Casablanca; adviser to the Minister of Finance, Rabat; chief of staff of the Minister of the National Education, Rabat, Morocco; Director of OCP Institute (Office Chérifien des Phosphates) Casablanca; Vice President for Development and Communication at Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane; Executive director for Strategy and Development at CDG (Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion); Director of General Affairs & Corporate Relations at ONA Group & President of the ONA Foundation., adviser to the World Bank Institute, Former President of the ONA Foundation and Currently, President of Sherpa Associates Inc. Washington D.C.

He is member in various boards of directors in Moroccan & International companies; Appointed official member of the Jury for the "Nature's Wisdom Award" in Aichi, Japan for "L'exposition Universelle" 2005 as well as member of the Canada-Danemark Initiative for Regional Security. He has been nominated by the World Economic Forum a Young Global Leader.

Carmen Sylvain is a native of Alberta and a graduate of San Jose University in California and Carleton University in Ottawa. She began her career at

Radio Canada in 1986 before joining the federal government. She has served in numerous departments including those of Secretary of State of Canada, Privy Council Office, Canadian Heritage, Communications, Canadian Heritage and Foreign Affairs. Ms. Sylvain was responsible for Canada's participation in World Fairs in Portugal and Germany where she served as Deputy Commissioner General for Canada. Carmen Sylvain was twice elected to the Presidency of the Bureau of International Exhibitions (BIE) where she served for 8 years. The BIE is the institution which elects the country host of the World Expo. In 2001, she joined Foreign Affairs and International Trade and has since served in the Middle East and Africa Bureau, as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco and Republic of Mauritania, as Director General for Bilateral Commercial Relations for Europe, Africa and the Middle East, and as currently Director General of the European Union Bureau. She has received the Alaoui Medal in reward for her efforts to develop the relations between Morocco and Canada.

Nicole W. Piasecki has been the President of Boeing Japan and Vice President of Boeing International at Boeing Co., since November 2006. Ms. Piasecki served as an Executive Vice President of Business Strategy and Marketing for Boeing Commercial Airplanes at Boeing Company from January 2002 to November 2006 and served as its Vice President of Business Strategies and Marketing since May 24, 2006. She was responsible for Boeing business relationships with all airplane leasing companies worldwide, including the sale and marketing of all commercial airplanes and aircraft services to leasing firms. Ms. Piasecki served as a Vice President of Commercial Airplanes Sales, Leasing Companies, from 2000 to January 2003. She served various positions in engineering, sales, marketing, and business strategy for the Commercial Aircraft Group from 1991 when she joined The Boeing Company as a customer engineer on the 777 airplane program until 1997. She served as a Sales Director of Americas at Boeing Commercial Airplanes from 1997 to 2000. Her previous career experience includes working for Piasecki Aircraft Corporation, Cresap - a Towers Perrin Company, Weyerhaeuser Japan, Ltd., and United Technologies, Sikorsky Aircraft Division. Ms. Piasecki has been a Director of Weyerhaeuser Co., since June 2003. She serves as a Director of Coal Valley Company, World Trade Center Seattle. She serves as a Director of the Federal Way, Wash. She

is a member of the Board of Governors, Tokyo, of the American Chamber of Commerce of Japan. She served as a member of the Federal Aviation Administration Management Advisory Council, the YWCA of Seattle-King County-Snohomish County and a fellow of the British-American Project, a nonprofit organization, and of the Royal Aeronautical Society. She served as a Director of Washington Works. She holds an Additional Course Work from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Keio Business School in Japan. Ms. Piasecki holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Yale University and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania.

Robert W. Rydell is a Professor of History and Director of the Montana Humanities Institute at Montana State University, in the United States. He has written or co written several books that examine the power of World Fairs to define the modern world, especially to lend legitimacy to America's growing imperial ambitions since the Civil War. International exhibitions reveal intersections between the cultural politics of race, class, and gender; provide fascinating lenses for examining cultural diplomacy; and afford important insights into the complexities of globalization. Among Rydell´s publications we can find the following titles: *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (1987); *Fair America* (2000); *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922 in collaboration with Rob Kroes* (2005); *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (1993); *Grand Illusions: Chicago's World's Fair of 1893 in collaboration with Wim De Wit, James Gilbert and Neil Harris* (1993); and also *World's Fairs and the Dawning of "the American Century": A Unit of Study for Grades 9-12* (1998).

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