

**"Spain and the World  
at the Dawn of 2010"  
Report of a Listening Post  
held in January**



**Encouraging The Reflective Citizen**

**Part 1. THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES**

In this part of the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experience in their various social roles, be those in work, unemployed, or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood or voluntary or leisure organisations, or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives', that relating to the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

After the introduction someone begins to speak about past LP's reports and comments that they were very pessimistic. Also, this year we began the experience the last ones (6th of January was Holiday in Spain), certainly we left the last ones the crisis, always to the tail of all.

They speak about robberies of wallet. Some Years ago one of the participants could twice avoid the robbery of his wallet because he realized in time, but 2nd of January walking in Orense Street he was aware that he hasn't his wallet and he hasn't found out when it happened. And 2 days ago that person, being in IKEA, someone robbed his coat. The first time with the robbery of the wallet he did not get upset, but second yes. The security agents showed a total apathy. They said the necessity makes robberies increase. In the subway there are more musicians and people begging for a few coins. And when they see it, they feel very lucky persons; in addition it impresses the good humour and dignity they face this crisis.

Much people are in unemployment and the unique alternative is to go out of the country. He feels sad by our country, because we are carefree. We are good in many things but we did not worry for anything. There is much wasted talent.

The crisis instead of to harness the talent and the creativity, what it arises is the authoritarianism and the narrowness of opinions and thoughts. It returns a near time from Spain. People with talent don't have managing positions.

There is much pessimism; people are hysterical, crying, and the people I talk about are people with a lot of money. The pessimism has invaded to everybody and is difficult from that position to leave the crisis. The crisis removes the fears from each person. Who is scared really? Those who can loose more? In the end there is a power that is the one that handles everything.

They speak about the situation of Argentina, where a day all the savings of their life can suddenly be nationalized, or also the accounts adjust and they clear everything to you. That is a problem really.

It is spoken of the submerged GIP, and that the unions do not say anything, nor they demand clarity in the accounts; on the contrary it is continued maintaining the situation. The submerged economy is maintaining us.

A person says that she had finished her degree 2 years ago and the majority of her companions does not have a job; people are depressed and they do not find a job nor of waiter.

In Spain there is a lot of support of the families (parents and grandparents), and in other countries they don't help young people (18 to 35 years old) as we do. If you do not dare to ask an increase of pay to your head, in the end there is a society maintained by past generations. The problem is with the people of thirty years (or more), that in the end they take any job (although they don't like) because if they request more then they do not have anything. It is difficult to understand how somebody with talent is in this situation and he cannot have space in the professional world.

They speak about the situation of the clinical psychologists which has a lot of experience and who have been fired after a new law in which prevail civil servants who obtained the work by a exam, and doesn't matter what happens to the people who have been 15 years working in those positions. There is much individualism.

There aren't people who 'rise' against laws or situations that are not tolerable (the unions do not do anything). There is a rejection to speak of the negative and to confront it. Problems are avoided from all the levels, from the government to lower levels. We are proud but there is no social will to desire and achieve to be better in something.

But also there are great companies in Spain, pioneers who have taken another way, leaders at worldwide level. We did not assume well our errors and that does not let to us leave ahead. We laugh a lot but of the others, not of ourselves, as they do in the north of Europe for example.

They speak about the situation of Aircomet (company that has gone to bankrupt), because seems that when one does something it must be successful, and if it is no successful, there is a social attack against the entrepreneur.

This it is a country of bricklayers and waitresses and we have loaded the bricklayers (by the real estate crisis) and now we go to load the first. The parents are happier when their children pass an exam for civil servant so they have a job for life, than if their children want to undertake a business; or if they say they want to move their job, parents show resistance. People look for jobs for all the life. There are great examples of the Spanish system of people who began as bellboys in a company and arrived very high in that same company. There is a paternalistic system of the companies.

Now they talk about if someone offers you a job by the double of money but in Catalonia, for example, they would think it carefully and would have many doubts before going (it is necessary to learn another language, many red tape. . .) there are many changes and difficulties to adapt to certain autonomies. It is easier to move from other provinces to Madrid, than from Madrid to other autonomies. Spain is not a dynamic market, because to change of autonomy it is a complicated process. In the USA they move much, is more dynamic. We are quite a conservative country. This one is the price that we are paying to be together. No, maybe it is the way to have power. The expenses are tripled but some persons are going to have their quota of power. Once the politicians have their power set impossible conditions to access to the public institutions in order to stay in their positions.

