

## "Spain and the World at the Dawn of 2008"



### Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

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

At the beginning the group has a lot of difficulties to start, and emerge the idea of 'what costs to start to the Spanish society, because is difficult to break the ice'. Then they began to talk about one of the things have shocked them from their citizen role, and this is the lie, because nobody says the truth. We have always to look under the surface because most of the times people tries to say other thing. There is a great sensation of impotence with this situation.

Also it has impacted the farewell of the president of the Congress, speaking of the pressures he has been suffering. It gives a sensation of defenselessness as citizen. The political establishment lies or says averages truths, and the reality analysis is completely different depending on the political party. The leaders don't stop talking about of the accidents of traffic, but anything of the industrial accidents is said. Only they speak of the terrorism to be aimed so many, but this year there has been 2,500 deaths in industrial accidents and nobody says anything.

There is the sensation to be in the end of an epoch, when already arrives at the disaster, not only of an economic, but also personal crisis: everybody lies, and no longer the truth differentiates itself and the reality, of the fantasies and lies. This is like 'Sodom and Gomorrah'. There is a lack of values, and the crisis is total, is a crisis of responsibility.

The clash that have the politicians is not representative of the citizens. There are two parts: in one part are the politicians, and in the other the citizens. The politicians have wars that have nothing to do with the citizens, because there is not a clash so radical among the citizens. Also we have general elections in March, and in recent months always there is more attack.

It is spoken of the bipartisanship as a vicious circle. There are the good and the evils, and there isn't other way to take. This division between good and bad is promoted for the mass media. Before there was impassioned political debate among the citizens, now barely is spoken of politics.

It doesn't exist the conscience of citizen, therefore the people are not implied in politics, there is not social conscience. They present you opposite things, because is easier to manipulate. This is a country of opinion and not of analysis; they tell you what you have to think about in the mass media, and depending on the political party there are two opinions. But there are many things that are not themes of opinion but of events. For example, in Leganés (Spanish town, where terminal patients died in suspicious circumstances in the hospital), what has happened? Nobody says anything; people only say what they think about the theme but without knowing the concrete

facts. Everything is political. Something occurs and it is trying to put the politics in the middle. But this is manipulated.

You can't speak about politics because they consider you just one of us or an enemy, you can't go free, and you can neither criticize the 'yours'. In the end people don't speak to avoid conflicts. For example, a person that during the civil war was under arrest by the two edicts by being apolitical.

A question arises: 'Is the civil society accommodated or manipulated?' They respond that it is adapted to this situation and in the end it let carry. There is the example of a person who was talking with a politician in US, and commenting that he would like that Obama win, the politician left the conversation when 5 minutes has passed.

Also the theme of the violence of gender and the illegal immigration arises. People don't spoke about it because there is a waterproofing to certain so painful problems. We are accommodated and in the end become desensitized.

In the judgment of the 11M at the end nobody has made anything of the sentence, and it depends on who speak about the theme. What has taken more prominence has been the the judge's wife book about the whole process. The people is tired of these things and in the end they look to another side. But also it is spoken of the lack of emotional capacity to look at certain things and in the end although you are conscious of what it's happening, you prefer not to see it to avoid suffering, because there are things that affect and hurt and nothing can be done like in Nairobi. In the TV we could see the images of 8 corpses and they didn't notify their harshness. It is spoken of the right to say no, or didn't want to see it for the suffering that generates.

But at the same time putting those images they 'anesthetize' and desensitize you with all that information. There are 120 dead persons each day in Iraq. But at the same time is done the 'show' (by Bush) that they are interested of what occurs in Gaza, but it is a lie, he (Bush) only goes there to put his medals.

It is spoken of the movie 'Rwanda Hotel' that is based on real facts, and is very hard, because is spoken of 1 or 2 million dead people. And the same occurs in many places. But behind all these catastrophes are the weapons, the diamonds, the mass media that confront the society.

Still with all the problems that exist, today we live better than never in the history, but the crisis we have is a crisis of values. We return more individualistic upon being more accommodated. But on the other hand, there is more depression in the 'modern society'. When you don't have food, you don't have depression because your only worry is to seek food. Sweden is an example of a developed country and with greater income per capita, but with the major index of suicides also. But it is never spoken about suicides in the newspapers, on TV, they are like the blank votes, they are not counted. There are more suicides than deaths by traffic.

Another theme that has impacted a lot ultimately is the Sarkozy effect, someone very media, active, who imposes his criterion and at the same time doesn't care about what people say. But they voted him to take unpopular measures with hard hand. It is need that the politicians look at beyond its legislature, which in Spain is 4 years, although in the end are 3 years and the 4th is to prepare the campaign for the elections. The American, French, and Spanish election systems are compared.