One of the participants says that no longer desires to speak about politics with friends and with people, because it makes join himself with depression, and when he was coming to the LP event he felt depression. The generalized feeling of the group is 'gray', we are in a gray stage. People feel emptier. There is fear, distrust, and sensation to be in 'stand by'. People is expecting that the crisis passes, they want to erase the 2009, and at the time of thinking about future strategies in companies, they speak of the 2010, but more of the 2011. The 2010 are in 'stand by'.

They speak about the image of a man who has just married 2 days ago in Haiti and his wife died squashed by the earthquake, and when he was explaining it he looks very coldness. What happens is that if he is in mourning he cannot look for her. Also it is certain that it is a country that is more customary to the death.

In any case there is much fear to imply oneself. In the work with very serious people with suicide situations, it is better not to imply yourself much, and to disconnect a little, because if you are depress you cannot work.

In France Telecom there was a very high index of suicides, and it was a so serious situation, that they had to take many measures to solve it and at the end they solved it.

The enterprises in Spain have many debts and great difficulties, are drowned and it is a vicious circle. The architects are stopped because they do not have anything to do.

When they think about politicians they feel very bad. We have million administrations and they are continued creating more. Everybody wants to be civil servant. Nobody wants to solve nothing. There are expenses that are tripled because there are many administrations and the positions are tripled, and there are many people how don't do anything.

Now they speak about an example in the Ministry of Industry, where there were corridors with many closed doors, and when they opened a door there were 3 women speaking and without doing nothing. When he asked them for somebody they get in panic, and at that moment 2 more people arrive and the 5 people began to discuss because they didn't know where was that person.

They have the sensation of lethargic whenever a political speaks, gives desire to watch talk shows on the TV. One has disillusioned oneself of the policy of this country, although it is a reflection of the society that we have. We have what we have created.

New administrations are generated as if they were small 'dominions', so there are more people with power, and once they have the power although he is the mayor of a town or president of a community, no longer they don't loosen it. We return for back; this is not political of 'wanting to do', but something individualistic.

There aren't people prepared in power positions, Zapatero doesn't know English, and the mayors of the towns don't have training or degrees. Example with the pharmacists who don't have authorization to prescribe dietetic products, but the dietetic consultants who they must train and who only need to have elementary training and practices in a pharmacy, can prescribes it. If a pharmaceutical one prescribes these products the inspectors can penalize them.

There are degrees with which you cannot exert in certain fields of your profession, but can exert people who only make elementary studies. It has no sense. And all this varies according to the laws of certain independent communities.

For the adolescents the models that they have are people of the magazines, uncultivated, suburban people whom hasn't had to study. There is little push; in the TV there is anything interesting. Perhaps there is something, a program that you can watch on TV on Sundays at 20:30, but must compete with football match.

It is necessary to assume what we are. In the past we have been very rich country, but now what has value in our society is to be 'cool' at the school and those that study are 'idiots'. There is no seriousness and as the things 'always have been thus' then it does not pass anything. The education and our culture are to award to the 'clever and sneaky child', who robs, who smokes before. . .

The 'first faces', ministers, politicians. . . are unworthy people, but also there is valid people like directors of public companies that are not going to move their job although governments change because they are good. But in many directive positions what is worth is 'to know how to sell yourself'.

For example, the government have bought many vaccines of the A influenza that they must put people because they are already bought. In a centre where one of the participants works, the medical doesn't want to put the vaccine, but they want to put it to the patients, because they have bought many vaccines so they are not going to throw them.

## **Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES**

In Part 2 the aim was to collectively identify the major themes emerging from Part 1. From several presented these have been drawn together under the following interrelated themes:

The main subject is the crisis, but there are two related subjects. These are:

- The fragmentation of the social structure of Spain
- Attitudes facing the economic, social and values crisis.

Other that came out in the first part were:

The individualism, pessimism, mistrust, lack of interest, lack of commitment and self-criticism.

The crisis has created a comeback to authoritarianism. There is fear, depression and lack of creativity. All these combined to the lack of values where it is punished differences in opinions instead of reinforce that diversity. There is a state of mind being in stand by but with the feeling of hopelessness.

## **Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION**

In this part of the Listening Post the members were working with the information resulting from Parts One and Two, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying

dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here the members were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world. Their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.