It is spoken of the housing problem, everyone is mortgaged, because we have a model where one must marry and to have your own house, instead of renting, while in other countries is very usual to share flat. Here we live very accommodated in parents' home, and only people becomes independent when they have all the things. There is a difference of culture regarding to other countries. Here we are more protectionists with the children, hotter. We have a different family culture. The family has a lot of weight, and we separate less from our children that in other countries, we protect them more. For example in England the concept of children is different of a dog, because treats better to the dog. They have courses of how to treat your son with affection, and also the workers are colder.

At the end of this space the doubt arises on if 'we think about the society that we will leave 30 years view since the role of father'.

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

1. Desensitized-adaptation.
2. Politician-citizen disconnection.
3. Violence-death.

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

### ***Desensitized-adaptation***

The habit makes you insensible, because we are saturated of sad news. "What can I do to avoid Butho murder? I can't do anything". At the end we have a lot of things on our shoulders and we can't do anything, because is impossible that a person feels and he suffers for all. We are saturated of negative information that we can't process and do anything.

We must elect where involve us, and the fear paralyzed (fear to someone hit you if you defend a person, because that occurs). There is people that is afraid to live in a house because they are afraid of burglar who enter to steal and attack you (example, a famous person in Spain was recently attacked in his house), still with the light on that indicates that there is people inside the house they enter. It exists the idea of 'don't do this if that can endanger your life'.

On the other hand, to another level is wanted us to be unfeeling to be paralyzed, and they do it through the fear (example: mass media, politicians...). They/we have desensitized because adaptation, fear, individual selfishness.

But we can't attend to all the social needs. We are overflowed by the needs. And at the same time, the distance between certain problems makes that we don't experience the pain and the suffering.

***Hypothesis:*** Because of the fear paralyzes people, the saturation of negative information that we can't process neither to resolve and that overflows us of anguish, the members of the society have desensitized in view of so many disasters that occur around us and as a consequence an adaptation to our situation arises that causes us to be increasingly more individualistic and to put greater distances of the social problems.

## ***Politician-citizen disconnection***

The citizens don't feel identified with the politicians neither in which they fight neither in the reason they fight. Many politicians are in politics as a way to seek a job, not by social vocation or a thought that is a temporary job. There is the feeling that they are seeking a life-job or to be politicians as a profession.

In Spain there is a division-gap between politicians and citizens that the 11M arose and it's not surpassed. There is a skepticism of the political messages, and from there is passed to the cynicism. All this generates a lot of violence and aggressiveness as a citizen and as a professional, because people feel attacked by the politicians and by its political fights. As consequence one does not feel represented by the politicians, and in the end does not interest the politics.

Rose Díez is trying to emerge in the politics after leaving the Spanish Socialist Party, but they don't leave her, nobody gives her finance or space in the mass media. This represents a part of the society that is seeking to leave and to have a different space, but they are covering it because it doesn't interest other ways; only interests the bipartisanship. In that line, neither the blank votes are analyzed neither keeps in mind themselves what represent, as neither the suicides are analyzed.

In Spain instead of democracy we have 'politocracia', because there is not a division of the powers, but is all mixed, therefore the legislative power chooses the executive and this to the court. We have judges that have 'left or right' ideas and depending on that ideas pronounce different sentences.

There is a lack of credibility in the politicians, because its profession is 'political'. There is distrust, they do not count the blank votes because in the end would be 'to throw stones in its own roof'.

***Hypothesis:*** Because of the political agitation, the bipartisanship and the lack of credibility of the politicians, the members of the society do not feel represented by the political establishment, but attacked, ignored or manipulated, what generates a disconnection between the citizens and the politicians that is observed in the skepticism and the cynicism of the citizens.

## ***Violence-death***

It is spoken that to kill is relatively cheap, because an ETA member can kill 30 people and in less than 28 years he is in the street. Besides if mafias and murderers from other countries come to Spain, this is because it should be enough 'free'. Although violence of the foreigner arrives there is not so much sensation of insecurity as in other countries. Also the fraud is profitable, enough more, for example Gescartera.

But many types of violence exist, also with children mistreated, in the institutes... When we feel overflowed by the tension or problems, at the end is transformed into uncontrolled violence. We can't channel all the tensions and they appear as violence.

There is a marketing to perceive the violence of a certain way through the mass media. 'They sell you' what can be done (in the TV, internet...) and in the end the violence hasn't importance. The capacity to think about problems is lost and then the violence arises.

But also the violence is a normal process in the people. It has to have violent parts, and each time they are more controlled or channelled in other themes or ways. Now we give more importance to the violence because we want to live more comfortable.

The lost of authority by the parents, professors, chief... in the end enlarges the violence. In the past, an only authority was the one who exercised the violence. Nevertheless, also the fear to the consequences paralyzes the violence and controls it. The gender violence is due to the change of men and women roles. But there is not more violence now than before, always there has been violence. The confrontation is the beginning of the violence.

**Hypothesis:** Because of the difficulties to channel tensions, the lost of authority and the feeling that there aren't too serious consequences to the violence, the members of the society can feel fear of uncontrolled violence and react also on violent form, but on the other hand, the violence is a part of the human being and we try to look for another way to control it and to channel it.

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