## Analysis and Hypothesis 1

### *The fragmentation of the social structure of Spain*

**Analysis:** There are problems that have been there always, and now have arisen, like in the inheritances that the problems were before and they do not arise until the person dies. As the Spanish society don't face the structural problems of their society for generations the announced crisis has come and it is worse than in the rest of countries of the U.E.

The parents have been so active to obtain everything, and the children have been so dependents that now with this crisis don't know how to react. There is an overprotected generation that when it must face problems then there is crisis.

There is a split in society where there is one part that is identified with the need to give protection, care, hope and for this is overwhelmed of work, hyperactivity and responsibility. So the productive and active people in Spain have to pay for the non-working people and for the government employees. That means that each worker is responsible of three persons.

The younger people depend on their families economically because there is not enough income to be independent, and the families and the society doesn't encourage young people to confront the situation because they fear that it could be worse.

It has been generated irresponsible children in front of very responsible parents? Is there resentment between generations?

Or you are number 1 or you are a failure. This brings about fear to grow, because it supposes much exigency. There is fear to the failure and to the change, and that causes that there is not generational relief. The competitiveness does not exist because the one of 'above' is castrating to you. There is envy, and those that are above are comfortable and castrate to those who are down. If the society does not have tools it cannot grow.

This situation reflects a social self that is demanding, immature, uncompetitive, unable to grow and without a clear identity.

There is a dependent link at every level in the Spanish culture, that is recognized in the relationship among the individual and his family, the individual and his organization and the citizen with the government, as well the Spanish government with the economic funds of the U.E. The result of this dependent relationship is a lack of maturity, difficulties to face conflict and change. We have a very immature democracy and a society, with lack of national pride and patriotism.

As a society Spain's growth has been facilitated by the protection and the funds of the U.E but now that there are not those funds and has to compete in the free market we enter in a crisis because we are not so competitive as we thought to be.

This social state of mind enhance paranoid functioning where insightful thinking is always under attack and there is a responsible or an enemy that justifies the bad things that happens to me or to us.

**Hypothesis:** Because past generations give a lot of protection and care to new generations, it has been generated dependency people, so the members of the society are afraid to grow and to change, without a clear identity, and with a paranoid state of

mind where insightful thinking is attacked, so it make impossible to affront crisis and as a result we have the fragmentation of the social structure because we can't grow.

## **Analysis and Hypothesis 2**

### *Attitudes facing the economic, social and values crisis*

**Analysis:** The economic and social crisis confronts society with their problems, but below the schizoid-paranoid state of mind, depression is invading the whole social and individual live. As a consequence the pessimism and the depression impede realistic thinking and creative solutions to the problems and let people hopeless and passive.

The Past is analyzed in an obsessive and compulsive way trying to find out someone or something to blame for the crisis. This makes very difficult to people to think in the present and even more difficult to think on the future.

Blaming others reflects a generalized pessimism and a lack of confidence in the social institutions, the different groups, and even the different generations.

It does exist the sensation that a change is needed but people feels that the change is impossible because there are big interests in groups, persons and institutions that impede it. There is the need to change the system, to be critic with former generations and to kill the father but it is impossible because everybody is dependent in one way or another.

There was latent scare that paralyzed but it has arisen now. There is a necessity of crisis, understood like a natural process, in which there are two options: you can die, or you can live. In this sense it is necessary to kill the system, it must die many things in a crisis situation; certain aspects of the society need to die to be able to grow and that all the talent and creativity can leave. 'To kill the father' and to make a duel, but it implies to assume a risk.

The politicians kill the civil society because they pay to the unions, they 'narcotize', sleep and manipulate the civil society, to avoid changes of power. It is necessary to have bravery and creativity to want to change the things, but lack of culture is fomented so that nobody is revealed. There is a society immature and fragmented and easy to manipulate, with a wall against the previous generations.

**Hypothesis:** Because of crisis and the fragmentation of the social structure, the members of the society are depressed and pessimistic, and as a result they have two possibilities: they can stay paralyze or can be aware of the necessity of change, so it is necessary that certain aspects of the society die, so they can grow and put creative solutions to the problems.

This was supplemented by a comment on the phenomenon of being 'absent whilst present' — people are physically here but are using their cell-phones to communicate with someone else who is in another place. Young people actively avoid eye-contact.

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